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Abstract

RISE UP MEN OF GOD

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Today the American Male is finding himself in a time of definition and redefinition of his masculine role and place in society. Adaptation to significant male role changes must be considered in the spiritual formation of men. Into this very complex situation this project/dissertation came into existence. The development of a concrete, applicable approach to developing men spiritually in the local congregation was a necessary outgrowth of this project research. The hypothesis for this project/dissertation was that if men are enabled to understand their masculinity and given a degree of accountability to one another through an intentional discipleship intervention program they will grow spiritually.

A twelve week study was then developed and instituted for use in the Bellville United Methodist Church. The first class consisted of thirteen participants who were given a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in promoting spiritual formation.

The fields of developmental psychology, faith development and male role development were used as the foundational disciplines for the first chapter. From these

fields the works of Daniel Levison, James Fowler, Neil Hamilton, and Father Richard Rohr were influential in the development of this program. Chapter two of the dissertation includes a detailed description of the twelve week study. Details included arguments for the defence of the program and particulars including: fellowship meals, prayer partnerships, and accountability. Chapter three reveals the evaluations of the program based on the findings from the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. The data gathered affirmed the hypothesis and the participants did mature spiritually. Recommendations for changes to enhance the program were found in the fourth chapter. This chapter also contained suggested adaptations to implement the program in different circumstances or groups. Also contained therein is also a section focussing on new research areas which have surfaced in the field.

The appendix consists of The Male Spiritual Formation Manual used during the study. The lessons found in the manual are: Introduction to the American Male, David and Jonathan-developing male friendships, Removing Our Masks, Accountability, Listening Men, Fruitbearing Men--applying the Fruit of the Spirit, The Journeys of the Johns--understanding the masculine and feminine sides of one's personality, Witnessing Men, Godly Men, and Men in the Church. All of the lesson plans, handouts, and material used for the study are included in the manual.

RISE UP MEN OF GOD

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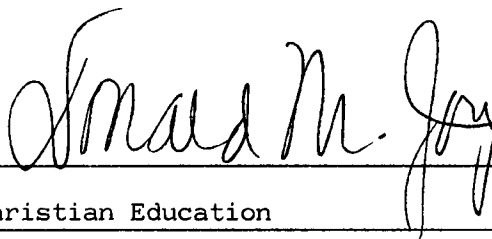
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Dedicated To

The men of the Bellville United Methodist Church and especially my first class, "The Sons of Thunder": Chip Backensto, Jack Gatton, Larry Gatton, John Herman, Charles Hobson, Fred Hupp, Bill Morrow, Craig Mottayaw, Dale Myers, Dave Remy, Ken Thomas, Bill Turner, and Carson Vincent.

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CHAPTER 1
FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

These are difficult times for men. Today the American male is finding himself in a time of definition and redefinition concerning his masculine role and place in society. Masculinity is being re-examined by society in general. Thus the typical male is finding himself adjusting to new expectations of society. Specifically, men are caught between a concept of masculinity based on influential men in their formative years and what society is dictating for today's male. Research done by the University of Michigan and Ohio State University has revealed that from 1967-1981 women under the age of forty-five have spent thirty percent less time on housework and child care than women prior to 1967. This same study also revealed that the amount of time men spent in child care alone increased by thirty percent.¹ These figures demonstrate that many men, particularly young married men, are becoming more aware of the nurturing aspects of their personality. This is coupled with the fact that men cannot rely on the role models

¹Daniel Goleman, "As Sex Roles Change, Men Turn To Therapy To Cope With Stress." New York Times, August 21, 1984, pp. C1, C5.

displayed by their own fathers during their childhood to define proper levels of involvement with the newly defined family structures. Men are conditioned even from infancy about what is traditionally held to be masculine. Clayton Barbeau in his book, Delivering the Male, makes the following statement concerning male formation:

The conditioning of the male, then, is well underway in infancy. For example, one study indicates that boy babies are physically caressed, touched, hugged, and rocked more during the first six months of life than girl babies are, but are touched less than girls. Indeed, most mothers then begin to discourage boys from seeking physical contact, usually turning the boy child's attention to toys and other objects. Meanwhile, as early as the second day of life, girl babies are talked to and smiled at more often than infant boys. One possible rationale for thus discouraging them from clinging to mother is the belief that boy babies must learn to fend for themselves, not be dependent, to stand on their own two feet.²

An additional complicating factor in establishing masculinity is heightened by the fact that for the last

²Clayton Barbeau, Delivering the Male (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1982) p. 13.

twenty years or more the role of women in America has been changing as women have been discovering the masculine world which shunned them for centuries. This frontier for women has mandated new experiences for men thus creating a period of redefinition of their own masculinity.

This project/dissertation had its conception during a retreat which I led for the four male lay leaders of my church, the Bellville United Methodist Church. During the retreat we had a series of discussions on David Smith's book, The Friendless American Male. During our discussion three areas of weakness in the masculine development of relationships surfaced. The first area of weakness discovered was independence in personal spiritual formation. The second area we designated for improvement was the ability to develop intimate male friendships. The third level of weakness was the lack of spiritual encouragement and accountability. That weekend experience demonstrated to me that, as their pastor, I needed to develop a program specifically for male spiritual formation in the Bellville United Methodist Church.

The foundational work for the project/dissertation focussed on the theories of adult development, faith development, and male role development. The works of Daniel Levinson, James Fowler, Neil Hamilton, and Father Richard Rohr were used to establish the foundation for the project with the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church.

Adult Development

In Daniel Levinson's book, The Seasons of a Man's Life, one finds a detailed discussion of male adulthood from ages seventeen to sixty-five. At the early adulthood transition one begins to terminate former relationships and begins to explore the possibilities of adulthood, testing and exploring these possibilities. One then moves into the season called Early Adulthood (ages 22-28). At this time the individual will avoid strong commitments but by the end of the period will feel pressured into making something out of his life. He will then move into the Age Thirty Transition. This transition is stressful for most men. His present life may seem intolerable but he cannot seem to form a better one. The ages thirty-three to forty finds a man preoccupied with settling down. He is moving from the bottom of the rung and becomes a senior member of the world. He now assumes a greater burden of responsibilities and pressures. The Mid-life Crisis Transition is the next season a man must face. During this period a man reflects on the question, "What have I done with my life?" He yearns for meaning in his life. As a result of the pressures of mid-life crisis some encounter the reality that life probably is lacking excitement and meaning while others discover this season is a time to undertake new adventures. The age Fifty Transition comes next with added pressures of

health and nearing retirement. Between the ages of sixty and sixty-five men find themselves moving into late adulthood, preparing for the era ahead.³

An examination of the specific tasks men consider as priorities in each of the seasons reveals the reasons that men ignore the spiritual aspects of their development and concentrate on physical, material, worldly, and career concerns. It is, therefore, possible for men to become preoccupied with living and the attainment of goals related strictly to the career, home, and possessions, thus they can easily neglect their spiritual development. One of the major weaknesses in the work of Daniel Levinson is his negligence in discussing the spiritual development of men. What happens to all of these seasons when a man is seeking first the kingdom of God as directed in Matthew 6:33? There is little room in Levinson's study for the life-changing work of God in a man's life. First Corinthians 5:17 states that in Christ one becomes a new creation. Christ transforms the old nature into a new nature and gives new direction. Levinson's study is, however, extremely helpful in the fact that one can define the stages that a man must face in the course of maturing. The awareness of Christ's transforming power would permit him to direct those areas of his life in possible crisis.

³Daniel Levinson, The Seasons of a Man's Life (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1978), pp. 21-39.

Faith Development

Levinson's work is enhanced when complemented by the work of James Fowler, a professor of theology and human development at Emory University. In his book, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian, Fowler deals with adult development and the Christian faith. He has divided life into seven stages of faith:

1. Primal faith: first year of life. The child is basically learning trust.
2. Intuitive-projective; Ages 2-6. The child is beginning to learn symbols and awakening to the world of reality.
3. Mythical-literal faith: ages 6-12. The child now is able to reserve process of thought and able to coordinate more than one feature of a situation at a time. Faith becomes a matter of reliance on the stories, rules, and implicit values of the family and valuing the stories, practices and beliefs of the tradition.
4. Synthetic-conventional faith: This stage begins at early adolescence. The young person now has available a variety of reflections and mirrorings of the self. Values, beliefs, and orienting convictions are made available through his/her significant face-to-face relations.

5. Individuative-reflective faith: Ages 20-40's. Persons begin to objectify, examine, and make critical choices about the defining elements of their identity and faith. They are gaining self authorization.

6. Conjunctive faith: This begins at mid-life and goes on until death. Dealing with the new reality and power of death, is what the person is dealing with. There is an awareness of the need to face and hold together polar tensions in one's life: being young and old, masculine and feminine, constructive and destructive. One needs to retain a genuine openness to the truths of tradition and communities other than one's own.

7. Universalizing faith: We rest our hearts on centers of values that confirm our identities and confer significance on our sense of self-hood.⁴

Fowler's theory only deals with faith issues which is the primary difference between him and Levinson. Fowler states:

⁴James W. Fowler, Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), pp. 52-71.

The most crucial factor differentiating the quality and movement of conscious and unconscious availability of that person or group's potential for partnership-for-synergy with the Holy Spirit.⁵

One's faith development depends upon one's willingness to cooperate with the power of the Holy Spirit. It is, therefore, imperative for the church to assist both men and women to understand the importance of faith development as it results in synergy with God. Maturing in the Christian faith is more than just moving through stages of development as Daniel Levinson's theory suggest. It is the involvement of the individual with God through those stages.

A professor of New Testament at Drew University, Neil Hamilton, adds another dimension to faith development in his book, Maturing in the Christian Faith. He also dissects the process of development, but in relation to biblical theology. Hamilton's belief concerning faith development is that life does have stages, eras, or seasons and there is some sequence to them. He differs greatly, however, in the following concept, "As I read the New Testament, the life of faith is drawn ahead by the Spirit rather than drawn by the self."⁶ Hamilton sees faith development in two basic stages, although, there may be many steps within each. The

⁵Ibid., p. 74.

⁶Neil Hamilton, Maturing in the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: Geneva Press, 1984), p. 29.

two stages are the discipleship phase of the Christian life and the transitional phase in the Spirit. The discipleship or childhood phase of faith finds people being childish and relying on the present-God of the kingdom. Discipleship as Hamilton defines it is,

The phase of the Christian life when Christ is experienced primarily as a figure of the past who continues among us in his teachings and example. The next phase is the transition in the Spirit. Jesus promises that the Spirit will be with you- there is an intense intimacy, resulting in new levels of effectiveness in ministry and new levels of holiness in the believer's life.⁷

Human developmentalists from Erik Erickson through Neil Hamilton have shown that people go through stages or seasons in reaching the point of maturity. The aforementioned developmentalists have been helpful in discovering the developmental and faith stages through which people, and specifically men in the work of Levinson, must progress. Levinson's stages reveal the priorities which men face as they proceed to the next stage. Fowler's work clearly demonstrates that not only does one developmentally move through stages but one's faith also has progressive stages. Hamilton adds to this dimension, the reality of God's work

⁷Ibid., p. 85.

in this developmental process.

Male Role Development

In addition to these discoveries, the concept of masculinity has been drastically altered in the past forty years. Early in this century society in general had a firm, immovable idea of its concept of the male role. Traditionally, men have seen themselves as the sole provider for the family. The husband was expected to pursue a career and provide financially for his family. Household duties such as cleaning and cooking were responsibilities left almost entirely to the wives. The father's participation in child care was very limited, especially with pre-schoolers. Decisions were predominantly made by the man who considered himself to be the head of the house.

Perry Garfinkel in his book, In A Man's World, states that this concept of masculinity is passed on from male to male in our society.

As a young man passes through the various masculine training grounds- with brothers, mentors, colleagues, and within all-male bastions- these patterns and others are developed and reinforced...the themes of power, competition, and

emotional abandonment are inextricably and unalterably woven into the fabrics of men's relationships.⁸

With the outbreak of World War II that image changed as women joined the work force in response to the war effort. The post World War II era found many women choosing to remain in their careers. Men were forced to see their roles beginning to be altered as a result of the changing woman's role from dependence to independence. Men began to help with the common household duties usually performed by women. In the seventies and eighties the number of women in the work force has increased tremendously. Many men have wrestled to gain an understanding of their masculinity in relation to what they have learned from the male images in their lives. Two factors which men have had to balance are what society dictates a man ought to be, and what the women in their lives perceive masculinity to be.

In addition to all of these sociological changes there are additional pressures including living up to the dichotomy between one's own ideas of masculinity and the sociological standards of masculinity. Coupled with these factors is the significant rise in the number of single parent families in which the male children are maturing without a visible male role model. Herb Goldberg in his

⁸Perry Garfinkle, In A Man's World (New York: New American Books, 1985), p. 7.

book, The Hazards of Being Male, emphasizes the underlying pressures for men as they face a continuing dilemma.

They (men) have lost touch with, or are running away from, their feelings and awareness of themselves as people. They have confused their social masks for their essence and they are destroying themselves while fulfilling the traditional definitions of masculine-appropriate behavior.⁹

Masculinity and Spiritual Growth

In further discussion of the roles of males and females in our society and most particularly in the church the profound work of a Catholic priest who has developed some research in the area of masculinity and spiritual growth must be considered. Father Richard Rohr, the founder of the New Jerusalem Community in Cincinnati, Ohio, explores the whole topic of masculinity and femininity in his lecture series called, "A Man's Approach to God, Four Talks on Male Spirituality." Father Rohr's belief is that men must take two different spiritual journeys. Men begin the first journey at what he calls the common masculine. He states that if a man remains in the common masculine he will become insensitive, tough and "macho."

⁹Herb Goldberg, The Hazards of Being Male (Barenfield, NJ: New American Library, 1976), p. 3.

The common masculinity is what you are taught about being male from your father, your uncle, and your grandpa. And your neighbor tells you this is the way to do it. We pick it up through the unconscious.¹⁰

Journey of John the Beloved

It is, therefore, necessary for a man to take the first of two inward journeys. The first journey he calls the journey of John, the beloved disciple. It is named after the disciple who laid his head on Jesus' breast during the Passover meal. John acted in love without any reservations. Men begin to discover the feminine side of their personality as they follow the steps of John the Beloved. This inner journey is nurtured through a man's relationship with the women in his life. During the past twenty years this journey has been continually more legitimized. The awareness of a man's need for such a journey has been increased as a result of the number of women who are determined to discover the masculine side of their own nature. This women's movement has forced men to adapt their masculine roles in order to relate to women who are more spiritually balanced in many areas of their lives. During this journey men are learning that it is permissible for

¹⁰Father Richard Rohr, "Four Talks on Male Spirituality" cassette (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, n.d.), t. 1.

them to be warm, caring, sensitive, demonstrative, and loving.

The church can have an important role here in assisting men to understand their masculinity in light of the many changes that they are facing. Any man who might be wrestling with the concept of masculinity he learned from his father, brother, uncle, or other significant men in his life, may need help in legitimizing the journey into the feminine side of his personality. David Smith's "American Male Creed" exemplifies the identity most American men accept as the foundation of their masculinity.

He shall not cry.

He shall display no weakness.

He shall not need affection, gentleness, or warmth.

He shall comfort but not need comforting.

He shall be needed but not need.

He shall touch but not be touched.

He shall be steel not flesh.

He shall be inviolate in his manhood.

He shall stand alone.¹¹

This credo will be shattered when men explore the feminine side of their personality.

¹¹David Smith, The Friendless American Male (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983), p. 22.

Helen Cecilia Swift and Margaret N. Telscher in their book, Unveiling the Feminine Face of the Church, have reaffirmed the fact that Jesus demonstrated a wholeness in his personality.

...we find Jesus at times displaying some very masculine characteristics-for example wielding a whip in the temple-and at other times responding to a situation in a feminine way-for instance, embracing a child before placing it in the disciples' midst.¹²

They also correctly demonstrated that Jesus in his temptations in the desert did not yield to the negative masculine response of manipulating and abusing his power. The aforementioned "American Male Creed" is clearly repudiated by the actions of Jesus Christ.

He shall not cry:

Jesus wept and was deeply moved with the sorrow at the death of his close friend, Lazarus. (John 11:1-46) Jesus also wept over the city of Jerusalem. (Luke 19:41)

He shall display no weakness:

Luke 22:39-44 record the weakness and struggle of Jesus while he was suffering. He anguished to the point of sweating like drops of blood. Jesus also cried out on the

¹²Helen Swift and Margaret Telscher, Unveiling the Feminine Face of the Church (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1989, p. 28.

cross, "My God, My God! Why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)

He shall need no affection, or gentleness or warmth:

Jesus was anointed with oil by an adulterous woman. When he was rebuked by Judas, Jesus defended the woman. (John 12:2-8)

He shall comfort but not need comforting:

When Jesus went to Mary and Martha's after he heard the news of Lazarus' illness, John records that Jesus wept when he found out that Lazarus had died. He states that Jesus was moved deeply. The people around noted how much he must have loved Lazarus. (John 11:35,38)

He shall be needed but not need:

While Jesus fed and tended the needs of the 5,000, he and his disciples had gone without rest and food. When Jesus dismissed the crowd he and the disciples departed to a lonely place to get some rest. Jesus needed rest. (Mark 6:30-32) He wanted Peter, James, and John near him in the garden of Gethsemane. He needed those who knew him best to meet his needs during his time of suffering. (Mark 14:32-36)

He shall touch and not be touched:

At the last supper, John the disciple whom Jesus loved leaned back on the breast of Jesus. Jesus was not afraid of tender touching. (John 13:22-25) Jesus was touched tenderly as he was anointed by the woman. (Mark 14:3-9)

He shall be steel not flesh:

Chapter 17 of the gospel of John reveals the tenderness and love that Jesus had for his disciples and how he wanted to remain with them. This passage reveals his very human love for them.

He shall be inviolate in his manhood:

Jesus demonstrated his pure manhood as it was intended to be.

He shall stand alone:

He was never without his Father and he chose twelve to be with him. Even out of those twelve he had three to whom he was even closer.

Jesus did not fit the mold of the "American Male Creed" but neither was he a weakling and effeminate as some would like to portray him. He demonstrated strength, leadership, the ability to deal with hostility, and endured the cruelty of the scourging, and the pain and agony of the cross.

Neil Hamilton, also discusses this concept in his book, Maturing in the Christian Faith. He understands the Holy Spirit to be the feminine side of God. His hypothesis is that if people are to become mature in their faith it will be necessary for them to experience both the masculine and feminine sides of their personalities. He states:

The more we learn about maturing in adulthood, the more we come to realize that all of us, whether

physically male or female, have the capacity to exercise both masculine and feminine traits.¹³

According to Hamilton, those feminine traits are:

(The) receptive, passive, self-effacing, care-receiving capacity in all of us that contrasts with the initiating, aggressive, self-assertive, self-sufficient traits we associate with the masculine dimension.¹⁴

There is a danger if a man only takes the first Journey of John, the beloved. He may become too feminine, exhibiting such traits as dependence, cloying, and the preoccupation with the establishment and maintenance of his home life. Rohr declares that, "when men only take the first journey they lose any kind of focus or determination or self-confidence or inner authority."¹⁵ Legitimizing the journey of John the beloved has resulted in the accusations that the church has become feminized.

Journey of John the Baptist

If a man embarks only on the journey of John the Beloved he will find himself unfulfilled and frustrated. It is, therefore, necessary for men to take a second journey

¹³Hamilton, p. 97.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Rohr, t. 1.

into the deep masculine. The second journey is that of John the Baptist. It is best pictured as a man who lives alone in the desert, lonely, and driven. He is compelled to set goals and establish direction for his life. Many of the characteristics which Father Rohr believes will surface during the spiritual journey into the deep masculine may at times appear contradictory to those qualities acquired on the first journey of John, the beloved. As a result if the second journey is taken first, the negative masculine will surface. Father Rohr states that in the second journey for men, the journey of John the Baptist, there are seven qualities of masculine energy which men need to develop and utilize as they progress. The success of the second journey depends upon men fostering these masculine qualities.

The Quality of Clarity and Reason

The first is respect for clarity and reason. Rohr, however, warns that men have over-identified with this characteristic. He holds that men need to become more aware of the right side of their brains, the emotional aspects of their personalities, if they want to get in touch with their own spirituality. His fear is that the church has become too much like the business which men execute and with which they have dealings daily. Men need to see the church as a separate entity not as an extension of their business world.

The Quality of Authority

The second masculine energy is that of authority. It must be a tamed, focussed, and compassionate authority. This form of masculine energy is work-oriented, thing-oriented, and service-oriented. Danger is possible when this energy is overemphasized resulting in a much too goal-oriented organization. The right balance, however, can bring the church into dynamic outreach rather than just the narcissistic behavior often found in the church.

The Quality of Community

The third trait is very similar to the second trait. Masculine energy is a positive power for the sake of the community. The feminine nature is basically concerned about its own home and its contents. The masculine energy must be concerned about the bigger world. The feminine energy gives the home its stability and depth which grounds and roots it. The masculine energy says the individual must take responsibility for what is happening in the world and must make it better for the future generations. If the church functions only in the feminine at this point it will only be concerned with the nurture and security of itself. As the masculine is developed the church will see itself more as an agent of change for the hurting world.

The Quality of Conviction

Fourthly, the masculine energy has a sense of conviction about it. It is a risk-taking energy rather than just a goal-oriented energy. By risk-taking, Rohr means, the individual is responsible for drawing his personality out from the center. The catalyst for drawing upon inner strength is centered in a deep sense of principle, conviction, and of truth. The church needs to see itself as having a principle and speaking forth the truth to a deceived world.

The Quality of Creativity

The fifth quality of masculine energy is that of being a co-creator. Building the kingdom of God is being involved in the creating of life. A man must sense his sonship with the Father in order to take on the co-creator energy. One of the basic qualities which nurtures human existence is creating. As the church takes part in establishing the kingdom of God on earth, it will experience a predominantly masculine energy.

The Quality of Assertiveness

The sixth quality is that of the ability to attack. If the church always nurtures it will consist of a flabby people incapable of sacrifice, discernment, and direction. The church has a tendency to nurture itself to flabbiness.

The masculine energy necessitates sacrifice and outreach. In his book, Unfinished Business: How A Man Can Make Peace With His Past, Dr. Donald Joy expands on why men have so little to do with the church.

It is clear why many men have little to do with "silk and satin" churches today. They have to park their masculinity at the door, and nothing "violent" has been announced or grasped in many congregations for years...men need involvement where there is some truth to stick by.¹⁶

Encouraging the masculine journey of John the Baptist would cause men to take a stance.

The Quality of Independence

The final quality of masculine energy is that of being self-possessed, a quality of aloneness. Men must be able to stand apart from the dominant consciousness. They should be able to stand alone and deal with their thoughts, fears, and loneliness as John the Baptist did. The masculine nature of being self-possessed forces the church to take a holy stance and speak prophetically to the world.¹⁷

Rohr believes that we do not have male spirituality because men do not know how to motivate themselves

¹⁶Donald Joy, Unfinished Business: How A Man Can Make Peace With His Past (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989), p. 173.

¹⁷Rohr, t. 1.

intrinsically. They need something from the outside to kick them, to reward them, and to get them going.¹⁸ This is precisely the reason that men need the feminine characteristics to work as a catalyst within to keep them progressing in their spirituality.

Another aid in assisting men to develop spiritually is the fellowship of other men. Rohr says,

men will find all sorts of reasons to mutually affirm one another, and mutually pat one another on the back and tell one another how great they are, try to mutually father or brother one another. That is why so many men become involved in sports and other exclusively male activities.¹⁹

Perry Garfinkle, in his book, In A Man's World, believes that every man has a sense of wanting to be with other men. He stresses this point when he says,

Almost every man can recall a time among men- celebrating a sports victory, savoring a business coup, reminiscing with college buddies, even fighting wars together- in which a sense of male comradery, seemed so strong and so profound that to explain it, would diminish its meaning and

¹⁸Ibid..

¹⁹Ibid..

impact. Our bonds come through doing together; we have not yet learned about being together.²⁰

In most men there is a sense of wanting to be 'with the boys'. The majority, however, do not have intimate male friendships. Joseph Pleck, a psychologist and director of Male Role Program at Wellesley College, has done extensive research into men and their roles. In his book, Men and Masculinity, he provides the following as one of the major reasons for the fact that men do not have close relationships with other men.

One reason lies in the masculine need for getting ahead. It is in the eyes of other men that we are judged to be a success or a failure. Most of us are in real or imagined competition with other men for the rewards society offers...In most everything we do, male culture encourages us to compare ourselves with other men, and see them as a standard showing what we should be able to do. No wonder we are so uneasy with men.²¹

Because of this competitive nature it is extremely difficult for men to experience the feminine journey of John, the beloved. A man's need for dominance in a relationship is obviously one of the reasons that men fear and avoid

²⁰Garfinkle, p. 3.

²¹Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer, eds., Men and Masculinity (Englefield, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974), p. 79.

intimacy with each other. Dr. Robert Goleman states, Men palling around with each other often gives a pseudo-intimacy. Shooting the rapids on a raft is not the same as acknowledging how often they are impotent, or don't even enjoy sex at all. It's quite difficult for most men to shed their defensive layers and be as intimate as women say they want them to be. A woman may feel hurt when a man doesn't feel comfortable telling a woman about his weakness, or confessing the ambitions he fears he'll never achieve.²²

The challenge, therefore, in developing an effective men's study is reaching a balance between a man's competitive nature and the need for intimacy.

There are many areas where growth needs to take place in helping men accept their masculinity. There are three main beginning points. First, I believe, men must get past the fear of expressing feelings. Herb Goldberg states it well when he says:

Today's man is a product of massive defensive operations against feelings. These defenses are geared to protect him for survival's sake by transforming the host of powerful, socially taboo impulses, needs and feelings into acceptable male

²²Goleman, p. c.5.

behavior. To survive and contain these repressed feelings he must detach himself increasingly from all relationships that might stimulate or provoke him into an uncontrollable response. He is comfortable primarily in denial. 'I don't need you.', 'I'm not angry,' 'I don't feel like crying,' and other such denials of his feelings. Because feelings are not permitted free expression the male lives in constant reaction against himself. What he is on the outside is a facade, a defense against what is really on the inside. He controls himself by denying himself.²³

Men have buried their emotions to the point that they are unable to share themselves with anyone. Men need to develop a close friendship with at least one other male. This leads to the second fear that men must overcome.

Secondly, men must deal with the fear of being with other men and the fear of touching a male without sexual overtones. Don Kimberlin in his article, "Hugs, Handshakes, and the Value of Expressing Love," makes the statement, "Let us not be afraid to care for one another by an appropriate touch, hug, or warm handshake."²⁴ In addition, Herb Goldberg, explains men's fear of intimacy with one another:

²³Goldberg, p. 58.

²⁴Don Kimberlin, "Hugs and Handshakes: The value of Expressing Love," HIS, March 1981, p. 15.

The need to preserve his masculine image prevents him from being transparent with other men and revealing vulnerabilities and weakness.

Consequently when two men are together, the combination of underlying competitiveness, fear of homosexuality, as well as the need to maintain a masculine image, allows very little safe territory for involvement. It only leaves room for impersonal discussion on topics such as automobiles, sports, politics, and business.²⁵

Men seldom are able to talk to other men about father and son relationships, insecurities in their sexuality, and fears and their careers. As a result of the male fear to draw close to anyone and share his intimate feelings he is forced to spend many hours frustrated because of his inability to ask for help.

Thirdly, men must also be forced to deal with their fear of asking for help, especially in the area of their spiritual formation. It is not unusual to find a man struggling over a problem, or a task hoping to stumble onto the solution rather than asking for help. The male fear of being out-performed by another male will often prevent him from seeking help or advice. A recent study by the National United Methodist Men's Group has found men grow better in

²⁵Goldberg, pp. 52-53.

all-male groups where there is some degree of accountability.²⁶ Dr. Joy affirms this by saying: "I am reporting how lightly structured but intentional support networks are a magnet for men who want to be fully whole, and fully alive and fully male."²⁷

Men in the Church

In his article called, "Where Are All The Men?" Noel Becchetti, the promotion manager for HIS magazine, states:

The major reason it is difficult for men to hear the gospel message is that the message itself has been 'feminized'. The aspects of God that we tend to emphasize in modern evangelism are qualities traditionally identified as feminine: God's emotional love, tenderness, and mercy; His desire to be close to us and have a personal relationship with us.²⁸

This statement is without a doubt closely related to the fact that men are indeed a minority in most churches across

²⁶"Increase in United Methodist Men's Groups", United Methodist Reporter, 1988, p. 4.

²⁷Joy, Unfinished Business: How A Man Can Make Peace With His Past, p.52.

²⁸Noel Becchetti, "Where Are All The Men?" HIS, March 1981, p. 1.

America. Statistics show that only thirty-five percent of the male population will be found in a church on a given Sunday.²⁹ Dr. Donald Joy, a professor of Christian Education at Asbury Theological Seminary, found in one of his research projects that the "typical child in a Sunday School would have only a four percent chance of having a male Sunday School teacher before the age of ten."³⁰ If a person was asked to list things that come to mind when they think of the church, many of the images that would surface could be characterized as feminine traits. The church stresses a sense of community associated with a bond of love. This emphasis could easily be a hinderance to men who have not dealt with or accepted the feminine side of their personality. The church needs to also emphasize the masculine aspects of the church such as outreach ministry and functioning as a change-agent. If the church is indeed stressing the feminine side of God resulting in a low percentage of men in visible positions of church leadership, especially Sunday School, the obvious results will be the feminizing of the church. Could it be that the church has created a religious atmosphere that is spiritually castrating to most men? They simply are unable to identify

²⁹Cliff Stabler, "Reaching Men; the Church's Overlooked Minority.", Leadership, Fall 1983, p. 125.

³⁰Donald Joy, "Is the Church Feminized?", Challenge, July/August 1983.

with the sugary-God image that they see and they are not sure that God can identify with them. If this is true then Father Rohr's theory of the second journey into the deep masculine must be encouraged in the lives of the men of the church.

Gordon Dalbey's book, Healing the Masculine Soul further develops the concept of the second journey into the deep masculine. In his chapter on why men are not in church he states the following in reference to Dr. Donald Joy's article in Challenge to Evangelism.

Specifically, Joy calls men to "an orientation toward perpetual repentance for our unbridled toughness, our tendency to control everything, our chauvinism, our frightening impatience with our children, our tendency to pride and arrogance." He concludes: For most of us, that kind of daily surrender is the key to honesty in all relationships, and it comes at a high price. Interestingly enough, these tamed men love the parts they contribute to their homes by active parenting. And healthy males and healthy females are what will make Lyle Schaller's fears of the feminized church go away. Men whose hearts are turned toward their children will be transforming our churches, doing the work of the Bridegroom who gives his life for his Bride-the Church.

Certainly, Joy offers an attractive vision. We all want to see more psychologically healthy males in our society. Anyone who has ever been a boy wants to see more fathers willing to show love and care for their sons. But just because a man is psychologically healthy and a caring father does not mean he will go to a church, much less be willing to work at "transforming" it. We simply have no guarantee that today's caring father will not be out fishing or playing ball with his son on Sunday morning instead of taking him to church. Something about Joy's image of the "tamed" male hints of one-sidedness. It's entirely focussed on men's becoming more feminized in outlook and behavior. Certainly, to the extent that we men have scorned such "feminine" virtues as child-nurturing, we need to become more feminized. But this is nothing new; we have been hearing about it since the sexual revolution of the sixties, and heeding it to a surprising degree. The question is not whether men should be "tamed," for any unbridled lack of discipline ultimately harms others and keeps one from accomplishment in one's own life. The question, rather, is "tamed by whom, and to what order?" The current lack of male participation in our churches seems clear

testimony that men will not be tamed by a program based exclusively upon feminine virtues.³¹

I believe that Dalbey has misinterpreted Joy. Joy is not one-sided. I believe that Joy is saying we need to eliminate the "macho" male but we still need men in the church who are tough and gentle. I believe, however, Dalbey's statement at the end of the paragraph is correct in that we need programs that stress both the masculine and the feminine sides of one's personalities. This is exactly what Father Richard Rohr is stating when he declares that men need a second journey into the deep masculine.

Dalbey, further states:

The church has done much over the century to encourage men to pursue feminine virtues. But we have not sought and portrayed Christ-centered ways to pursue masculine virtues. It is not enough for Christians to portray weakness and tenderness as acceptable in men. He must also portray the manly strength and firmness that is in God. We must demonstrate that weakness confessed and submitted to the Living God through Jesus Christ ultimately hugs the very masculine strength for which men hunger: toughness in the face of opposition, decisiveness in the face of uncertainty, and

³¹Gordon Dalbey, Healing the Masculine Soul (Waco: Word Books, 1988), pp. 178-179.

saving power in the face of danger. The church when it ignores or even scorns such masculine values must ultimately lose all men and become fully feminized.³²

Betty Friedan, a feminist, in her book, The Second Stage, refers to the need for a second journey for women. It is her proposition that women must not only journey to the masculine but must also journey back into the deep feminine, or the 'new feminist' frontier. She cites many examples in the first chapter of her book of women who have journeyed into the masculine only to discover anger instead of fulfillment. She said,

There is a lot of good but there is something telling us that this isn't the whole picture.

There has got to be a second journey back into the deep feminine.³³

Ms. Friedan has found women who have had all the masculine journey and remained unfulfilled. As a result they desire a second journey into what can be called the deep feminine, experiencing the home, children, and family. This is a complete reversal of her theory of feminism since writing The Feminine Mystique in 1963.

³²Ibid., p. 180.

³³Betty Friedan, The Second Stage (New York: Summit Books, 1981), p. 83.

Project Focus

It is into this very complex situation that this project/dissertation comes into existence. The key issue is, what could be done in the lives of the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church to enable them to deal with their maleness as related to spiritual formation. The developmentalists have clearly demonstrated that there are stages in faith development and there are stages in human development thus revealing the complexity of masculinity and spiritual development. If men are enabled to understand their masculinity and given a degree of accountability to one another through an intentional discipleship intervention program they will grow spiritually. Joy, again stresses the importance for having intentional agenda when he says:

Many men are dying on the vine and would leap at the opportunity for in intentional support group. Think of what they face: career decisions, marital questions, parenting problems, coping with seductions of culture, job frustrations, and deeper personal integrity issues. When men meet in bars, they tell stories, make confessions, laugh and cry, bump, slap, and hug each other-all gestures denoting deep needs to establish relationship with other men.³⁴

³⁴Ibid., p. 181.

Joy, however, points out that the missing ingredient when men meet in bars is that of an intentional agenda.

Thus, the development of a study and fellowship group was established to enable the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church to facilitate their spiritual growth and to gain an understanding of their maleness as God intended it to be.

CHAPTER 2

The Project

The Bellville United Methodist Church is located in a small town of 1,200 people in Bellville, Ohio. The church was founded in 1814 and is one of six churches within the town limits. Theologically, the church is evangelical with some charismatic involvement. The membership is 120 with an average attendance of 85-90 on Sunday mornings.

The church consists of a wide range of adults from singles to newly weds to senior citizens. The average age of the church is forty-five. The church has an active laity who are involved in ministry as well as being innovative, enthusiastic, and supportive of the pastoral leadership. Ministry to all age levels had been taking place as this program began. A Bible study specifically for women assisting them in dealing with issues related to their gender as well as a study for couples were both well established. Prior to the matriculation of this men's study there was no formal men's group within the church. The men would periodically meet for some active ministry such as helping to cut wood for one another, painting a house, or putting on a new roof. As stated earlier in chapter one, when the lay leaders and I attended our yearly retreat we decided that there was a need for the men of the church to

meet on a regular basis for study and fellowship.

At the onset of this program there were twenty-three males in the Sunday morning worship, who attended weekly. A letter was mailed to each of the men three weeks prior to matriculation. (The letter may be found in the appendix, page 3). Fourteen of the men responded favorably. Three of these fourteen had to drop out because of changes in their work schedules. One man joined the group three weeks into the program. The ages of the men ranged from twenty-seven to seventy-nine with the average age being forty-five. Seven of the twelve held some form of leadership position in the church. One of the twelve had just been attending the church for about a month but all the others had been established for some time in the church. Two of the group had college degrees. The occupations of the group varied widely and are as follows: two mailmen, a telephone engineer, a grocery store stocker, a packaging engineer, two accountants, a police officer, a coon light builder, a factory worker, an odds and ends man, and a retired service station manager. The make-up of this group is typical of the other men of the church.

The program was developed so that it might be used in a twelve week Sunday school quarter. I believe, however, that although this could be done during the Sunday school hour, the program provides more satisfactory results if the study is done when time will not be a factor. Icebreakers,

sharing and prayer time would almost have to be eliminated in order to accommodate a forty-five minute to one hour time span. Generally speaking, this group met for a one and a half hour time span. This allowed enough time to complete the lesson, and ample time for discussion and group prayer.

Each evening always began with refreshments which were prepared to be ready when the men arrived. The refreshments had a three-fold purpose. The first reason for this activity was to welcome them and let them know that I was glad that they were there. Secondly, the refreshments promoted fellowship as the men conversed with each other. Thirdly, the refreshment time allowed the men to get surface talk about superficial things like weather, sports, cars, and jobs out of the way.

Three meals were served during the twelve week program, on the first week, the sixth week, and the last week. Like the refreshments the meals provided extra fellowship. It was my intention that the meals might be an example for the men to follow in taking the initiative to periodically fellowship with other men. If this program was done during the Sunday school hour the supper meal could be replaced with breakfast.

After refreshments and about ten minutes of fellowship we would proceed to some form of icebreaker. The icebreakers were usually incorporated into some aspect of the evening lesson. The main purpose behind the icebreaker

was to promote sharing among the men about experiences in their lives, fears, feelings, about people who have influenced them, and even, when appropriate, about personal shortcomings. At times the icebreakers were of a serious nature and at other times the group would laugh the whole way through the icebreaker. The icebreaker usually lasted from five to ten minutes. There were times, however, that the men would keep sharing and this aspect of the evening lesson might be slightly extended. Dr. Joy believes that men respond well to stories.

Men must be prompted to respond to these questions and most agenda items with "stories". The stories need to be descriptive: populated with people who have names, of quoting actual words spoken, and recreating action visibly. The story form is crucial because it forces men to open up.³⁵

During the icebreakers the men were often sharing their "stories" thus becoming a part of the lesson.

At the end of the second lesson the participants were asked to write down their first three choices for a prayer partner from the group. On the third evening I assigned prayer partners. The purpose behind the prayer partner concept is basically for encouragement in prayer. There were, however, a couple of motives behind having prayer

³⁵Ibid., p. 185.

partners. Men find it difficult to ask for help, but when they have to learn to share prayer concerns they are learning to share needs in their lives. Another reason for this type of activity was for the promotion of building intimacy. As two people share together what is happening in their lives, as well as their prayer concerns, intimacy and openness are obvious developments. Finally, this made it easier for those in the group who are more introverted and could not share requests in a large group to make their prayer needs known. Periodically during the twelve weeks the task on the devotional sheets would require the men to do an exercise with their prayer partners.

Devotional sheets were devised to prepare the men spiritually for the next week's lesson and to encourage and develop, if needed, a consistent daily quiet time. Each devotional sheet had a daily scripture reading and some form of task to help encourage the development of the specifics of that lesson. (These weekly sheets can be found at the end of each lesson.)

A pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire were developed in order to determine the spiritual maturity of the men prior to the study and how effective the study was for each of the participants. The pre-questionnaire was administered on the first meeting. An explanation was given stating that this was necessary for my research in the area of men and their spiritual formation. The questionnaires

were kept anonymous. The post-questionnaire was given to the men three weeks after completing the twelve week study. These were the exact same questions as the pre-questionnaire except in a different order and on different colored paper. (The pre and post-questionnaires may be found in the appendix.) I used different paper and rearranged the order of the questions so that the men would not feel like they were just repeating an exercise.

Some of the participants had met with me for a Bible study for a year prior to the development of this program. As this dissertation/project came into existence a congregation reflection group consisting of five of the men from the previous group was formed. The congregation reflection group met with me monthly for a year discussing what lessons would be most helpful for the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church and what activities would be effective in developing their spiritual formation.

There was definite intention within each aspect of the meetings as previously discussed. Even the order of the lessons was designed with some specific intent. The lessons were constructed to build upon one another. The participants first needed to feel welcomed and loved as they began the study and they needed to understand the importance of intimate male friendships. As the men began to feel they could openly share, prayer partnerships were created to enhance that sharing. A teaching on spiritual

accountability followed encouraging the men to assist one another in their spiritual formation and to seek a spiritual director. This could not be done unless first they saw the importance of developing deep friendships with other men. As these dynamics began to surface in the group they proceeded to the next lesson which assisted the men in removing, or at least identifying, the mask that they most often hide behind. As that lesson aided them in being vulnerable with one another they were able to move into the next lesson on listening and empathy. The lesson was prepared to assist them in really listening and feeling for their friend or spouse. By this point in the program the men were beginning to open up and share more. This was helpful as they entered the seventh and eighth weeks. These lessons focussed their attention upon the fruits of the Spirit. Most of these fruits appear to be contrary to the world's definition of masculinity. It was necessary, therefore, to provide a safe environment for the men to openly discuss the development of spiritual fruit in their lives. As the two week discussion on the fruit of the Spirit developed, the men were then able to openly discuss the concept of masculine and feminine journeys and the necessity of embarking on those journeys. These concepts were the foundation of the following lessons. As these discussions unfolded, the transition into the next lesson on being godly men was made more easily. As the men understood

the intent of the Creator then the principles of disciplines of spiritual formation became important to them in becoming all that God would want them to be. Only as the men began to understand who they were would they be ready to openly discuss sharing their faith with others which was the purpose behind the eleventh week's lesson. The final teaching was emphasizing that all of them, no matter how different they seemed to be, were important in the life of the church. A more detailed synopsis follows detailing the dynamics of each of the twelve lessons.

Week One: Introduction to the American Male

This meeting began with a fellowship meal. Following the meal I welcomed the group and explained the whole twelve week program. Weekly schedules were distributed to each of the participants complete with a notebook for keeping notes and their devotional sheets.

The lesson's aim was to demonstrate to the participants that men are generally weak in developing their spiritual formation.

Each of the men was given a Men's Questionnaire which was used to determine the beginning point of the men's spiritual formation and to evaluate the effectiveness of the entire program. (Men's Questionnaire is found in the appendix after lesson one.)

The lesson began with an icebreaker in which the men shared on three specific types of incidents. First, the greatest time they ever had with a friend; or secondly, they were to describe the last time they were with their closest friend; or thirdly, they had to describe their favorite trait in their friend. Each of the participants then completed the "Friendship Inventory" (found at the end of lesson one in the appendix). This inventory came from David Smith's book, The Friendless American Male, which was the foundation for the first three lessons. The inventory was used to assist the men in evaluating their present friendships or lack of friendships with other men.

Discussion then focussed around what restricts men from developing deep, intimate friendships with other men. This discussion caused the men to examine their emotions or more importantly their fear of revealing those emotions, especially to other men. The discussion then progressed to the reasons why men get involved in sports and all-male clubs in order to have fellowship and avoid loneliness. The men evaluated the influence that their competitive nature contributes to hindering close friendships with other men. A man's inability to ask for help was also discussed in relationship to friendships. Finally, the deliberation narrowed in on how easy it is for men to get their priorities out of order thus neglecting their spiritual formation. Some time was then spent on getting the men to

discuss what the Friendship Inventory revealed about their friendships.

In preparation for the next week the following scriptures were read: First Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42. These passages dealt with the friendship between David and Jonathan. Each of the men was given their Male Spiritual Formation Devotional Sheets to use during the next week. The lesson closed with a prayer circle in which prayer concerns were shared and the men held hands and prayed.

Week Two: David and Jonathan

This lesson began with an icebreaker in which the men had to share facts about their lives which no one in the group knew.

The aim of this lesson was to define biblical friendship by comparing the participants' close friendships with the friendship between David and Jonathan. David Smith in his book, The Friendless American Male, gives six principles for developing a solid biblical friendship. During this lesson the participants would discover and discuss the first three of those principles.

The first principle was the need for the friendship to be God centered. Paul's instruction to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers became an instrumental evaluating point of discussion. This was found in Second Corinthians 6:14-17. These verses were employed as a point of

comparison as the men examined their relevancy to developing friendships. During this lesson the men would refer to their Friendship Inventory to evaluate their own friendships in relationship to these biblical principles.

The second principle applied from Smith's book is the formation of a covenant. First, the definition of covenant had to be understood in order to comprehend the covenant between David and Jonathan. Some deliberation was given to such covenants and rituals as: marriage, baptisms, church membership, and even club memberships.

The third principle was that friendship entails a sense of faithfulness. The worldly philosophy, "laugh and the world laughs with you- cry and you cry alone," was evaluated in light of Romans 12:9-21. The Romans' passage detailed a list of qualities or behaviors by which all Christians ought to be living, including men.

The lesson concluded with the conversation focussing on the importance of vulnerability in a friendship. This was an introduction to asking the men to write down their first three choices for a prayer partner from this group of men. Each of the men would be assigned a prayer partner the next week. The lesson closed with a time of prayer in a prayer circle. Each of the men was given the opportunity to share any requests and or to share any answers from last week's prayer time.

Week Three: David and Jonathan, continued

This lesson was a continuation from the previous week. During the icebreaker, each of the participants described his closest childhood friend along with some of his childish antics like becoming blood-brothers.

After reviewing the first three principles of biblical friendship the group's discussion focussed on the fourth principle that there must be some social involvement in friendship. The men then discussed reasons for men's general lack of willingness to form lasting commitments to a community or to an individual. Jesus' relationship with the disciples found in John 15:9-17 and other passages which the men shared was then discussed. Jesus' example of friendship as he ate with, prayed with, and even had three out of the twelve as his closest friends was compared to the men's need for close, intimate friendships. The importance of spending time with one another meant that the opportunities to share one's dreams, fears, hopes, pains, and joy would be increased as time spent together was increased.

The fifth principle, according to Smith, was the importance of speaking the truth to one another. This was compared to Louis Evan's covenant of openness found in his book, Covenant to Care. Proverbs 21:17 which speaks of iron sharpening iron was then compared in relationship to friendships.

The teaching then focussed around the final principle

of biblical friendship which is that of respect. This was all compared with David and Jonathan's relationship and Philippians 2:3 which admonishes one to consider others better than oneself.

Prayer partners were assigned and devotional sheets distributed before going to the closing prayer circle.

Week Four: Accountability

This evening's meeting began as the men shared the ways in which they were held accountable for their actions and activities in their places of employment.

The lesson aim was for the participants to see the importance of developing a relationship with a spiritual director or soul friend. The first principle which had to be brought forth was the definition of the term "soul friend" or spiritual director. The discussion then focussed around the reasons why spiritual directors are needed and the people who had helped each of the participants be accountable for their spiritual growth.

This was all emphasized in studying the passage from Exodus 18 which revealed Moses' soul friend, Jethro, his father-in-law. Jethro listen, ate with, observed, and then corrected Moses in his handling of the Israelites. A soul friend speaks the truth but only after he has earned the right. This principle was discussed in relationship to our finding and being soul friends.

The evening concluded with a teaching about self-disclosure. Each of the participants were given a Self-disclosure sheet to use with his prayer partner. This exercise was developed to help build intimacy and truthfulness with one another. Each participant was also given his devotional sheet.

The lesson ended with a time of prayer. One of the goals of the prayer times was to encourage the men to share their struggles and difficulties with one another. For those who were still finding it difficult to even share a request there was always an opportunity provided to ask for prayer for silent requests.

Week Five: Removing Our Masks

Creativity needs to be used in describing the icebreaker for week five's lesson on Removing Our Masks. Each of the men was asked to make the mask which he most often hides behind so that people will not see what is going on in the depths of his being. A little more time than usual is needed for this icebreaker. After they had made their masks the lesson proceeded to a discussion of Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. This passage revealed the need for mutual effort, support, encouragement, and strength. Sharing with one another and defining the term fellowship were additional elements which arose from the correlation of the truths found in Ecclesiastes. The participants came to

the realization that they needed to get in touch with and feel one another's hurts, to encourage one another and to help one another through a healing process.

An excerpt from Robert Ball's book, Why Can't I Tell You Who I Really Am? revealed to the group that people do not know who we actually are. We then deliberated on the types of masks which men often hide behind like: "I'm tough mask"; the "I'm holy mask"; the "I'm able to handle the pain and pressure mask"; or the "I'm cool or I got it all together mask". The participants revealed how from time to time they have hidden behind each of those masks. Each of the participants then had the opportunity to reveal the mask which they had made during the icebreaker.

The discussion then turned to the passage from Numbers 35:6-15 in which God instructed the Israelites to build six cities of refuge. Along with the passage of scripture, an excerpt from Chuck Swindoll's book, Dropping Your Guard gave additional insight to the discussion on the need for the church and more specifically this men's group to be a place of refuge where each of the participants could "remove their masks" and be themselves.

During the prayer time that night the group centered in on specific prayer requests for the ability and courage to remove their masks and help for this group in becoming a refuge city.

Each of the participants was given his devotional sheets.

Week Six: Listening Men

This lesson began with an icebreaker of completing the statements in which the participants revealed relational and listening skills. This lesson builds off the previous lesson according to the premise that in order to be cities of refuge to one another we need to know how to listen and be empathetic. The aim of this lesson was to sharpen listening skills and empathy levels in the participants.

The lesson began with the group defining communication and evaluating their listening skills. The men used a "How would you describe yourself as a listener" sheet adapted from Norman Wright's book, Communication-Key to Your Marriage in order to define personal strengths and weaknesses in this area. (Found in the appendix after lesson six.) Following this worksheet experience, the group read a series of scriptures dealing with listening. The scriptures were further enhanced by an excerpt from the book, Tough and Tender by Joyce Landorf which details seven listening skills for marriages which are also relevant for friendships. The group then sang the hymn, "Blest Be The Tie" and discussed the richness of the words like: binds, comforts, sorrows, mutual woes, mutual burdens bear, flow of

sympathizing tear, and when apart there is pain. Scripture references were read which dealt with the need for this type fellowship in the church. In order for these passages to be reflected in the lives of the participants, empathy must be learned and developed.

This lesson concluded with a prayer time in which the men were encouraged to share their burdens and pains.

Week Seven: Fruitful Men

As this week's icebreaker the participants evaluated the maturation of the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Each of the participants was to place a red sticker beside the two fruits easiest for them to demonstrate and two blue stickers beside the two most difficult fruits to demonstrate on a poster which was displayed in front of the group.

The lesson aim was to assist the men to see the importance of developing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives even though at times such action may seem contrary to the secular view of masculinity. This lesson dealt specifically with the fruits of love, joy, peace, and patience.

An understanding of the importance of the fruit and the presence of the Gardener in their lives was the first truth for the group to assimilate. The discussion then proceeded with an analysis of each of the characteristics or attributes commonly known as the fruit of the Spirit. The

men revealed the manner in which they express their love to their wives, family, and friends. Each of the participants had the opportunity to talk about the fruit of love as they see it in their lives.

The fruit of joy was the second fruit of the Spirit examined. The difference between joy and happiness was a key principle in understanding the definition of joy. Joy is not based on circumstances or events. It comes from a living relationship with God. Scriptures related to the fruit of joy were read and analyzed.

The third fruit of the Spirit about which the men talked during this lesson was the fruit of peace. The discussion focussed on scripture from John 15:18-21 in which Jesus prophesied that a difficult time would come for the disciples. Another key scripture for this lesson was Romans 8:35-39 where Paul says that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. The group shared how God has brought peace during difficult times in their lives.

The last fruit of the Spirit discussed during this lesson was the fruit of patience. According to the icebreaker this was the most difficult fruit of the Spirit for the men to express. This part of the lesson focussed first on the definition of patience as found in the scriptures. The men discussed patience in terms of long-suffering under mistreatment, tolerating those who try to intentionally arouse one's anger, tolerance of shortcomings

of others, one's patience in waiting on God, and finally persevering through hardships.

Following the lesson portion of the meeting an explanation on the devotional sheets was given. The sheets were in the form of a booklet called, "Becoming Fruitful Men" in which there was a devotional sheet for each of the nine fruits of the Spirit. Over the next two weeks the participants were instructed to use the devotional sheets which corresponded to the two fruits of the Spirit they had marked as their most difficult. Each of the devotional sheets contained an exercise for the individual to complete in furthering the development of that particular fruit.

The lesson concluded as the men shared in the prayer circle.

Week Eight: Fruitful Men, continued

This lesson was a continuation of the previous lesson on developing the fruit of the Spirit. Each of the men discussed a particular fruit of the Spirit as they saw it developing in their lives during the time of the icebreaker. This lesson focussed on the fruits of gentleness, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control.

As the lesson began the group focussed on the reasons for which the fruit of gentleness is seldom sought, especially by men. It is difficult to see manliness and gentleness in the same context since most of maleness has

been defined by the secular world. A passage from Isaiah 40 aided the group in revealing the gentleness in the lives of the participants. This was also compared with New Testament scriptures that clearly demonstrate gentleness to be one aspect of the Christian life regardless of one's gender.

The fruit of goodness was next discussed by the group. One specific aspect of this characteristic which was emphasized is that good works should flow naturally from a fruitful person. The group then discussed what type of example they were for their families in exhibiting this trait, particularly the children.

The fruit of kindness is often found to be in direct conflict with the world's definition of maleness. The group discussed what they believed the secular world expected of them as men. Each of the participants had an opportunity to share when they experienced kindness in a special way. Then each person wrote on a slip of paper a kind deed that they would like someone to do for them. There were no names on these so no one was identified in a threatening way. This exercise, however, clearly demonstrated to the group how easy it is to do a kind act towards another. Kindness is redeeming others' lives in small but meaningful ways.

The group then proceeded on to the fruit of faithfulness. They first observed the faithfulness of God as revealed in the scriptures. Some time was spent evaluating the men's faithfulness in their places of

employment and in their service to the church. One element of determining individual faithfulness was brought forth as the men examined how they measured up against their membership vows in the United Methodist Church.

The final fruit for discussion was the fruit of self-control. This was also one of the top characteristics which the men listed during week seven that was most difficult to express. This lesson focussed on being men "under authority" of God. The participants examined what it meant to be under the Lordship of Christ as well as examining their present relationship to Christ.

The group then discussed the fact that if they do not let the fruit of the Spirit be developed in their lives then they will be controlled by the works of the flesh found in Galatians 5:19-21.

Devotional sheets were distributed to each of the participants. After the prayer time the group had a footwashing service. This could be optional, however, I felt that it was a very explicit way to express humility, and the fruit of gentleness. Directions on how the service was performed are found on the last page of lesson eight in the appendix.

Week Nine: The Journeys of the Johns

The aim of this lesson was to help the men see that they have a masculine and feminine side to their

personalities. A complete the statement icebreaker was utilized to assist the men in discussing such topics as: "the hardest thing about being a male is"; "the most important thing I learned from my mother was"; "I learned how to be a man from"; "I remember my father as". (The complete list is found at the end of the lesson nine in the appendix.)

The group was then divided into two groups and given a set of scriptures to read along with the assignment of writing a character sketch of either John the beloved or John the Baptist. Their summaries were used later in the lesson.

The participants then addressed the changes that are taking place in America in relationship to defining masculinity and femininity. The men were each given the opportunity to share who taught them about what it was to be a man. An introduction was given to explain the concept of humanity having both masculine and feminine sides to their personalities. Father Richard Rohr's concept of the two journeys was discussed with the group allowing plenty of time to ask questions. This was then discussed in relationship to the changes that are taking place in the culture concerning masculinity and femininity. The men discussed the role their fathers assumed in their infant through pre-school years. The younger men shared how they have been more involved in the care of their own children

than their fathers had been. The nurturing, caring or feminine side of the personality is developed through relationships with significant women in the lives of each participant and this reflects the journey of John the beloved. The group then discussed Rohr's second journey, the journey of John the Baptist. The group examined the seven masculine qualities of that journey. Discussion focussed around what hinders us from taking either journey. These concepts were contrasted with the question, "Has the church become feminized?" A significant amount of time was needed to allow for questions.

The group time ended with prayer and devotional sheets were distributed to each of the participants.

Week Ten: Godly Men

The aim of this lesson was to emphasize the importance of developing spiritual disciplines in their lives. The goal of this meeting was to specifically evaluate three spiritual disciplines: study of God's Word, worship attendance, and prayer in the lives of the participants.

The icebreaker for this lesson began as the men read a passage of scripture. They were instructed to assume that it was specifically written to them from God. They had to then write a letter back to God in response to his instruction to them. The purpose for this icebreaker was two-fold. The first goal of this exercise was to introduce

them to a different way of reading and responding to scripture. Secondly, it was my intent to give them a trial experience in journaling.

The spiritual discipline of the study of God's Word focussed on reading scripture and discussing the role that God's Word plays in each of their lives. The men were given time to evaluate and discuss what specifically keeps them from studying the Word of God.

The second spiritual discipline to be examined was the role of worship in their lives. The lesson stressed the importance of both private and corporate worship. Isaiah 6 was discussed at length as a classic description of worship. Each of the participants was given the opportunity to share moments when they have been extremely close to God in worship.

The final spiritual discipline which was analyzed was prayer. They began by sharing a time when they felt exceptionally close to God in prayer or a time when they had felt abandoned by God when praying. The men were given the opportunity to ask questions about prayer. Following the discussion the group spent time in prayer together. Devotional sheets were given to each of the participants.

Week Eleven: Witnessing Men

The aim of this lesson was to assist the men in realizing the importance of personal evangelism. The

objective was to give them a tool from Joseph Aldrich's book, Life-Style Evangelism, to assist them in practical evangelism.

The icebreaker, a complete the statement exercise, consisted of statements like: "I would witness more if"; "the guys at work know that I am a Christian because"; "the reason I tell people why I go to church is"; and similar statements related to proclaiming one's faith.

In order for men to witness to other men they need a tool other than simply quoting scriptures. Life-style evangelism, I believe, is effective in reaching men and becomes a useful element of evangelism when properly applied.

The lesson first defined the different types of evangelism: proclamational evangelism, confrontational evangelism, and life-style or relational evangelism. An over-head projector was used for this lesson to show how the approach builds on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. The group then examined Maslow's hierarchy of five basic needs: physiological needs, safety and security needs, love and affection needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. The men discussed the importance of recognizing the present spiritual state of an individual in order to offer that person Christ. A list of scriptures was developed with each of Maslow's levels in mind. Aldrich's work contained a list of man's needs and God's solutions. The scriptures

reaffirmed God's solutions. (The complete list of scriptures and over-heads are found in the appendix after lesson eleven.) Time was allowed for discussion. During the prayer time at the end of the lesson each of the men shared with whom they would like to share the Gospel message. Each of the participants were given their daily devotional sheets.

Week Twelve: Men of the Church

Since this was the last meeting of this program the evening began with a fellowship meal and holy communion. This week's lesson focussed its attention on assisting the men in realizing their importance in the life of the Bellville United Methodist Church. The discussion centered around the twelve disciples and all of their obvious personality differences. The participants compared these differences to the differences between each of the men involved in the study. The personality or human weaknesses of the disciples were observed by examining a number of scriptures revealing their humanity. The men also read and shared about Acts 2:42. This scripture speaks of the life of the early church in study, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. The men discussed these four aspects and their importance and how they observed them in their own lives. The most profound revelation was how important their meeting together had become. They began to discuss continuing this

group after the completion of this program. The group closed with a time of prayer after discussing the future of this group.

It was with the anticipation that as each of the participants progressed through the program they would grow in their relationship with God and in their relationship as a community of believers. This growth would come through daily devotions and activities. Each of the men were encouraged to strengthen their relationship with God through deepening their times of prayer, scripture reading, and worship. Spiritual growth would also come through their moments of reflection during the icebreakers. As each of the men shared from their own stories, they learned to listen to one another, to care for each other, and to understand how similar they were to the other men. The intent of the prayer partnerships was to promote intimacy and growth as each of the partners had the opportunity to further their brother in his spiritual growth. Finally, each of the teachings was constructed to assist the men in understanding their masculinity in relationship to one another and God.

CHAPTER 3

Findings and Evaluations

Three weeks after the completion of the study the participants were given a post-questionnaire to assist in evaluating the program. (The post-questionnaire may be found in the appendix after lesson twelve.) There were some obvious changes in men's lives as one studies the questionnaires.

According to the answers to the first question which concerned daily scripture reading the pre-questionnaire revealed that only two of the twelve participants read the Bible every day. Upon completion of the program three of the twelve were reading the scriptures daily. Four of the men were reading the scriptures four to six days a week prior to the study and after the study that number increased to eight. When the program began five of the men were reading the Bible one to three days a week but on completion only one was in that category. One of the twelve began the program not reading the scripture. There was no one in the category at the end. These findings reveal that there was significant improvement in helping the participants increase their daily scripture reading.

The second question dealt with how often the participants asked other men questions about their lives.

This question related to the emphasis of the program in assisting them in taking active part in developing friendships with other men. Three of the participants revealed that they frequently asked other men questions about their lives in the pre-questionnaire and that number was unchanged in the post-questionnaire. Four of the twelve occasionally asked questions of other men prior to the study and that category improved to eight after the study. At the onset of the program three of the men seldom asked other men questions about their lives and the post-questionnaire revealed only one person remained in this category. According to the pre-questionnaire one of the participants never asked questions of other men while the post-questionnaire showed no one in this category. These statistics reveal that the participants were beginning to understand the importance of developing friendships with other men and taking an interest in their lives.

The third question dealt with their willingness to talk about Christ and the Bible with their friends. None of the men in the pre-questionnaire would talk about Christ and only if their friends were Christian. After the program, however, one did reveal he would do that. Prior to the study five of the men would only talk about Christ if the subject was brought up by their friend. That number dropped to four upon the completion of the study. Five of the participants rather than three as in the pre-questionnaire

revealed that they would find it now easier to share Christ with their friends. Four out of the twelve usually did not share anything about their relationship with Christ at the onset of the program but that number was reduced to two participants at the time of the final questionnaire.

The fourth question dealt with the desire for a regular male prayer partner. Four of the participants felt at the beginning of the study that a prayer partner might be helpful. The completion of the study found only one in that category. None of the men felt that it would be a waste of time to have a prayer partner at the onset of the study. One of the participants, however, felt after the study that the prayer partnership was a waste of time. Eight of the men began the study saying that they needed a prayer partner and that number was ten at the completion. It should be noted that prayer partnership was not a new concept to most of the participants. Prayer partnerships have been encouraged in the church before this program matriculated.

The next question sought to discover how often the participants have prayed with another man. As the program began four of the men had prayed with another brother in the Lord in the past week. At the completion of the study that number had increased to eight who had prayed with a brother. The pre-questionnaire revealed that none of the men had prayed with a brother in the last month while the post-questionnaire revealed two of the participants had prayed

with another brother in the last month. It had been over a month since they had last prayed with another man for three of the participants according to the pre-questionnaire. That number was reduced by two by the completion of the program. Three of the men had never prayed with another man prior to participating in this study. That statistic was eliminated by the completion of the study.

The sixth question asked the men to reveal when they had last discussed a personal weakness or asked another friend for help. There were not many changes from the pre-questionnaire to the post-questionnaire but the results did show some slight improvement. Prior to the study five of the participants have revealed a weakness or asked for help in the previous week. One half of the men had asked for help or revealed a weakness to a friend by the completion of the study. Two of the men had asked for help in the previous month at the onset of the program. That number increased to three by the completion of the program. For five of the men it had been over two months since they had asked for help or revealed a weakness to another brother when the study began. That number was reduced to three by the time of the post-questionnaire. The results of this question showed little variation between the beginning and the end of the program, evidently, because it is difficult for men to ask for help or reveal weakness or because the experiment did not unlock the door for them. This remains a

factor even after twelve weeks of study and sharing.

The seventh question asked the men how often they verbalized their love for their spouse to her. Two of the participants were widowers so the statistics reveal less than twelve. Seven of the participants had told their wives that they loved them that day at the onset of the study and ten of them had verbalized love to their spouse that day at the end of the study. One of the men had told his wife the day before that he loved her. This number was identical in both the pre and post-questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire revealed that for two of the men, they had verbalized love to their spouse sometime during that week. That statistic was eliminated by the end of the study. One reason for significant improvement is a heightened awareness of the necessity of positive communication. During week six of the program the discussion focussed on empathy and listening in relationships.

Question eight requested the men to measure their ability to demonstrate their emotions. At the onset of the study only three of the men felt that they could easily reveal their emotions. By the completion of the program, however, six of the men felt that they could easily reveal their emotions. The pre-questionnaire revealed three of the men could reveal their emotions but with some reservation. That number increased to four by the end of the program as a result of the changes in the last phase of the question.

Four of the men at the onset of the study felt that usually they kept their emotions to themselves. The post-questionnaire revealed that number had been reduced to two remaining in this category. The deepening of friendships and the intimacy that was built during the prayer partnerships aided the men in feeling freer to reveal their emotions.

As was stated in the first chapter some men have a fear of touching another man. Question nine dealt with that issue. According to the pre-questionnaire only one of the participants felt he would feel ill at ease holding hands with another man during prayer. By the completion of the program none of the men indicated being uncomfortable holding hands with another man during prayer. Eleven declared in the pre-questionnaire and twelve in the post-questionnaire that holding hands with another man would not bother them. None of the participants would totally object to holding hands. I believe that the general atmosphere of the church which is a "hugging" type of fellowship helped in eliminating any fears in holding hands. Each of the sessions always ended with the men holding hands in a prayer circle.

Part of developing friendships comes with spending time together. The next question was directed at the participants having a social lunch with their male friend. The pre-questionnaire revealed that five of the group had

had a social lunch or meal with another male friend in the last week. The post-questionnaire revealed a drop of one. Three of the participants at the onset of the study had had a meal with a friend in the last month, while after the study that particular number increased to six. One of the participants had had in the past year a fellowship meal with a friend prior to the study and that number increased by two according to the post-questionnaire. The first questionnaire revealed three of the men had never had a just a social meal with another man. By the completion of the program that statistic had been eliminated. I believe that the fellowship meals which the men participated in during the program and the encouragement from the leader helped the men to see that it was acceptable and desirable to socialize as friends and have fun.

Question eleven required the men to evaluate their own spiritual growth. They had to decide whether their walk with God was growing, stagnant, or declining. Six of the participants felt that they had a growing relationship with the Lord as they began the program and eleven of the group felt that their relationship was growing at the completion of the study. In the state of stagnation was the way six of the men described their spiritual life when they began the study. Only one of the participants felt that they were not growing after the completing the study. Spiritual growth is difficult to measure and is almost totally subjective. If,

however, the participants felt that they were growing then most likely there was progress.

The study in lesson four on accountability prompted the twelfth question which dealt with talking to someone about your spiritual life. Four of the participants, as revealed in the pre-questionnaire, had talked to someone during the previous week about their spiritual life. The post-questionnaire revealed that eight of the men had talked to someone about their spiritual life during the week they completed the questionnaire. Four of the participants in both the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire stated that they had talked to someone about their spiritual life in the last month. The pre-questionnaire also revealed that four of the men had not talked to anyone about their spiritual life in the last three months. I am not sure that the men fully understood the question when they took the pre-questionnaire. The concept of "soul friend" was new to the group. Therefore, the question was probably interpreted in a very general sense of talking about your spiritual life.

Question thirteen related to the lesson on listening. The question was designed to assist the men in evaluating their listening skills as they related to their spouse or friend. The pre-questionnaire revealed that seven of the men felt that they had difficulty in keeping their minds from wandering while someone was talking to them while five

of them sensed no difficulties. That number did not change by the end of the program where half of the group still had difficulty listening. This might reveal that the men still need some assistance in developing their listening skills.

Asking men if they could describe themselves as men of love was related to the lesson on the Journeys of John in which John the beloved was called a man of love. All twelve of the men in the pre and post-questionnaire were willing to be identified as men of love. There was no fear in being revealed as a man of love found in this group.

Question fifteen related to the lesson on accountability as well as the lesson on being godly men. The men were asked if they felt that they were seeking first the kingdom of God in their lives. As the program began eight of the group felt that they were seeking first the kingdom of God and four felt that there were still areas in their life in which they had not surrendered to God. The post-questionnaire found eleven of the group felt they were now seeking first the kingdom of God while only one of the participants was still not seeking first the kingdom. I believe that this question ties in very clearly with the question of whether they were growing or not. And the results in the questionnaires are very similar.

The next question had the men ranking some emotions or actions in order of ease of expression. Each of the scores were tabulated and then averaged. The scores were as

follows:

<u>EMOTION/ACTION</u>	<u>PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE</u>	<u>POST-QUESTIONNAIRE</u>
Joy	1.1	1.4
Anger	3.6	2.5
Sorrow/hurt	5.0	3.5
Tenderness	3.4	2.2
Frustration	2.8	2.6
Pain	4.4	3.4

The pre-questionnaire scores revealed that sorrow/hurt and pain were the most difficult for the participants to express. Those two emotions/actions were still the most difficult for the men to express at the end of the study, according to the post-questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire revealed anger as being the third most difficult of these emotions/actions to demonstrate for the participants. The post-questionnaire revealed that frustration was the third most difficult to express. The pre-questionnaire revealed tenderness as the fourth most difficult to express while the post-questionnaire revealed anger. The second easiest of the emotions/actions according to the pre-questionnaire for the men to display was frustration. Both the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire revealed that joy was the easiest to express. The rankings did not change much between the two questionnaires but the point evaluations did thus revealing that after the program the participants realized the difficulties in expressing one's emotions.

The seventeenth question asked the men to list the last thing which they had done for the church. This question was related to the last lesson of the program called, "Men in the Church." The purpose behind this was for the men to realize that they have been and can be a part of the church. The pre-questionnaire revealed eight of the men being able to list the last thing they did for the church. The post-questionnaire showed only six responses. I cannot explain the differences found here. There was no decrease in activities by any of the men in the group in church activities.

The next question had its formation as a result of the lessons on friendships. The men were asked to list the last time they told their friend how important he was to them. Only two of the twelve had told their friend that he was important to them in the last week at the onset of the program. That number had increased to six by the completion of the study. One of the participants had told his friend that he was an important part of the participant's life in the last month according to the pre-questionnaire while the post-questionnaire revealed that two of the participants had done so. It had been at least a year since four of the group had told their friend how important he was as revealed in the pre-questionnaire. That statistic was reduced to three in the post-questionnaire. Five of the men admitted that they had not remembered ever telling their

friend how important he was to them. The conclusion of the program, however, showed that only one of those five still had not spoken to their friend about how important he was. I believe that the first three lessons were essential in aiding the men in understanding the importance of friendships.

The nineteenth question was related to the lesson on the Journeys of John. One aspect of the discussion that week was the truth that the journey of John the Baptist had a sense of direction to it. Eleven of the men in the pre-questionnaire and twelve of them in the post-questionnaire felt that they had some sense of spiritual direction. As stated earlier in questions twelve and fifteen all but one of the men felt he was growing and seeking first the kingdom of God. Here all twelve sensed that they had some spiritual direction which, therefore, means that the one participant who was not growing did not feel that he was going to stay in that stage.

Question twenty requested that the participants focus on the area in their lives in which they struggle the most. The areas from which they could choose were: spiritual life, career or work, marriage/family, self-image, or other. The pre-questionnaire revealed seven of the participants struggled most with their spiritual life, one with his career, two with marriage and family, and one with self-image. The results of the post-questionnaire did not show

significant change. It revealed six of the participants struggled most with their spiritual life, one with his career, one with his marriage and family, none with self-image, and four with other. The others recorded were related to problems dealing with life's pressures and problems. It was good to see that most of them still struggle with their spiritual life in that it shows they are understanding the complexity of spiritual formation and the fact that it is a growth process.

The twenty-first question asked the men to decide with whom they would share personal issues. There was almost no difference between the questionnaires. Three of the men on both questionnaires would share with his pastor, seven on the pre-questionnaire and six on the post-questionnaire would share with his spouse, one of the participants revealed on the post-questionnaire that he would share with his friend. Two of the men on both questionnaires would keep personal issues to themselves. This question was related to the lessons on friendship in which the discussion led to the solution that there needed to be some self-disclosure. The answers revealed that most of the men believe they have someone in whom they can confide.

The next question required the men to evaluate how much of their time per week was given to serving Christ and the church. The pre-questionnaire revealed that two of the men were giving less than an hour of time a week to serving the

Lord. Three of the participants were spending two hours per week serving the Lord according to the pre-questionnaire. Four of the men were spending three to five hours per week and three of the participants were spending over five hours a week serving the Lord. The post-questionnaire revealed that two of the men served two hours, six of the men served three to five hours and the remaining four served five or more hours. The statistics show that there was an increase in the amount of time per week the men invested in ministry.

Question twenty-three gave the men the opportunity to list any gifts or talents that they might have that they would like to use for the church. The intent of this question was for me, as pastor, to see if there were any ways in which these men desired to serve the church which are not being utilized at present. The areas listed by the men included: woodwork, crafts, music, mechanical, building, sports, time, administration, visitation, and teaching.

The next question surfaced from the lessons on friendship and listening. The men were asked to determine whether they were aware of their friend's greatest need. The pre-questionnaire revealed five of the men felt that they did know their friend's greatest need. It also showed that three of the participants thought they knew their friend's greatest need. Finally, it revealed that three of the men were not aware of their friend's greatest need. The

post-questionnaire revealed some significant changes. No longer were five of them sure they knew their friend's greatest need, now only one of them felt this way. Nine of them now felt that they might know their friend's greatest need leaving two of the participants not aware of their friend's greatest need. The changes reflect the fact that the participants realized when completing the post-questionnaire that there was much more about friendships and intimacy that they did not understand when they began the study.

Question twenty-five was about the spiritual discipline of fasting which was briefly discussed in lesson ten on being godly men. I did encourage the men to fast in some situations about which we had prayed. That encouragement is found in the statistics. The pre-questionnaire revealed that only one of the participants had fasted in the last week, two in the last month, seven in six months or more, and one had never fasted. The post-questionnaire revealed, however, that four of the participants had fasted in the week prior to completing the questionnaire, five had fasted in the last month, two in the past six months and one still had not fasted.

The next question dealt with the participants' prayer lives. This question was derived from the lesson on being godly men. The men were to place themselves in one of five categories: they prayed daily, they prayed four to six

times a week, they prayed one to three times a week, they prayed only in crisis situations, or they never prayed. The pre-questionnaire revealed that eight of the men had daily prayer lives. It also demonstrated that two of the men prayed four to six times a week, and that two of the men prayed one to three times per week. Those statistics improved by the completion of the program. The final questionnaire revealed that now ten of the participants were praying on a daily basis and that the other two were now praying on a four to six day schedule. I believe the success of this aspect of the program came as a result of several things. The first reason for the success of the prayer time was the encouragement each of the men received during the group prayer time each week. The second reason for the apparent success was that the prayer partnerships provided encouragement to the participants to further their prayer lives. Finally, the men were given the opportunity to share answered prayers. As the men progressed through the program there was an increasing number of prayer requests given by the participants. This is an additional indication of the strides the men made in developing their prayer lives.

The twenty-seventh question focussed on the area of witnessing which was discussed during the eleventh lesson of the program. The men were asked to indicate if they felt that their co-workers would know they were Christians, might

know that they are Christians, or would not know if they were Christians. Both the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire revealed the same results. All twelve of the participants felt that their co-workers would know they were Christians. As the men shared during the lesson on witnessing their greatest difficulty was not on demonstrating their faith but on finding ways in which to share their faith.

The next question related to the lesson on being listening men. The men were asked to identify whether they would be totally aware of what their spouse struggles with, or whether they might know what their spouse struggles with, or were not aware of their wife's struggles. Again, the numbers will reflect that two of the men were widowers. There were not significant differences between the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire. The pre-questionnaire revealed that four of the men felt that they were totally aware of what their spouses were struggling with. Four of the group felt that they might know what their spouses were struggling with. And two of the participants knew that they were not aware of their spouses' struggles. The post-questionnaire also revealed that four of the participants were totally aware of their spouses' struggles. However, six of the participants thought that they might be aware of their spouses' struggles. Most of the men who took part in this study had

fairly secure marriages and they appear to be fairly sensitive to their spouses's needs which is reflected in the statistics. This is, of course, in contrast to question twenty-four which dealt with how aware they were of their friend's greatest needs.

The twenty-ninth question dealt with the issue of the masculine and feminine sides to each person's personality. This was a new concept for most of the men in the program. Only four of the men were aware of the concept of having a feminine side to their personality prior to the onset of the twelve week study. The post-questionnaire revealed that eleven of the participants were aware of having a feminine side to their personality. The last person, may have been absent or preoccupied during lesson nine on the "Journeys of the Johns" or he could not accept the concept of men having a feminine side to their personalities.

The final question was in relationship to lessons seven and eight on the fruit of the Spirit. The men were asked to circle the four most difficult fruits for them to demonstrate. The results are as follows:

<u>Fruit</u>	<u>Pre-questionnaire</u>	<u>Post-questionnaire</u>
Love	3	1
Joy	4	2
Peace	5	2
Patience	8	7
Kindness	4	5
Gentleness	6	6
Faithfulness	8	9
Self-control	9	11
Goodness	1	5

In the pre-questionnaire the results were spread almost equally between the nine fruits. The post-questionnaire revealed that there were six of the fruits with which the men felt that they needed more help. I believe this difference occurs because the participants had a better understanding of what the fruits of the Spirit meant and how they ought to be applied to spiritual development. (The questions and all the statistical information can be found in the appendix.)

The men, generally, responded positively to each of the lessons. The lessons on friendships were well received by the group because most of the group testified that they had few, if any, close friendships with other men. I believe that as a result of the lessons on friendships the men are better able to make more intimate friendships. Developing intimate friendships with other men will not be easy because of their masculine competitive nature. The knowledge they have acquired about the value of intimacy should, however, encourage them to take the risks.

The lesson on accountability was also received well as the participants saw the correlation between their accountability at work and their spiritual accountability. I could see some changes in the men as the study progressed in that they were more willing to share difficulties with one another, thus becoming accountable to one another. The men would encourage others in their spiritual journeys and

they did not hesitate in helping their brothers.

Change was even more apparent as the participants admitted to the masks which they most often hide behind during the icebreaker in lesson five. The icebreaker for that night, however, was difficult for a couple of the men. They were a little hesitant to design their masks because they were not sure what was being asked of them at first. The next time I teach that lesson I will have the old masks without any names on them displayed to aid those in the group who lack creativity.

The men responded favorably to the two lessons on the fruit of the Spirit. They appeared to understand that the scripture's concept of godly character is often diametrically opposed to the secular view of masculinity. Their openness in talking about the fruits of the Spirit revealed that the men did indeed have the desire to demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit more adequately in their lives.

The lesson on the journeys of the Johns was, as stated earlier, a totally new concept for most of the men. I could sense by their attentiveness and their questions that this concept was important to them. One of the men asked during the lesson, "Could we call it something other than our feminine side?" The concept appeared to be acceptable to most of the men, but the semantics may have been difficult to handle. The participants asked many probing questions

during that lesson.

The lesson on being godly men could easily be expanded to discuss the many other spiritual disciplines, such as journaling, meditating, fasting, and serving. I believe that the spiritual discipline of consistent daily devotions might have seen greater response if there had been more accountability. On repeating the program with another group of men, I would have the participants return their daily devotional sheets to the group leader. This would further encourage the participants in their spiritual formation because it would help the leader in assisting them in growth areas as revealed in their reflections.

The lesson on becoming witnessing men proved to be the one lesson to which the men responded the most. I believe that each of them wanted to become more effective in sharing of their faith but did not feel comfortable with the concept of street evangelism. The participants requested the handouts on the scriptures related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs signifying that they considered the information to be helpful in their daily lives.

The results of the program have to this point been far-reaching. There has been a bonding process occurring within the men as a group as they have learned to share their struggles with one another. This was observed in the fact that they would share more personal prayer concerns and as the program progressed more of the men would pray out

loud during the group prayer times. Another significant occurrence was that one of the men took the initiative to follow up on a member of the group that might have missed a lesson. As the weeks progressed one could observe them asking others in the group how they were doing physically, emotionally, or spiritually. Although the level of accountability can definitely be expanded, there has been significant development in this area. Other examples of positive change can be seen in the general improvement of the men's daily times of devotions, their time of service to the church, and development of more intimate friendships with other men.

An even more profound example of the significance of the program is that one year after completing the study the group remains in existence. At the last session the participants decided that they wanted to continue to meet on a weekly basis for study and fellowship. The group chose to study Jerry Bridge's book, The Practice of Godliness, which is a study of the fruits of the Spirit. As a result of the program the men saw the value of learning more about the fruit of the Spirit and how they might apply the concepts of the character of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The group continues to use icebreakers because they enjoy sharing with one another. Some of the participants have continued their prayer partnership relationships. The men enjoyed the fellowship meals and continue to have them every two or

three months. A spiritual retreat was planned in the spring after the completion of the study. The men have been taking charge of their spiritual formation. They are now taking some initiative in pursuing their own spirituality. I can see some of the men emerging from the journey of John the beloved, being caring and sensitive, and beginning the journey of John the Baptist, driven and motivated by ministry to the world. One of the aspects of the journey of John the Baptist is that men need a mission or outreach. The group has chosen to work on a mission project for the first time in the ten years I have served this congregation and are beginning to follow through on it.

The hypothesis of this project/dissertation was that if men were enabled to understand their masculinity and given a degree of accountability to one another through an intentional discipleship intervention program they will grow spiritually. I believe that this twelve week Male Spiritual Formation program was effective in assisting the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church in growing in their relationships with God. They are now more actively seeking first the kingdom of God and pursuing lives that would glorify God. The title for this dissertation comes from the hymn, "Rise Up, O Men of God." The words of that hymn speak of men giving their hearts, souls, minds, and strength to serve the King of kings. The concept of the Church waiting for them to rise up and make her great is also present in

this hymn.³⁶ It has been the intent of this program to enable the men to grasp in a concrete way the mission and mobilization that are necessary for the Church to grow in serving the Lord. I believe we are making significant progress in this area in the Bellville United Methodist Church. These are difficult times for men in America as men are redefining their masculinity, but as the Church assists men in dealing with their masculinity and their spiritual formation they will indeed rise up and serve Jesus Christ faithfully.

³⁶John S. Monsell, "Rise Up, O Men of God", The Singing Church, (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Company, 1987) p. 457.

Chapter 4

Recommendations and Further Research

There are some definite changes which I would include in the next implementation of this program. The greatest change, stated earlier, is that there needs to be an even greater level of accountability. The intention of the weekly devotional sheets was, originally, to help the men develop a consistent daily quiet time of prayer and scripture reading and to give them a chance at some form of ministry. The most significant change I would institute is that I would have the devotional sheets returned to the leader so that progress could be closely monitored. In the proper setting, this accountability/responsibility could be shared between prayer partners.

Almost any lesson could be lengthened but according to the results accumulated in the post-questionnaire, the lesson on listening skills might require another session to further develop the practical application needed for healthy listening skills. This could be done through role playing, more group discussion on problem areas, or even using more exercises from Norman Wright's books on communication. The group involved in the pilot program did choose to study in depth the fruits of the Spirit upon completion of this particular program as mentioned earlier.

Other lessons could be added to include areas with

which men need to deal and learn specific applications. Some suggestions for such topics are: A man's relationship with his father and with his sons, mother and son relationships, sexuality, careers or job difficulties, marriage relationships, and broken relationships. There could also have been a session where the men just asked questions about specific situations the men still needed to discuss.

There are some logical changes which could be done upon the repetition of the program. In assisting the men in becoming more responsible, or giving them ownership of the study they could be responsible for bringing the weekly snacks. Some of the teaching probably should be done by capable participants so that the participants get a varied teaching style. Co-teaching would also be an inspiration to the other men to become involved in some form of ministry. The co-teaching, especially by a lay person, puts the spirituality on the same level, in that they see a man just like them, not clergy leading the group. The icebreakers could easily be created and led by one of the members. The man who was going to lead the icebreaker would need to know the lesson topic in advance.

Another viable addition to a session could be including a man on certain weeks, sharing his "story." This aspect of the group sharing strengthens the application of the principles being taught as well as assisting in the building

a sense of community among the men. A couple of examples of such involvement would be: having one of the men share his personal testimony, or one man might share his "story" about how he learned a particular fruit of the Spirit.

A final consideration for additional programming could be the addition of a spiritual retreat. I included that dimension four months after the completion of the study. The intention of the retreat was encouraging the men to keep their spiritual formation as a priority in their lives. The success of any program one chooses depends on the adaptations one will make according to the needs and sensitivities of one's particular group.

Further Research

Almost every week one can walk into the bookstore and find a newly released book on men and how they change or are changing. Even in Christian book stores they are emerging on a regular basis. The church and Christians, however, are realizing that it is time for men to deal with "baggage" that they have been carrying around for many years. This project dissertation focussed on developing a twelve week study on spiritual formation. Its purpose was to assist the men in developing the spiritual dimension of their personalities. Dr. Donald Joy's recent book, Unfinished Business: How A Man Can Make Peace With His Past, is a prime example of these materials. Joy's experience with

support groups of male seminary students for the past seventeen years prompted him to write this book. The book focusses on what it is to be born male, the demands placed on parents, intimacy with a woman, the male tendency to hide what's really on the inside, and the risks of marriage. Patrick Morley in his book, The Man in the Mirror, deals with twenty-four problems which men face. He divides his book into to four categories: solving our identity problems, solving our relationship problems, solving our money problems, and finally, solving our time problems. He has included in the book study guide questions for each of the chapters hoping that men will use it for discussion or support groups. Gordon Dalbey's book, Healing the Masculine Soul, also tackles the deep issues of masculinity. Valuable resources continue to emerge to assist men in dealing with their masculinity and spiritual formation.

It is my perception, however, that, generally speaking, men are not avid readers. Therefore, programs where men can become involved intellectually, emotionally, and physically in a structured setting will be more effective. Apart from my program there are such programs as the Emmaus Walk available. As this section is being penned I have just returned from being a spiritual director on an Emmaus Men's Walk. The Emmaus movement in the United Methodist Church had its ancestry in the Roman Catholic Cursillo, which means "little courses." It is something which is done in a few

days rather than weeks or months. This movement began in 1977 in the Upper Room and by 1984 it has become a world wide ministry. There are separate walks for men and women. On the walks the participants are encouraged to encounter Christ on their road to Emmaus. It is a seventy-two hour walk in which the participants experience teachings given by laity and clergy. The talks cover the following areas: priorities, priesthood of all believers, life in piety, growth through study, Christian action, discipleship, changing our world, the body of Christ, and perseverance. The clergy talks all deal with the area of grace: prevenient grace, justifying grace, means of grace, obstacles to grace, and sanctifying grace. The seventy-two hour event consist of thirty-five pilgrims and twenty-five team members meeting together and sharing their lives. As I experienced my own walk and have now experienced being a part of a team, I can see how this walk can be helpful for most men. One of the end results of the Emmaus walk is that the participants are encouraged to become a part of a share group of four or five men who have also taken the walk. The share group times become sessions of accountability for the participants, which as stated earlier in this paper is absolutely essential for consistent spiritual growth.

At the 1984 General Conference of the United Methodist Church a mandate was passed that all United Methodist Churches will institute a United Methodist Men's Group.

This mandate surfaced because of the lack of men in United Methodist churches and the need to strengthen those who are present. Following that mandate the Board of Discipleship along with the National United Methodist Men's Officers developed a study to use with men's groups called, "A Spiritual Journey for Men."

As a follow-up to this project the men of the Bellville United Methodist Church studied Jerry Bridges book, The Practice of Godliness, which dealt with the fruits of the Spirit and how to practically apply them to one's life.

Men have a deep need within themselves to have contact with other men and yearning to tell someone with what they are struggling. If the Church is faithful to her ministry she must assist both men and women to understand their created nature and assist them in spiritual formation.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual

Weekly Schedule

September 1: Kick-off dinner and introduction
September 8: "David and Jonathan"
September 15: "David and Jonathan" (continued)
September 22: "Accountability"
September 29: "Removing Our Masks"
October 6: MEAL "Listening Men"
October 13: "Fruitful Men"
October 20: "Fruitful Men" (continued)
October 27: "The Journeys of the Johns"
November 3: "Godly Men"
November 10: "Witnessing Men"
November 17: MEAL "Men in the Church"

Dear

As many of you are aware I have been working on my Doctorate of Ministry degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. I am hoping to complete my degree by this coming May.

The next step is extremely important and I need you to be a part of it. I am ready to begin a twelve week study exclusively for men.

This study will concentrate on areas within our lives as Christian men which I feel we need to develop. The success of the program depends upon your involvement. I am excited about what I believe is going to happen individually and corporately as we walk through this study together.

We will have a kick-off dinner on Thursday, September 1 at 6:00 pm in the church basement. We will meet for the following eleven weeks at 7:00 pm.

Please, consider taking part in this twelve week adventure. It would be helpful if you would let me know if you are planning to attend.

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Mike Somerville

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson I: "Introduction to the
American Male"

Lesson Goal: Participants will be able to list the general weaknesses of men in spiritual formation.

Scripture References: I Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42;
Haggai 1:3-11

Special Notes: I began this lesson having a fellowship meal together. Knives, forks, and spoons are needed for the icebreaker; Friendship Inventory and Men's Questionnaire (one per participant and completed prior to the lesson.)

Icebreaker: Each man will take either a knife, a spoon, or a fork from the table. Knife: Share the greatest moment you have ever had with a friend. Spoon: When did you last spend time with your friend? Fork: What is your favorite trait of your friend's personality?

Have each of the men complete the Friendship Inventory Sheet and the Men's Questionnaire.

Men, I am excited, as we begin this twelve week spiritual formation adventure. I believe that we are embarking on an adventure which will change our lives by drawing us closer to one another and, more importantly, closer to God.

David Smith, in his book, The Friendless American Male, states that we men are trapped by an unwritten male creed. This male creed has been instilled in us from the time we are born by the significant men in our lives. Here is that creed:

He shall not cry.

He shall not display weakness.

He shall not need affection or gentleness or warmth.

He shall comfort but not need comforting.

He shall be needed but not need.

He shall touch but not be touched.

He shall be steel not flesh.

He shall be inviolate in his manhood.

He shall stand alone.¹

I believe that as we grow through this adventure God is going to enable us to step out of this creed and establish a creed based on Scripture.

Tonight we want to focus on the importance of friendship with other men. But first, we need to look at those things which keeps us from developing deep friendships with other men. What is it that keeps you from developing deep friendships with other men? (Allow the men time to respond.) Very early in life we as boys are taught that we are not to show our emotions. To be a man is to conceal our

¹David Smith, The Friendless American Male (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1983). p. 22.

emotions. With the exception of some sports men do little touching of one another. To many men touching implies sexual interest. The thought that someone could want to hug or caress you as an expression of affection or friendship without sexual overtones is hard to believe. Some men become very distant or at least embarrassed if they are hugged by a male friend. Some fear that this might be some unconscious expression of latent homosexual tendencies.

We as men also have an inability to fellowship by spending time together. Men find it difficult to accept the fact that they need to seek out fellowship. It is my belief that many men take part in strictly male events because they have a desire within them for fellowship with other men. Sometimes men will invent reasons to be together. For instance they insist that a business deal must be discussed or a game must be played. Even men getting together to go out drinking in bars, etc. can be an excuse to be together. Unfortunately, for most of us when we do get together our social interaction rarely gets past the superficial level. If your conversations are limited to sports, politics, dirty jokes, etc. you are not having fellowship.

Another barrier to men developing friendships with other men is the very fact that there are not adequate friendship role models. Heroes tend to be self-sufficient, strong and impersonal. Let's describe some of the movie heroes that we have seen in the past few years. (Allow

suggestions from the group.)

As men our basic competitive nature also hinders us from developing deep male friendships. If a man plays a game he feels he must win. Competition is highly respected among men and there is nothing wrong with competition. Men, however, can get so caught up in the spirit of competition that they can miss out on the joy of participation and the simple fun of being together with friends.

Our inability to ask for help is also critical in keeping us from developing deeper relationships. As men we seldom ask for help. It is tough for men to ask for help or to admit deep personal needs or longings. We seldom share our problems with counselors. We are reluctant to share with our wives and families. And our conversations with our friends will never even show a hint of the need for assistance of any kind. A primary example of this reluctance can be observed when a man gets lost while driving. His wife will continually say, "Dear, why don't you stop at this next gas station and ask for direction?" He will respond by saying, "No, I know the road is just up here a little farther." Have you been there? (Allow the men time to respond.)

As men we are also conditioned to find a good job, have a nice home, and provide well for our family. In the pursuit of these goals it is so easy to neglect the spiritual side of our lives. Haggai 1:3-11 reminds us of

the need to concentrate first on the spiritual side. (Read the passage.)

This problem of friendlessness happens even in our churches. We sit together, sing together, and even greet one another often without even being aware of what is going on in each other's lives. It is my hope and desire that we can break out of this "American Male Creed" and become strong men in the Lord.

Perhaps the greatest example of two men in close relationship is found in David and Jonathan. Let us take a look at I Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; and 20:1-42.

Friendships do not just happen. Next week we are going to examine six important principles in building a strong biblical friendship. Let's take a few moments to see what our friendship inventory sheets revealed.

Men's Questionnaire

1. I read the Bible: Circle the appropriate answer
7 days a week
4-6 days a week
1-3 days a week
I do not read it
2. I ask other men questions about their lives?
Frequently
Occasionally
Seldom
Never
3. I am able to talk about Christ and the Bible with my friends?
If they are Christians
Only if they bring up the subject
Easily
Usually not at all
4. I believe that having a regular male prayer partner:
Might be helpful
Would be a waste of time
Is what I need
5. I have prayed with a brother in the Lord in the last:
Week
Month
More than a month ago
Never
6. When is the last time you revealed a weakness or asked for help from a friend?
Last week
Last month
Over two months
7. When is the last time you told your wife that you loved her?
Today
Yesterday
This week
8. I can show my emotions:
Easily
With some reservations
I keep them to myself

9. Holding hands with another man during prayer:
Would bother me
Would not bother me
I would rather not do
10. When is the last time you had a social lunch or just got together with a male friend?
Last week
Last month
Last year
Never
11. How would you describe your walk with the Lord?
Growing
Stagnant
Decreasing
12. When is the last time you talked to someone about your spiritual life?
In the last week
In the last month
In the last three months
13. As your wife or friend talks to you do you find it difficult to keep your mind from wandering to other things? Yes or No
14. Could you be described as a man of love? Yes or No
15. Are you seeking first the Kingdom of God in your life?
Yes, in all areas that I am aware of
No, there are still areas in my life that I haven't surrendered to God.
16. Rank the following emotions in order of easiness for you to express.
Joy
Anger
Sorrow/hurt
Tenderness
Frustration
Pain
17. What is the last thing you did for the church?

18. When is the last time you told your friend how important he was to you?
Last week
Last month
Last year
Never
19. Do you have a sense of spiritual direction in your life? Yes or No
20. What do you struggle most with:
Your spiritual life
Your career or work
Your marriage and family
Your self-image
Other (please specify)
21. If you needed to share something really personal or something you have hidden inside for a long time, whom would you reveal this to:
Your pastor
Your wife
Your best friend
A stranger
No one
22. How much time do you give to serving Christ per week?
Less than an hour
1 hour
2 hours
3-5 hours
Over 5 hours
23. What gifts or talents do you have that you would like to use for the church?
24. I am...of my friends' greatest need.
Totally aware
Think I'm aware
Not aware
25. When is the last time you fasted?
Last week
Last month
6 months or more
Never

26. I pray:
Daily
4-6 times a week
1-3 times a week
Only in crisis situations
Never
27. At work others would:
Know that I am a Christian
Might know that I am a Christian
Would not know that I am a Christian
28. I am...of what my spouse is struggling with?
Totally aware
Think I am aware
Not aware
29. I am aware that there is a masculine and feminine side to my personality. Yes or No
30. I need the most help in developing the following four fruits of the Spirit in my life:
Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Gentleness
Faithfulness
Self-control
Goodness

FRIENDSHIP INVENTORY

KEY:

A=no problem
 B=needs improvement
 C=major problem

CHRIST CENTERED

I'm concerned with the spirituality of the men I know.
 I'm able to talk about Christ and the Bible with my
 friends.

I pray with and for my friends.

The activities I share with my friends are wholesome.

I regularly include God in my thoughts and plans.

COVENANT

I remember important anniversaries and celebrate them with
 letters, cards, and calls.

I'm not afraid to risk being rejected by reaching out to
 others.

I have told my friends that they are important to me.

I make every effort to heal a strained or broken
 relationship.

My friends know that I honor my commitments.

FAITHFULNESS

My friends can count on me.

I can keep a confidence.

I take full responsibility for what I do and say.

Circumstances affect my consistency.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

I enjoy making new friends- I ask people questions to learn
 more about them.

I care enough about new acquaintances to greet them warmly.

I don't begrudge the giving of my time or money when I see a
 needy person or a cause.

I plant shade trees under which I know I'll never sit
 (I'm not selfish.)

I'm not prejudiced. I do not discriminate against
 individuals who are of different race, ethnic group,
 religion, or social class.

CANDOR

I speak the truth in love.

I am honest in my relationships.

I'm not defensive if a friend talks about a problem in my life.

I can ask for help if I'm in need.

RESPECT

I really believe God loves each individual.

I am tactful, considerate, and do not take advantage of close friends.

I express gratitude when I have been helped by someone.

I have a deep-seated belief in the inherent worth of myself and others.

I respect the right of each of my friends to be different from me. (I respect their opinions.)

ACCEPTANCE

I know God has forgiven me.

I am not judgmental of the behavior and thinking of others. (I am tolerant.)

Material things and status are not important in my relationships.

I look for good in others and minimize their faults.

I do not hold grudges.

I express precise and honest appreciations.

EMPATHY

People I know experience God's love through me.

I sincerely try to understand how other people feel and think. (I invest the time needed to accomplish this.)

I do not force my views on others.

I treat other people as equals.

LISTENING

I look for feeling in people's words.

I don't talk too much or interrupt people when they talk.

I ask men questions about their own lives.

I listen alertly and avoid distractions.

I take the time needed to listen to others.

LOYALTY

I am dependable and consistent.

I am not a fair-weather friend.

I keep in touch with friends now separated from me by miles.

SELF-DISCLOSURE

I do not try to act like someone I'm not.

My friends and I confide in each other.

I'm willing to reveal a weakness or ask for help from a friend.

I don't fear showing my emotions.

COMPROMISE

I don't always have to have things my way.

I don't expect my friends to be perfect.

When wrong I admit it. (I also say I'm sorry.)

I deal with conflicting ideas with reason and understanding.

I do not have a competitive, win-or-lose orientation that makes life a succession of contests..

I do have the capacity to adapt to new conditions in a spirit of cooperation.

(Taken from David Smith's book, The Friendless American Male, pages 132-135. Used with permission from Nelson Publishers)

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 1: Read each of the following passages and jot down
impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: I Samuel 18:1-4

Saturday: I Samuel 19:1-7

Sunday: I Samuel 20:1-42

Monday: Psalm 1

Tuesday: I Corinthians 15:33

Wednesday: Proverbs 16:28

Thursday: Proverbs 17:9

Ministry: Send a note to a brother encouraging him, or
expressing to him your gratitude for his life and witness.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson II: "David and Jonathan"

Lesson Goal: Men will be able to list the first three principles of biblical friendships.

Scripture References: I Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42;
Proverbs 16:28; 17:9; Romans 12:9-21;
Corinthians 1:3-4; 6:14-17; James 5:16

Special Notes: This lesson is taught over two weeks.

Roll of toilet paper needed for icebreaker.

Icebreaker: Pass around a roll of toilet paper and ask each one to take off the amount he would use to blow his nose. For each square of toilet tissue taken the participants are to share something about themselves that no one else there knows about them.

David Smith, in his book, The Friendless American Male, gives us six principles to follow in developing a solid biblical friendship. The first principle for a spiritual friendship is that it must be God centered. As two men share the same core values which are focussed upon Jesus, they can seek each other's counsel and have the confidence that their response will be sound. David came to Jonathan; Moses accepted advice from Jethro; Timothy followed Paul's

advice.

Paul instructed the Corinthians not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers in Second Corinthians 6:14-17. This passage is generally used in relationship to marriage. I believe, however, that it can also be applied to our intimate friendships. Now you may have friends who are non-believers, but you will be unable to develop a true biblical friendship with them because of the differences in spiritual attitudes. First Samuel 20:42 says, "We have sworn friendship in the name of the Lord." One cannot do that unless both parties have a relationship with the Lord. Do you remember our Friendship Inventory Sheet? The first section entitled, Christ Centered, incorporated the following ideas: I am concerned with the spirituality of the men I know. I am able to talk about Christ and the Bible with my friends. I pray with and for my friends. The activities I share with my friends are wholesome. I regularly include God in my thoughts and plans. Those statements all imply a spiritual dimension to a friendship.

The second principle in biblical friendship is the formation of a covenant. First Samuel 18:3 says, "And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself." We do not have rituals or ceremonies to be conducted for the development of friendships like we do for marriages, birth, baptisms, graduations, and even club memberships. A covenant is a "formal, solemn, and binding

agreement between two parties especially for the performance of some action", according to Webster's dictionary. Covenant making in Jewish culture carries a deeper significance because in Jewish history God made covenants with his people. It conveys an idea of mutual belonging, incorporation into the marriage-bond (though not sexual in a friendship). A covenant is a formation of a unity. The soul of Jonathan was knit together with the soul of David and they became one in Spirit. To outwardly show his covenant love to David, Jonathan took off his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt, and gave them to David, his dear friend. David could only return his gift of loyalty and respect. Our friendship Inventory Sheet asks: Do I remember important anniversaries and celebrate them with letters, cards, and calls? Am I unafraid of risking being rejected by reaching out to others? Have I told my friends that they are important to me? Do I make every effort to heal a strained or broken relationship? Do my friends know that I honor my commitments? (Allow time for response or observations.)

The third principle, according to David Smith, in forming biblical friendships is that there must be a sense of faithfulness in that relationship.

There is a poem by Joseph Bayly which I discovered that fits how I believe we should react to one another. Where it says Lord in the poem we ought to be able to place the name of our friend.

I cry tears
to you Lord
tears
because I cannot speak
words are lost
among my fears
pain
sorrow
losses
hurts
but tears
You understand
my wordless prayer
You hear.
Lord
wipe away my tears
all tears
not in distant day
but now
here."

The world's philosophy seems to be "Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and you cry alone". As Christian men, however, we are to be guided by the Bible not the world's standards. Let's take a look at Romans 12:9-21. Let's list the qualities or behaviors which we ought to be manifesting. According to these verses love must be sincere, be devoted to one another, don't lack zeal in spiritual fervor, be joyful in affliction, faithful in prayer, share with God's people, practice hospitality, bless those who persecute you,

¹Joseph Bayly, "Tears", publisher and date unknown.

rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep, live in harmony, be at peace, and don't take revenge.

Can you imagine the changes in you and me if we would let God develop these traits in us? As men we have a difficult time weeping, let alone weeping with another brother. This is the kind of friendship, however, that God wants us to develop with one another.

A faithful friend will keep a confidence according to Proverbs 16:28 and 17:9. As we are learning to be open with one another in our meetings let us remember to keep confidential what we share in our times together. There is vulnerability in friendship, and this is as it should be. We have to be open and trusting. This is one reason why betrayal is so evil and faithfulness so virtuous.

Let's look at Second Corinthians 1:3-4 and James 5:16 and remember that mutual sharing leads to mutual caring.

Next week we will take a look at the final three principles in developing biblical friendships. Now, tonight before we go to our prayer time I would like each one of you to write down on a slip of paper your first three choices of a prayer partner from this group of men. Next week I will assign each of you a prayer partner with whom you are to meet once a week to pray together.

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 2: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Psalm 133

Saturday: Proverbs 18:24

Sunday: Proverbs 27:10

Monday: John 15:9-17

Tuesday: John 17:20-26

Wednesday: Romans 12:9-21

Thursday: II Corinthians 1:3-4

Ministry: Take a brother out for breakfast or lunch just for the sake of fellowship.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson III: "David and Jonathan"
(continued)

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to list six principles of biblical friendship.

Scripture References: I Samuel 18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-42;
Proverbs 21:17; John 15:9-17; Philippians 2:3

Special Notes: At the end of the lesson the leader will assign prayer partners.

Icebreaker: Describe the closest relationship you had with a friend as a young child. Possibly maybe a blood brother.

This evening we want to continue to look at the last three principles in developing biblical friendships. Last week we discovered in the relationship of David and Jonathan that the first three principles of a biblical friendship were: First, the friendship must be God centered. It cannot be unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Secondly, the friendship needs the formation of a covenant. A covenant is a mutual bonding in which the friends stick together no matter how difficult circumstances might get. Thirdly, this

principle is closely related to the last in that there needs to be a sense of faithfulness in the relationship, that is, to laugh when your friend laughs and cry when he cries.

The fourth principle for spiritual friendship is that there needs to be some social involvement. Few men are willing to form lasting commitments to a community or to an individual. Yet we are admonished in the scriptures to be good neighbors and to be involved in the lives of others.

Let's take a look at John 15:9-17. As Christians, we are commanded to love one another and we are no longer considered servants but friends. The disciples were close to Jesus. He desired to eat the Passover meal with them. He wanted the disciples close to him when he was in the garden, especially his three closest friends, Peter, James, and John. Jesus invested considerable time in developing his relationship with the disciples. Toward the end of his ministry, he devoted most of his time to them. It takes time and investment and concern to build lasting friendships. We have a responsibility to be involved in the lives of others and in the lives of other brothers in the Lord.

Along with our spouses we need to and should take some responsibility in developing our social relationships. Jonathan and David spent time together eating, hunting, and probably even singing together. Those times of fellowship and communion helped to build their friendship.

Too often we, as men, have very little involvement in the

establishment and maintenance of social contact with our friends. We need to be socially involved with other men and their families in dinners, activities, and time together. This does not mean, however, going to the extreme and always being together. Even as we are gathered here, we know so little about each other. We do not know each other's dreams, fears, hopes, pains, or joys. One of our prayer concerns should be that God will continue to help us to open up to one another.

The fifth principle, according to David Smith is that of candor among friends or speaking the truth to one another. This is a difficult area for all of us. Before you or I could ever speak truth to someone which might lead to a confrontation we must make sure that we have established a caring relationship. Our friend must feel support from us before he will ever accept criticism. We have all met the type of person who can always criticize. Unless I feel that person really cares about me, I am probably not going to listen to his complaints. But if this truth comes from a person who has been a truly supportive friend, I can accept his criticism. There must be trust, affirmation, understanding, and love before we can ever be completely candid with one another.

Louis Evans in his book, Covenant to Care, shares this covenant of openness:

I promise to strive to become a more open person,

disclosing my feelings, my struggles, my joys, and my hurts to you as well as I am able. The degree to which I do so implies that I cannot make it without you, that I trust you with my problems and my dreams and that I need you. This is to affirm your worth to me as a person. In other words, "I need you!"ⁱ

It may hurt at first, but a friend will help you face the difficult truth. Arguments can occur in a friendship but Proverbs 21:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." (NIV)

The final principle of biblical friendship is that of respect. The word respect means to feel or show esteem for someone. I believe that Philippians 2:3 expresses respect in terms that we can understand. "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit but in humility consider others better than yourself. Each of us should not look to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (NIV)

David knew that Jonathan was the king's son. He could have viewed him as heir to the throne of the man who wanted him dead. On the other hand Jonathan could have viewed David as a young aggressive person who was trying to destroy his father's kingdom. Neither of them even considered such thoughts as they embraced each other as friends.

ⁱLouis Evans, Covenant to Care (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), p. 64.

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 3: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Saturday: Hebrews 10:24

Sunday: I John 5:16

Monday: I Peter 1:22

Tuesday: Exodus 18

Wednesday: Hebrews 2:11

Thursday: James 5:16

Ministry: Spend time with your prayer partner this week and begin sharing your spiritual journeys.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson IV: "Accountability"

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to list the reasons for needing a spiritual director.

Scripture References: Exodus 18:5-27; Proverbs 27:6
Matthew 24:12-13; Luke 9:62; I Corinthians
9:24-36; James 5:16

Special Notes: Self Disclosure Sheets (one per participant).

Icebreaker: Each man is to share the manner in which they are held accountable for their actions and activities at work.

For the past six or seven months I have been wrestling; wrestling with myself and with the Lord and I am not sure we are done. There is a profound truth, however, that I face each day as I wrestle, "Why am I wrestling alone?" Who is my soul friend? To whom am I accountable? When one does not make use of a spiritual director, there is a tendency to sit and "spin your wheels" or lose sight of personal spiritual goals and progress. If this pattern continues you eventually form a deep rut of which it seems almost impossible to get out.

What do I mean by a soul friend or a spiritual

director? The closest pure, present day example we have can be found in the monastic life. When a new brother comes to the monastery he goes through a trial period as he determines whether God is, indeed, calling him to the contemplative life of prayer and meditation. Upon his arrival at the monastery the novice, the new arrival, is appointed a novice master who works as his spiritual guide. The novice master is responsible for overseeing the spiritual development of that beginning monk.

The closest structured image that resembles the novice master in the Protestant church is the pastor. The pastor is technically the shepherd of the flock. Sometimes, though, we as pastors, get so tied up in keeping things going, patching up wounded sheep, and feeding the entire flock that we do not have enough time for personal involvement with every needy individual. As a result, I can speak generally from the pulpit and hope and pray that the Spirit of God prompts you the congregation, on in your spiritual walk.

What are some of the reasons you and I need a soul friend?

1. Your pastor cannot be a soul friend to everyone.
2. Our spiritual life should have priority in the soul friend relationship. Unless we personally work on spiritual formation we will not grow. A spiritual guide helps us keep accountable for our spiritual formation.

3. Sometimes we can get so set in our ways that we are not aware of what is happening around us. A spiritual guide can say, "Why don't you look at it this way?" A soul friend can give you an extra set of eyes for spiritual discernment and a little more faith when it comes to prayer.

4. Sometimes in our spiritual journeys we become fixated at a particular stage. God waits for us to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit. You have probably heard people say, or may have even said it yourself, "I can't do that. I'm not gifted in that area." God, however, is sitting back and saying, "That's right, you're not, but I can give you the gifts that you will need. We need to learn to tell the Lord that we will do whatever he wants. A spiritual guide can help us with trusting God's directives and taking steps of faith.

Let's look at an example found in the scripture. Turn with me to Exodus 18:5-27. Moses had a soul friend in Jethro, his father-in-law. Look at what Jethro did. He greeted Moses. There was friendship and love between them. Jethro listened to Moses share about all that God has done. (Vss. 8-9) Jethro worshipped with him. Remember, we have already talked about like-minded spirits. (Vss. 10-12) He ate with him. In a soul friend relationship there must be time for fellowship. Eating together is an important way to get to know one another. The next day the scripture says that Jethro observed Moses in action. A soul friend

knows his brother and is aware of the events of his friend's life. It is only after Jethro greeted, listened, worshipped, ate with, and observed that he had the right to correct Moses. A soul friend can speak the truth to his or her friend.

Solomon in Proverbs 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy." When someone knows you well enough and loves you deeply enough to wound you with the truth, the bruises will be trustworthy and reliable. We cannot take criticism from a stranger because those words are too hurtful. But a bruise from one who knows you and has your best interest at heart is a whole different story.

Spiritual progress in the New Testament is sometimes described in phrases like: putting one's hand to the plow and not looking back (Luke 9:62); enduring to the end (Matthew 24:12-13); preparing for a race or conflict (I Corinthians 9:24-36). There is a clear call in the scripture to perfection, to holiness, to fullness of life in Christ. This call is often referred to as a call to spiritual maturity. A soul friend is one who is concerned about your encounter with God, and your maturing in faith.

A soul friend is your spiritual physician. In the Protestant faith we have moved away from the priestly figure to whom you would go and confess your sins. We have spiritualized it by saying that we can go to God directly.

We are instructed, however, in James 5:16 to confess our sins to one another and be healed. We are also called to be a royal priesthood. I realize for us, as men, it is extremely difficult to share weaknesses and especially sins. But we will have greater victories over our sins if we can, indeed, be open and vulnerable to a soul friend. When your sin is out in the open you can deal with it and its influences in your life. Let your soul friend at least be your physician's aid and show him your wounds without shame, openly trusting, and confiding in him. With your weekly devotional sheet I will give you a self-disclosure sheet to use with your prayer partner this week.

SELF-DISCLOSURE SHEET

1. Are you afraid to share with me?
2. What is your life goal?
3. What gives you joy?
4. What do you struggle with the most?
5. What is your greatest fear?
6. How do you feel about me?
7. As your friend and brother what can I do to help you the most?

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 4: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Numbers 35:6-15

Saturday: I John 4:8

Sunday: Luke 19:1-9

Monday: Romans 15:1,5-7

Tuesday: Psalm 31:11-13

Wednesday: Galatians 6:2

Thursday: Colossians 3:12-17

Ministry: Meet with your prayer partner this week. Talk about some of the spiritual goals in each of your lives and how you might help one another achieve those goals.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson V: "Removing Our Masks"

Lesson Goal: The participants will identify their mask of propriety.

Scripture References: Numbers 35:6-15;
Ecclesiastes 4:6-15

Special Notes: For the icebreaker: construction paper, glue, scissors, crayons, or markers.

Icebreaker: I'd like each of us to take a few minutes and make the mask that we hide behind.

We have been talking for the last few weeks about the fact that we need each other. We openly admit that this goes against our "macho" male image. Tonight we want to continue to look at what we ought to be according to the scripture rather than worldly standards.

Solomon wrote four appropriate verses about friendship which would be beneficial for us to ponder. Turn with me to Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friend can pick him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to pick him up. Also if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how

can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (NIV)

What does this section of scripture say about the importance of friendship? To me it says there should be mutual effort, support, encouragement, and strength. It is only as we share life's experiences that we really begin to understand what fellowship is all about. You and I cannot fellowship when we keep each other at arm's length. Fellowship here implies getting in touch, feeling one another's hurts, encouraging one another, and helping each other through the healing process. I believe that these four verses demonstrate what we have been talking about for the past four weeks. Each of us needs this type of relationship with one another and I believe that we are in the process of building a firm foundation for spiritual growth.

Robert Ball in his book, Why Can't I Tell You Who I Really Am?, says the following:

You could follow me around for months, take voluminous notes on my habits, activities, conversations, and know a great deal about me, but you wouldn't know me. You can only know me as I allow you to know what I hope and fear in the depths of my being. If you had known me you would have known the profound loneliness I feel when I

appear to be brave, the deep sadness inhabiting me when I am acting carefree, the yearning for friendship overwhelming me at some of the moments when I'm being so hard to get along with. To know me would include knowing my personal value system, the one that actually determines my life, not necessarily the one I defend in public. You can't know any of this unless I tell you. Unless I allow you to know me, you have no choice but to treat me on the basis of what you see in me.¹

And that is how most of us are! We must learn to take the risk of letting others know how we really feel, because then and only then can we minister and be genuine friends to each other.

What kind of masks are we hiding behind? Each of you made a mask as you came in tonight. We will share these in a few minutes. Here are a few of the masks that I have found men often wear: (Give them the opportunity to discuss what it means to wear each of these masks.)

1. "I'm TOUGH" mask keeps us from showing any fears or weaknesses that we might have.

2. "I'm HOLY" mask means that we never have to bother people with our struggle with spirituality and that we have all the answers for life's questions.

¹Robert Ball, Why Can't I Tell You Who I Really Am? (Waco: Word Books, 1984), p. 18.

3. "I'm COOL" or the "I've got it all together" mask helps us resist the hard questions, and keeps us from being open. This mask avoids straight talk.

4. "I'm ABLE-TO-HANDLE-THE-PAIN-AND-PRESSURE" mask. This mask keeps us from asking for help and admitting weakness.

Gentlemen, what is the mask that you are holding in your hands that you hide behind? Let's take a few minutes and reveal our masks to one another. (Allow the men time to share what their masks represents.)

Reuben Welch has written a poem that fits with what we have just done. It reminds us of how much we really do need each other. As I read this poem reflect on your brothers gathered here tonight.

You know something
 We are all just people who need each other.
 We are all learning
 and we've all got a long journey ahead of us.
 We've got to go together
 and if it takes until Jesus comes
 we better stay together,
 we better help each other.
 And dare I say by the time we all get there
 all the sandwiches will be gone,
 and all the chocolate will be gone,
 and all the water will be gone,
 and all the backpacks empty.
 But no matter how long it takes us
 we've got to go together.
 Because that is how it is in the Body of Christ
 it's all of us
 in love and in care,
 in support and mutuality.
 We really do need each other.²

²Reuben Welch, publisher and date unknown.

Part of our friendship to one another is being a shelter, a refuge, a place to hide. In ancient biblical times God instructed the people to establish six cities of refuge where people could go to seek safety from their avengers. Turn with me to Numbers 35:6-15 and let's read that passage.

We need to express real, authentic love. We should not be afraid to say to one another, "I love you." Chuck Swindoll tells about a recent convert's dilemma;

The only thing I miss about the old fellowship was when all the guys of the outfit used to go to the local joint and sit around, laugh, tell stories, drink beers, and really let our hair down. It was great. But now I don't have anybody to tell my troubles to, to admit my faults to. I can't find anybody in the church who will put their arm around me and tell me I'm still okay. Man is it lonely in there.³

Maybe the church needs to be less of a habitat for the pious and more of a shelter or a refuge. With all of my heart I believe that God wants the church to be a place of shelter and I am even more convinced that God wants us, as brothers in Christ, to be a place where we can come in and say, "I'm sunk or beat or I'm hurting" and in that place to

³Chuck Swindoll, Dropping Your Guard (Waco: Word Publishers, 1983), p. 116.

find friends who love and need each other.

I need you and you need me and the rewards for dropping our masks far outweigh the risks.

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 5: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Matthew 13:1-9;18-23

Saturday: John 15:1-17

Sunday: Matthew 3:8

Monday: Galatians 5:13-26

Tuesday: John 12:24

Wednesday: II Peter 1:5-11

Thursday: Ezekiel 47:12

Ministry: Meet with your prayer partner this week.

Write two notes this week: one to your spouse telling her how much you love her, and a second one to a brother in the Lord telling him how much you love him.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson VI: "Listening Men"

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to evaluate their listening skills.

Scripture References: Psalm 34:12-13; Proverbs 15:23; 18:13,21; 25:11; 26:22; Luke 7:37-39, 47-48; 19:1-9; Romans 12:9-21; 15:1-13; II Corinthians 1:3-4; 2:5-8; Galatians 6:2; I Thessalonians 5:11-15; James 1:19; 3:2-10; I Peter 3:10

Special Notes: "Complete the Statement" slips for the icebreaker prepared ahead of time and separated.

We have been getting to know each other better during the past weeks. I want you to know how much I appreciate the openness that each of you expressed last week as we removed our masks.

Tonight I would like us to focus our attention on two things, communication and empathy. First, let's take a look at communication. Communication is the process in which people get to know each other, relate to one another, and understand what is really going on in the other person. As men, we generally have a more difficult time when it comes to communicating and developing listening skills than women do. Listening is one of the most important aspects of a

relationship, whether it is a marriage, friendship, or a work relationship. Listening does not come easily. We must work at it not only in our friendships and marriages but even in our relationship with God. For example, how often does our prayer life reflect our one-sided conversations with God?

We feel more comfortable letting people and God know our position, our opinions, and our feelings. Actually, most of us want to be heard more than we want to listen. Yet when people are asked what they seek in a friendship, they respond, "I want a friend who listens." Sometimes we concentrate more on getting our word in rather than giving our complete attention to what the other person is saying.

Let's look at the following passages of scripture and see what God's Word says about listening.

Proverbs 18:21

Proverbs 26:22

James 3:2-10

I Peter 3:10

Proverbs 25:11

Proverbs 15:23

Proverbs 18:13

James 1:19

Psalm 34:12-13

One of the keys to a successful marriage or friendship is to hear what your mate or friend is really saying.

Listening should free us from ourselves and from our own interests. Our main objective in listening should be the other person. One of the problems that we have in listening is that we try to second guess what our friend or spouse is going to say, so we either cut them off and finish the sentence or we interrupt his idea with something that he does not mean at all. I find myself at times trying to even guess the next question and figure out in my mind what I am going to say next, rather than really listening. That is what Proverbs 18:13 means, "He who answers without listening."

Joyce Landorf in her book, Tough and Tender, has a chapter entitled "Exceptional Listener." In this chapter she lists seven skills or thoughts that we, as men, need to develop in our marriages and I would add, in our friendships.

1. Have I already stopped listening? When is the last time you asked these three questions to your spouse or friend? How do you feel about...? What happened in your life today? Or interspersed your mate's or friends' remarks with , "You are right." instead of uh-huh or just nodding.
2. Do you listen without judging or presuming? Like deciding what they are going to say before they speak.
3. Do you listen by touching? Listening is not

always done with the ears, sometimes it involves holding and touching. It shows that you care and understand what your mate or friend is going through.

4. Are you communicating in honesty? We talk and listen on five different levels:

- a. Cliche conversations
- b. Reporting the facts to others
- c. My ideas and judgments
- d. My feelings and emotions
- e. Complete emotional and personal truthful communication.

5. Do you communicate through written words?

Written words communicate how we feel about another person. We as men have a tendency to neglect writing. We need to get into the habit of sending our wives cards, and notes on the mirror, etc. (and we need to get in the habit of writing to our brothers and telling them how much we love them, that we are praying for them and that we are there if they ever need us.)(my addition)

6. Are you a gut level listener? A terminally ill girl was in the hospital. The staff of the hospital did not know if the girl knew she was dying and most of their attempts to lead her into such discussion had failed. The girl was very

near death and yet she could not speak of it. She was easy to get along with and never complained. One night she urgently rang the call light and the nurse responded. Lying under her oxygen tent, she asked, "What would happen to me if the hospital caught on fire?" The nurse smiled and answered, "You'll be alright," and started to leave the room. When she got to the door her gut level reaction responded to what the girl said. She turned around, walked back to bed, unzipped the oxygen tent and crawled onto the bed and held the girl in her arms. She asked, "Would this help?" She heard the girl's message, "I'm afraid because I'm dying."

7. Do you take the time to listen? Our taking time shows them that we love them and really do care about what is happening in their life.¹

We must be more than just a listener; we must learn to show empathy towards our friends. I would like us to sing a hymn tonight that speaks so clearly of how the church should relate to one another and specifically how growing believers, ought to relate to one another. "Blest Be The Tie". (Sing the hymn together.) Look at those words: binds, comforts, sorrows, mutual woes, mutual burdens bear,

¹Joyce Landorf, Tough and Tender (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1981), pp. 77-92.

flow a sympathizing tear, and when apart there is pain. That is how we ought to be with one another. There should be a mutual sharing of our joys and pains. This is what the early church called koinia fellowship. Let's look at some scriptures that reflect the type of fellowship we ought to have.

II Corinthians 1:3-4

Romans 12:9-21

II Corinthians 2:5-8

I Thessalonians 5:11-15

Romans 15:1-13

Galatians 6:2

If we are to live like these scriptures tell us we should, then we had better learn to demonstrate empathy to one another. Empathy is the capacity to participate in one another's feelings and ideas. Empathy does not just happen. It only happens as we break out of the superficial realm and get to the root levels of our friend's feelings.

In a relationship you care about what is going on inside your friend and he cares about what is happening in your life. A friend of mine at college was fed up with everyone going around and saying, "Hi, how are you?" and the typical response of, "I'm fine. How are you?" He decided one day that every time someone asked him that he was going to respond, "Terrible, my mother died!" The results of his experiment were that nobody noticed. Similarly, we may say

to someone we care about, "Hey, you look great" and they tell us that they are fine and go on their way when inside their pain throbs just below the surface.

Empathy does not mean that we solve our friend's problem. It means that we listen to him, listening for the sound of pain. "Wait, what did you say?" "How do you feel about that?" What you are doing is helping your friend get his feelings out in the open. Empathy means asking those prodding questions. But only after you have earned the right. Remember our lesson on principles of biblical friendship in which you had to earn the right to speak the truth. Another problem that you and I have in listening to our friends is that we try to match what they are doing with something that we have experienced. Too often this switches the focal point from them to us. Sometimes it is good to share common struggles but only after they first know that you understand. We need to speak personally and to draw the other person out when we sense there is something going on deep inside. Acceptance is so important.

How did both Zaccheaus and the woman who anointed Jesus feel acceptance from Jesus in the following passages, Luke 19:1-9 and Luke 7:37-39, 47-48? (Allow time for answers.)

Complete the Statements
for lesson VI

When I am around other people...

I love you (name someone who is here tonight) because...

I wish someone would...

I would spend more time with God if...

I'm afraid of...

My faith could be compared to...

I'd like to get to know (name someone here tonight) better because...

If I had my life to do all over again, I would...

I wish that at work I could...

If any of you washed my feet, I'd feel...

If I could change one thing about myself, it would be...

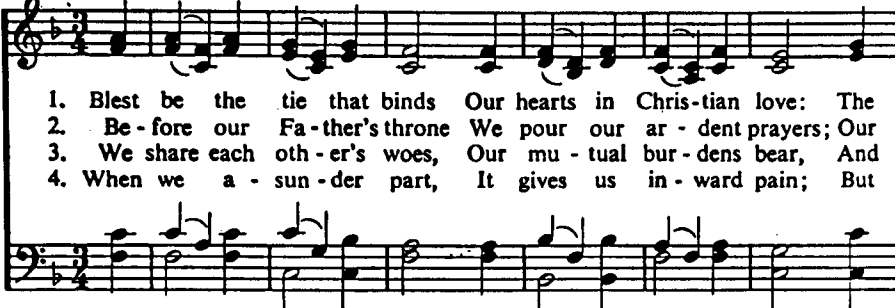
When I am with you guys I feel...

Sometimes God...

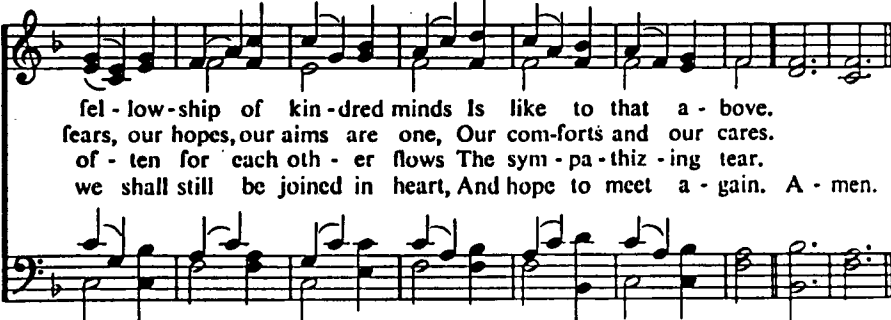
If I had no limits for God I would like to...

Blest Be The Tie

JOHN FAWCETT, 1740-1817

DENNIS SM
JOHANN G. NÄGELI, 1768-1836
Arr. by LOWELL MASON, 1792-1872


1. Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris-tian love: The
 2. Be-fore our Fa-ther's throne We pour our ar-dent prayers; Our
 3. We share each oth-er's woes, Our mu-tual bur-dens bear, And
 4. When we a-sun-der part, It gives us in-ward pain; But



fel-low-ship of kin-dred minds Is like to that a-bove.
 fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our com-forts and our cares.
 of-ten for each oth-er flows The sym-pa-thiz-ing tear.
 we shall still be joined in heart, And hope to meet a-gain. A-men.

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 6: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Matthew 13:1-9

Saturday: Galatians 5:16-26

Sunday: I John 4:20-21

Monday: James 1:2-4

Tuesday: John 15:18-21

Wednesday: Psalm 40:1-2

Thursday: James 5:7-8

Ministry: Spend time with your prayer partner discussing the fruits of the Spirit in your life.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson VII: "Fruit Bearing Men"

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to list the fruits of the Spirit and how they ought to be applied to their lives.

Scripture References: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 40:1-2; Matthew 5:43-48; 13:1-9; John 15:18-21; Romans 5:3,8; I Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:2-3; I Thessalonians 3:6-9; I Peter 4:8

Special Notes: For the icebreaker: poster board with the fruits of the Spirit listed, two blue and two red stickers per participant, Becoming Fruitful Men devotional for notebooks.

Icebreaker: Have a chart with each of the nine fruits of the Spirit listed. Give each man two red and two blue stickers. They are to place a red sticker beside the two easiest fruits to display and a blue sticker beside the two most difficult to display.

For the next two weeks I would like us to focus our attention on some areas in our lives that we need to develop more fully. It is easy when you look at the list of the fruits of the Spirit to consider them less than masculine.

Yet these fruits were meant for men as well as women.

A fruit begins as a tiny seed and must mature until it is fully ripe. Let's first take a look at Matthew 13:1-9 to see an important principle to remember when looking at the fruit of the Spirit. Who is the planter in this parable? That's right, it is God. God is the one who has planted each of the fruits in you. So if you want the fruit to develop then it is necessary to let the gardener do the gardening. Let him develop the fruit and cause it to grow. In order to do that, we must examine the fruit and let God do what he must in order to develop us into the men he wants us to be. When we let God ripen the fruit in us we are allowing him to develop his character in us. We may have to fight some of the training or concepts that have been instilled in us about masculinity because some of the fruits will seem contrary to the "macho" image of masculinity. One of the reasons that each of you have begun this whole program was because you wanted to become more Christ-like in your daily lives. I believe that the more that we allow God to develop the fruit of the Spirit in us the more Christ-like we will become in our lives. Turn with me to Galatians 5:16-26 and see the contrast that Paul has developed between the living by the flesh and living by the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness, and self-control. Tonight we will look at the first four fruits: love, joy,

patience, and peace.

Developing the fruit of Love:

Love is a word that is rooted in relationships. Jerry Bridges in his book, The Practice of Godliness, states that, "our devotion to God finds its outward expression in loving one another."¹ I John 4:20-21 states that, "For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God who he has not seen. And he has given us this command: whoever loves God must also love his brother." This could not be an easy task if we were to attempt to accomplish it on our own. This principle is especially true in the fact that we are commanded to love not only our brothers in the church but also our enemies. Let us read Romans 5:8 and Matthew 5:34-48. The kind of love that God wants us to develop is a supernatural type of love which he provides for us.

Generally speaking, men do not verbalize their love for their wives, or children, and especially, not for other men. When is the last time you told your wife or kids that you loved them? As men, our tendency is to rationalize in our minds that we perform specific tasks for our families because we love them. This is true, but we must verbalize that love also. The love which God wants us to have is a love that sacrifices.

¹Jerry Bridges, The Practice of Godliness (Colorado Springs: Navipress, 1983), p. 245.

Developing the fruit of Joy:

The second fruit we need to internalize is joy. It is common to confuse joy with happiness but the two are very different. Happiness is based on temporal circumstances which occur in and around your life. If things are going well, then the tendency is to be happy. Joy, however, is a quality of life, not a reaction to events and happenings in your life. Joy is being able to live without being tied down or shackled by circumstances. This joy comes from the presence of God dwelling deep within you. Joy is found not in possessions or good events but is rooted in our relationship with Christ. As we walk in obedience to God we will experience a real sense of joy. Joy is also linked to our ministry with others. Paul stated this in First Thessalonians 3:6-9. Paul had invested his life in the people of Thessalonica. Let's read those verses. Paul had sacrificially given of himself. Who would like to describe a time when you were filled with joy as the result of serving someone? (Allow time for sharing from the group.) Paul in writing to the Philippians was filled with joy because of their partnership with him. Let's read James 1:2-4. James tells us to consider it pure joy when we face trials. Why would he tell us that and why is it then so difficult to consider it pure joy when we face difficult times? (Allow the men time to respond.) Again, I believe that it goes back to being rooted in a deep relationship

with Jesus.

Developing the fruit of Peace:

The most common definition of peace is the absence of war. Jesus, however, prophesied that a difficult time was coming in John 15:18-21. Let's read that scripture. Jesus expected his disciples to face tension and even persecution because of their faith. What is the secret to the peace that Jesus offered to the disciples? (Allow time for response.) The secret that Jesus offered to the disciples was that he would place his peace within them—a peace that passes all understanding. The people around us might not understand how we can be peaceful in light of the situation we are facing. Jesus said because of their trust in him his followers would be able to face trials, persecutions, and even death. Their security was found not in themselves, or the world, but in their relationship with him. Paul in writing to the Romans said:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?
Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine
or nakedness or danger of the sword? No, in all
these things we are more than conquerors through
him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither
death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither
the present nor the future, nor any powers,
neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all
creation, will be able to separate us from the

love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35,37-39 NIV

God calls us to live in peace and to be peacemakers. Sometimes being placed in the role of being a peacemaker is very difficult. What are some of the struggles that we face each day in which we need to experience the peace of God, that is knowing that God is in complete control? (Allow time for response.) It is my dream that these times of sharing together will facilitate the openness to identify and share with one another these tense areas in our lives. Developing the fruit of Patience:

The word patience, as we use it, is found in the New Testament in several different words with the same Greek root. An understanding of each of these terms will allow us to see the full picture of patience.

The first term is long-suffering as found in the King James Version. Long-suffering is one's ability to suffer for a long time under the mistreatment of others without growing bitter or resentful. Peter tells us in order to develop this fruit we need to look at the example of Christ. I Peter 2:23 says, "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered he made no threats. Instead he trusted himself to him who judges rightly." If we have not learned this aspect of patience we will be deeply troubled by a magnified and unbalanced sense of justice. "I do not deserve what is happening to me. I want

to get even!"

The second aspect of patience that we must identify is patience in trying relationships. It is difficult to tolerate a person who intentionally tries to arouse our anger or wrath, to make us lose our temper. We must learn to reflect God's tolerance or slowness in demonstrating his anger toward his people. If a person has a problem with anger one of the best solutions is to admit that there is a problem and to focus on such verses as Exodus 34:6; First Corinthians 13:5; and James 1:19. Every time anger erupts, the angry person should apologize to the person towards whom the anger was displayed. Habits are not easily broken. A person must discipline himself to bring anger under control.

The third aspect of patience is the tolerance of the shortcomings of others. I fail more often here than anywhere else in this fruit. The shortcomings of others can cause us to lose patience. It could be the driver in front of us, or a friend who is late for an appointment, or for me it is an officer in the church who does not do his or her job who causes me to become angry from frustration. The patient reaction to these episodes in life is termed forbearance as seen in Ephesians 4:2 and Colossians 3:13 (Read these passages.) Forbearance or tolerance as it is found in the Bible is always associated with love, and the unity of the body. Let's look at Ephesians 4:2-3 and First Peter 4:8. Let's imagine that a friend of yours had an

appointment to meet you and missed it. How will you react? You might ask yourself why should I be tolerant of his failure. The patient person's answer would be, "Because I deeply love and appreciate the person." Remember love covers a multitude of sins. (I Peter 4:8)

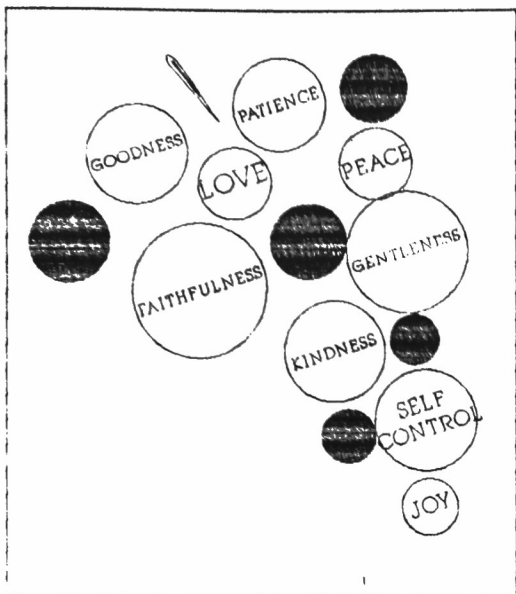
The fourth area where we need to demonstrate patience is in our relationship to God. Many times God does not answer our request right away but allows time in our lives where we must wait on him. David learned to wait on the Lord and this is reflected in Psalm 40:1-2. Some of you have been farmers and have planted seeds and then have had to wait for the crop. James refers to patience being like a farmer. (Read James 5:7-8)

Finally, the fruit of patience is seen in the area of enduring through hardships. In Romans 5:3 we are told that suffering produces endurance. James 1:2 tells us that the trials that test our faith develop perseverance.

This evening we have talked about the fruits of love, joy, peace, and patience. Each of us has each of these fruits in us if we are believers in Christ. The degree of ripeness will vary from one person to another. If we want to become more Christ-like in our daily lives then it will be necessary for each of us to ask God to develop these fruits in our lives.

Your weekly devotional sheets for the next two weeks are a little different. When you began this evening you

marked on the chart the two most difficult fruits for you to express in your life. I would like you to take each of those fruits and work on one each week. In your Becoming Fruitful Men, find the sheet for the particular 'fruit you need to develop more in your life. Each sheet contains a prayer, daily scripture readings, an adventure/task, and a blank sheet of paper for the recording of events.



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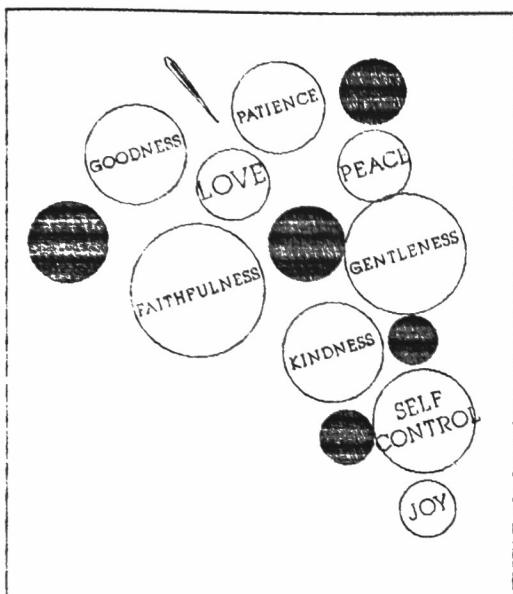
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John 15:1-8 NIV

BECOMING FRUITFUL MEN



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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF LOVE

PRAYER: God, I know that you love me and I want you to fill my life with your love. There are some people in my life who are hard to love and others who make loving them easy. Make my life a life of love. I yield myself to you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

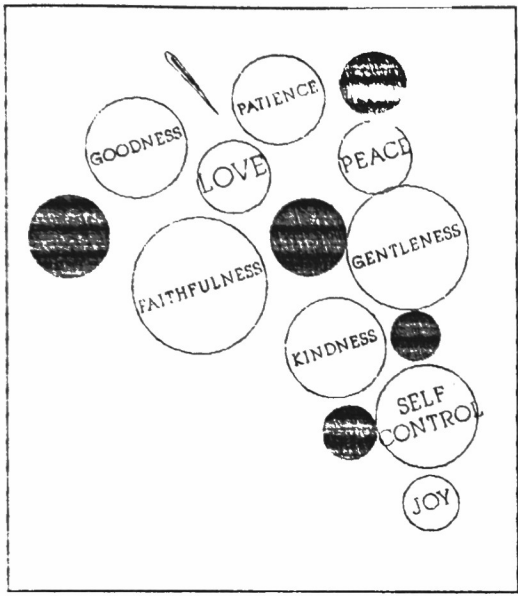
Friday: I Peter 1:22
 Saturday: Romans 12:10
 Sunday: Hebrews 13:1
 Monday: I Peter 3:8
 Tuesday: I John 3:16
 Wednesday: I John 4:20-21
 Thursday: I Thessalonians 4:9-10

ADVENTURE: You will experience sharing love with two people this week:

1. With a brother you love very dearly.
2. With someone with whom you come in contact regularly, whom you find difficult to love.

TASK: You are to meaningfully express love towards those two people. You should allow yourself to be led by God in accomplishing this. Ask him to show you and remember it may mean walking an extra mile.

RECORD: In your notebook record how your love is growing.



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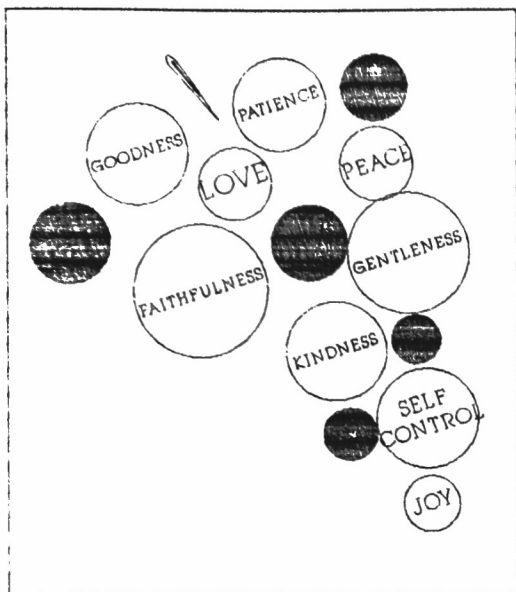
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John 15:1-8 NIV

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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF JOY

PRAYER: Father, develop the fruit of joy in my life. In every and all circumstances may you cause that fruit to grow in me.

SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Luke 10:17-21

Saturday: Luke 24:52

Sunday: John 15:9-11

Monday: John 16:21-24

Tuesday: Acts 5:41

Wednesday: Ephesians 5:19

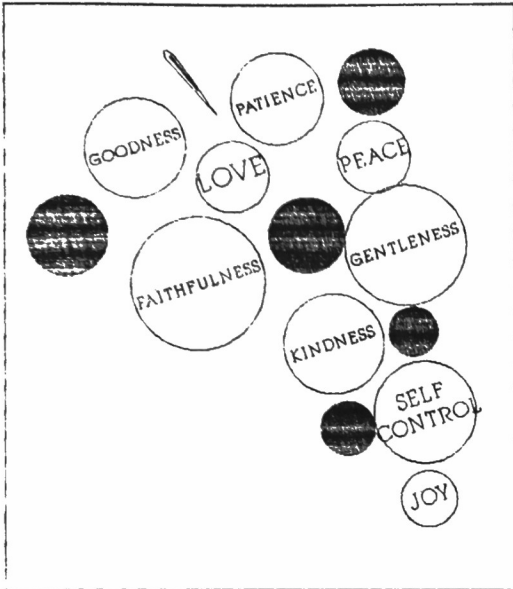
Thursday: Psalm 105:43

ADVENTURE: To experience this fruit in your life this week I want you to do two things:

1. Sacrificially serve another brother this week.
2. Send a note to a brother thanking him for serving you. (Remember Paul thanked the Philippians!"

TASK: See above.

RECORD: In your notebook record what Jesus is doing in you and how your joy is growing.



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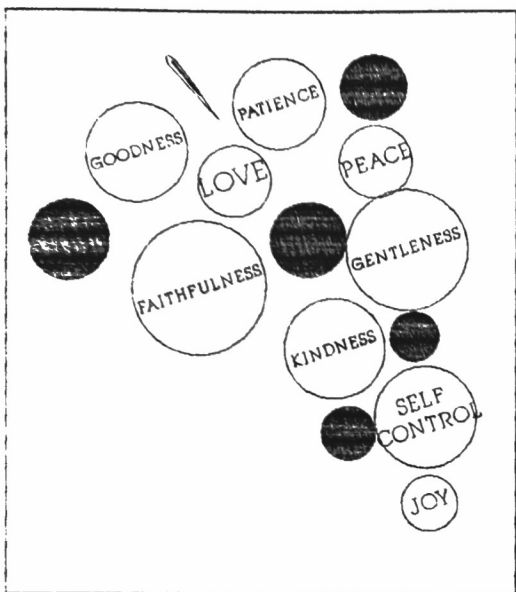
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John 15:1-8 NIV

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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF PEACE

PRAYER: Father, develop the fruit of peace in my life. I want to reflect your peace and be a peacemaker for your glory and praise.

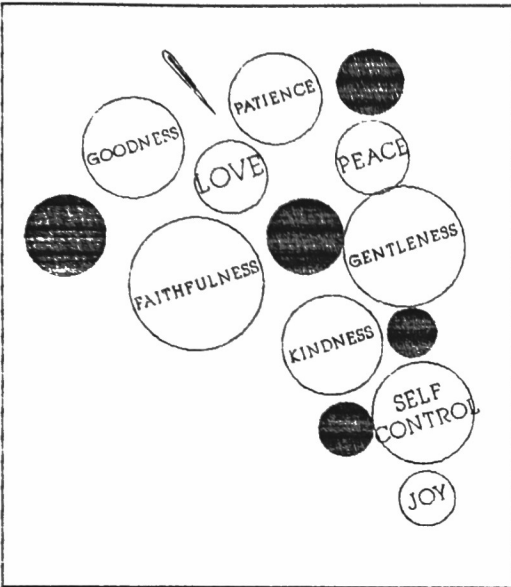
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Romans 8:6
 Saturday: Romans 14:11
 Sunday: Isaiah 48:18
 Monday: John 14:27
 Tuesday: II Corinthians 13:11
 Wednesday: Ephesians 2:14
 Thursday: Psalm 29:11

ADVENTURE: Identify a tense situation in your life and share it with at least two brothers.

TASK: See above.

RECORD: In your notebook write a psalm expressing your confidence in God in the situation you have identified. Share that psalm with the two brothers.



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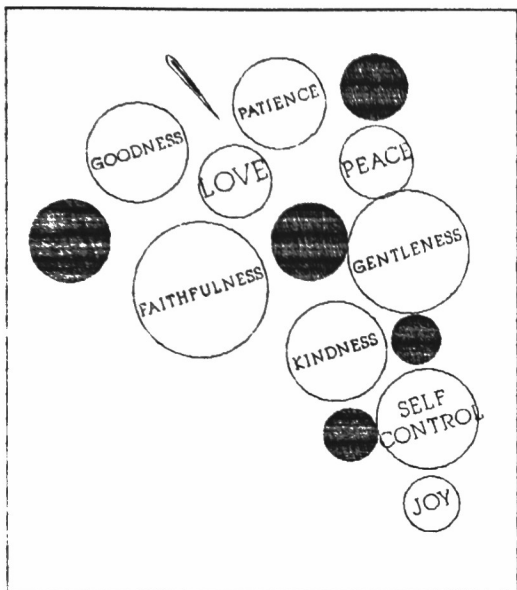
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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF PATIENCE

PRAYER: Father, help me in my impatient world to show the same kind of patience that you express to me. I know that it will not be easy, but I know that I need that fruit in my life.

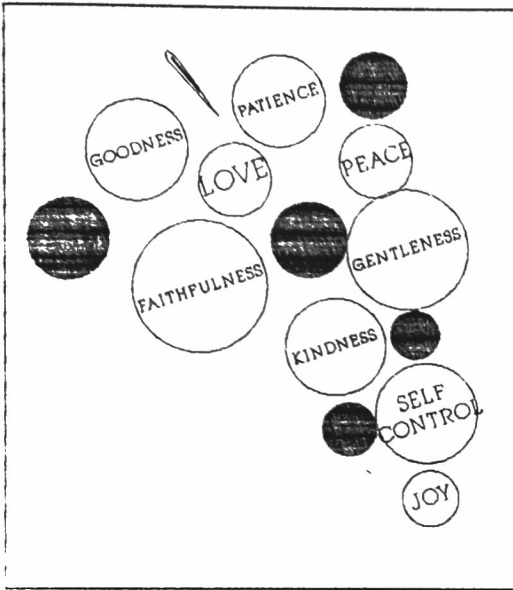
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Hebrews 6:11-12
 Saturday: Romans 15:5
 Sunday: James 5:7-11
 Monday: Titus 2:2-3
 Tuesday: I Peter 2:23
 Wednesday: Ephesians 4:1-2
 Thursday: I Timothy 6:11

ADVENTURE: Identify the areas in your life where you are most impatient at home and at work.

TASK: Share those areas with your prayer partner and covenant to pray for victory for one another.

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord is teaching you about the fruit of patience in your life.



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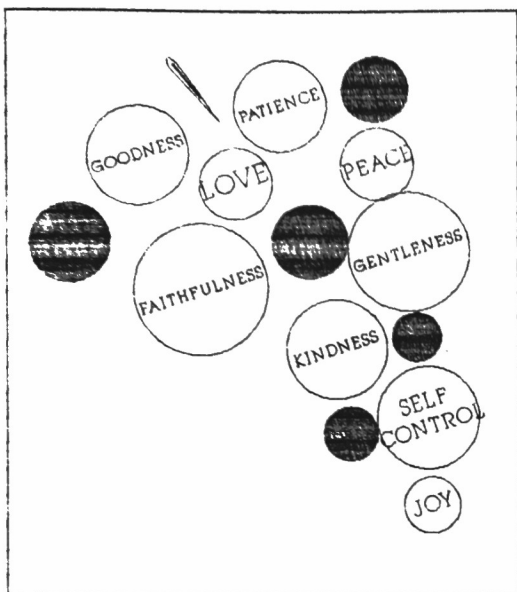
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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF KINDNESS

PRAYER: Father, help me to express the love that you gave to me to others. Let me show your kindness to others. I know that it will not be easy, so give me your grace.

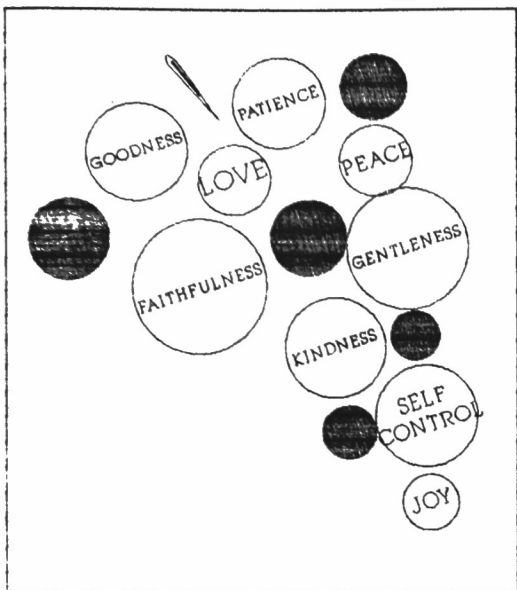
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Ephesians 2:7
 Saturday: II Peter 1:7
 Sunday: Titus 3
 Monday: Psalm 18:50
 Tuesday: Jeremiah 9:24
 Wednesday: Hosea 11:4
 Thursday: Colossians 3:12

ADVENTURE: Identify someone to whom you desire to minister with the fruit of kindness.

TASK: Seek God's guidance as to what you can do to minister to that person or be brave and ask that person what you can do and insist on an answer. Then do it!

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord is teaching you about the fruit of kindness and what you experienced in doing an act of kindness.



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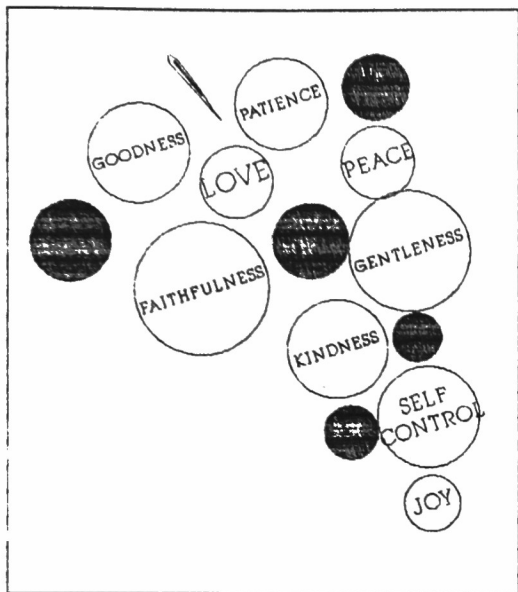
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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF GENTLENESS

PRAYER: Father, in a world where men are expected to be tough I want to demonstrate gentleness. Help me be sensitive to others around me.

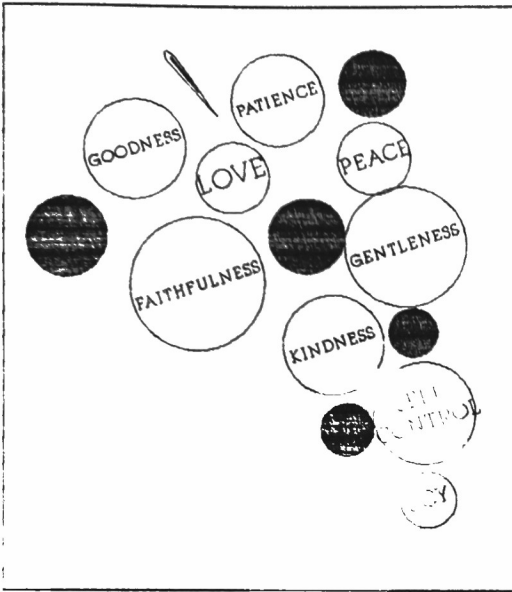
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Psalm 18:35
 Saturday: Philippians 4:5
 Sunday: Titus 3:2
 Monday: Colossians 3:12
 Tuesday: I Timothy 6:11
 Wednesday: Matthew 11:28-29
 Thursday: Matthew 12:20

ADVENTURE: Identify a brother to whom you desire to minister the fruit of gentleness.

TASK: Seek God's guidance as to what you can do to minister to that person. Touch their heart with an act that will say in big words, "I love you!"

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord is teaching you about the fruit of gentleness and what you experienced in doing an act of gentleness.



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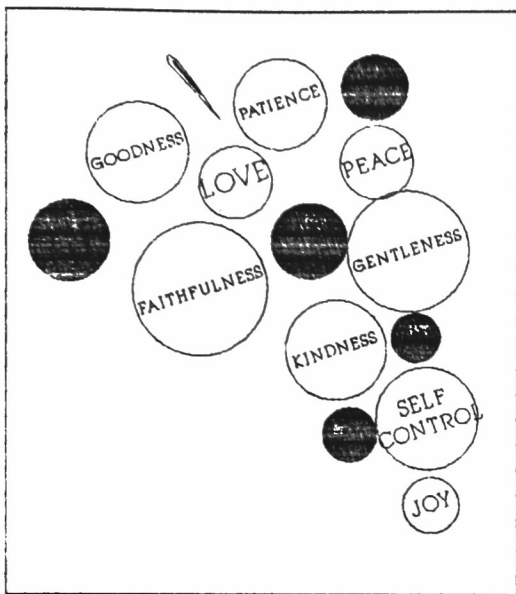
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John 15:1-8 NIV

DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF GOODNESS

PRAYER: Father, if I was created to do good works then reveal to me how I might go about that task this week and forever.

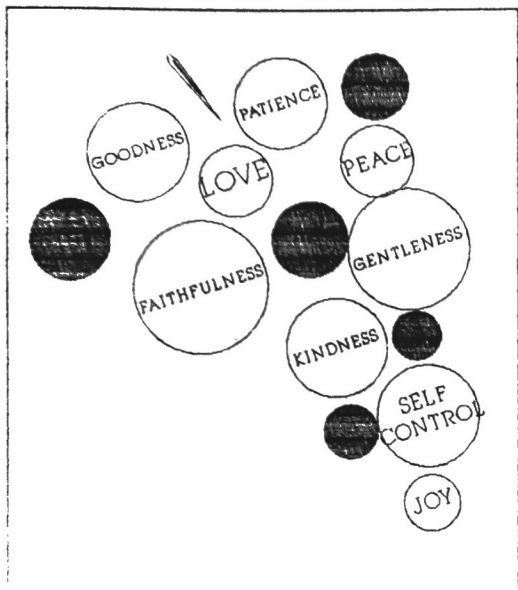
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Ephesians 2:8-9
 Saturday: Galatians 6:10
 Sunday: I Timothy 5:9-10
 Monday: Galatians 6:9
 Tuesday: Hebrews 12:14
 Wednesday: Matthew 25:31-46
 Thursday: I Peter 4:10

ADVENTURE: Seek the Lord's guidance as to how and to whom you might show good works this week. You might consider using this as a chance to minister to someone who does not know the Lord Jesus.

TASK: Same as above.

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord has taught you this week about the fruit of kindness.



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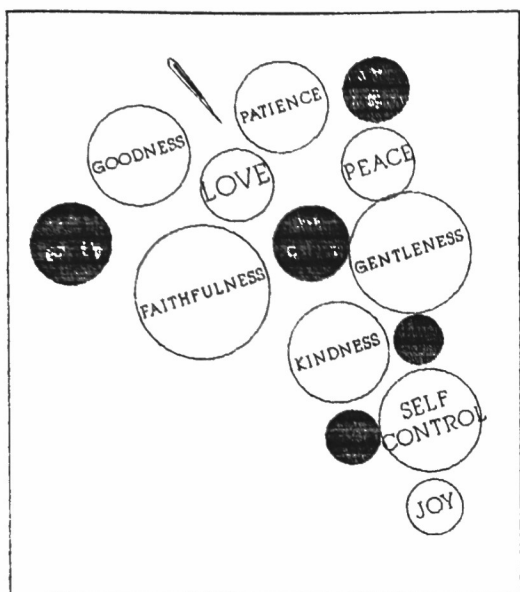
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DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF FAITHFULNESS

PRAYER: Father, faithfulness is one of your attributes. If I am to become like you then develop the fruit of faithfulness in me.

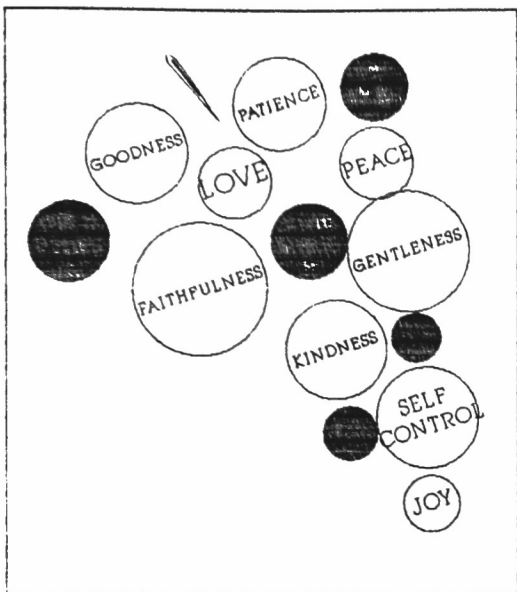
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Joshua 24:14-15
 Saturday: Psalm 40:10
 Sunday: Psalm 57:3
 Monday: Psalm 86:15
 Tuesday: Psalm 111
 Wednesday: Psalm 91:4
 Thursday: Psalm 117:2

ADVENTURE: Study Psalm 111 and underline in your Bible those indications of God's faithfulness. Get creative and develop a coat of arms that will graphically express the faithfulness of God as you understand it.

TASK: Send a thank you note to someone who has been faithful to you. Be specific in that note so they are aware of their faithfulness.

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord is teaching you about the fruit of faithfulness.



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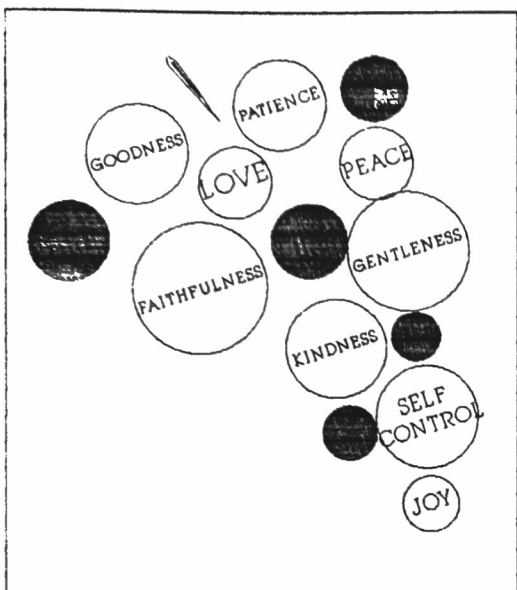
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DEVELOPING THE FRUIT OF SELF-CONTROL

PRAYER: Father, I acknowledge before you that I am lacking self-control in these areas of my life...Help me to let you be Lord of all my life. Develop the fruit of self-control in my life.

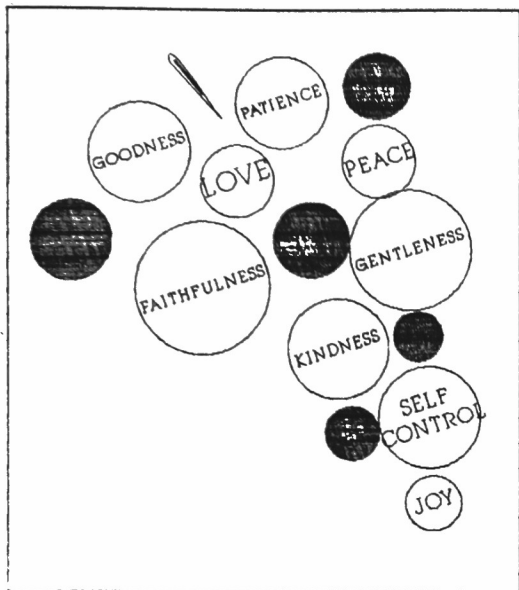
SCRIPTURE:

Friday: Proverbs 25:28
 Saturday: I Corinthians 6:12
 Sunday: I Thessalonians 4:3-5
 Monday: II Corinthians 10:5
 Tuesday: Psalm 139:2,4 and Psalm 19:14
 Wednesday: Proverbs 16:32
 Thursday: Philippians 4:8

ADVENTURE: Share with two brothers the areas in your life where you need more self-control and ask them to pray for you.

TASK: Same as above.

RECORD: In your notebook record what the Lord is teaching you about the fruit of self-control.



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John 15:1-8 NIV

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Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson VIII: "Fruit Bearing Men"
continued

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to list the fruits of the Spirit and how they ought to be applied to their lives.

Scripture References: Psalm 36:59; 89:1,2; Isaiah 40:10-18; Lamentations 3:23; Matthew 5:43-48; 11:8-29; 25:4-30; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:19-21; 6:9-10; Ephesians 2:2-9; Philippians 4:5; I Thessalonians 2:7; I Timothy 5:9-10; Hebrews 12:2; I Peter 4:10

Special Notes: Cut out nine different fruits from construction paper and place them on the back of the chairs before the men arrive.

Icebreaker: Place the cut out fruits on the backs of the chairs: Banana/love; peach/joy; grapes/peace; pineapple/patience; plum/kindness; cherries/self-control; watermelon/gentleness; red apple/goodness; yellow apple/faithfulness. After each man is seated reveal what each fruit represents. Then have the men share how they see that fruit in their lives.

Developing the fruit of Gentleness:

George Bethune once said, "Perhaps no grace is less prayed for, or less cultivated than gentleness."¹ This statement is perhaps more true for men than for women. We do not think of gentleness as an attribute for which we want to be known for. Gentleness is difficult to define because it is so often confused with meekness. Both gentleness and meekness are born of power not weakness. There is no false gentleness that is effeminate or false meekness that is cowardly. A Christian is to be gentle and meek because those are virtues of God.

Isaiah 40 contains several powerful verses which display a vivid picture of God. Listen to these verses:

See the sovereign Lord comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. Who has measured the water in the hollow of his hand or the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on scales? And the hill in a balance? Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Or showed him the path

¹Ibid., 219.

of understanding? Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they are fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. To whom will you compare him with?

(Isaiah 40:10,12-18 NIV)

Tucked away in the midst of all those verses about the awesomeness of God is a verse which speaks so clearly of the gentleness of God, verse eleven giving equal weight to the strength of gentleness. "He tends his flock like a shepherd: he gathers his lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those who have young."

(Isaiah 40:11 NIV)

Several passages from the New Testament direct our actions toward the fruit of gentleness. Philippians 4:5 says, "Let your gentleness be evident to all." I Timothy 3:3 is a description of an overseer which says, "not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money." Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-29, Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Sometimes we have a difficult time seeing manliness and gentleness in the same context. The reason for this is simple. We have been influenced by the world's concept of maleness. We want gentleness in our mothers and wives, but not in ourselves. Paul in writing to the Thessalonians said, "We were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children." (I Thessalonians 2:7) As men we must learn to touch, care and hold one another when it is necessary so that the fruit of gentleness may be seen in our lives.

Developing the fruit of Goodness:

In Ephesians 2:8 Paul clearly teaches us that salvation is by grace through faith and not by works. But we must also be familiar with the following verse. Let's examine both of these verses of scripture.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God-, not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Paul aptly illustrates the ordinariness of most good deeds in First Timothy 5:9-10. This list is written for virtuous widows, but I believe it is applicable to all people who wish to demonstrate the meaning of good deeds. I do not believe that this list is just for women but for any

of us who want to serve the Lord by doing good deeds. Look at that list: bringing up the children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble, and devoting oneself to all kinds of good deeds.

In Paul's letter to the Galatians we are admonished to be good to all people, especially to those who belong to the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

Good works as a fruit in us ought to flow naturally from us. Once or twice a week it would be advantageous for us to do something good for another brother so that God might develop the fruit of goodness in our lives.

This fruit is most frequently overlooked in our home lives. What kind of example are we as fathers? Do our children see us doing the dishes, mopping the floors, taking out the garbage, doing good deeds for our neighbors, or fellow brothers and sisters in the Lord? How else will they learn the value of goodness if we are not setting an example of Christian goodness?

True goodness is not only self-sacrificing, it is also untiring. Galatians 6:9 tells us that not to become weary in doing good deeds.

In Matthew 25 Jesus reminds us that what we do to the least of these our brethren we do unto him. Our actions of goodness are to be seen as if we are doing them unto Jesus himself.

Peter also reminds us that we have an obligation to use

our gifts and abilities to serve others. (I Peter 4:10)
Goodness must be a part of our lives. We must strive to do for others what is difficult and unpleasant for them to do for themselves. The fruit of goodness is most actively seen as we carry out good works for others.

Developing the Fruit of Kindness:

Kindness in men is found to be in direct conflict with the world's definition of maleness. What does the world expect of men? The world's image of the perfect man is one who is macho, rough, tough, and who does not need to express love and tenderness. God's image of the strength of man is, however, not in the toughness of the skin but in the tenderness of his heart.

In all of the nine fruits of the Spirit kindness and love are the two fruits of the Spirit which we give and receive most frequently. Kindness is in many ways inseparable from the word mercy. It implies a genuine concern for another person. Caring or kindness is the essence of God's own love for all of humanity.

What does kindness cost a man? The development of this fruit comes with a high price tag in commitment, sensitivity, and self-sacrifice. He must forget his own personal preferences. He must labor without fan-fare to bring pleasure to others. Let's take a few moments and share a time when we experienced kindness from someone else. (Allow time for response.)

In Matthew 5:43-48 Jesus speaks of the need for us to express our love and kindness to those who will not love us in return. This is the kind of kindness that God desires for you and me.

Let's be vulnerable tonight. On a slip of paper I want each of you to write down one caring thing that someone could do for you. Do not put your name on it because I am going to read these papers out loud just so that you can see how simple these acts of kindness can be. (After the men have written their answers, read them.)

Kindness takes time, lots of time. It cannot be done with a flippant, cheap attitude. It must come from deep within the heart. And it takes time that we would usually spend on ourselves, and that is where the real sacrifice is to be found.

Kindness is redeeming others' lives in small but meaningful ways. Visit people. Make calls to do little favors for others. Run errands. Help those who are struggling with their work. Bear some of their burdens. Pray with them. Share their joys and sorrows. Write them letters and give them your time.

All of us are extremely busy. It takes time to sacrifice an hour or two for gentle conversation with someone. They are worth it. Kindness requires time, thought, and love. God requires kindness to be an outgrowth of our lives.

Developing the fruit of Faithfulness:

There are sixty references to God's faithfulness found in the scriptures. Forty of these references are found in the Psalms which speak of the struggles of the godly and their total dependence upon God.

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth will I make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself. (Psalm 89:1-2)

Lamentations 3:23 says, "They (his compassions) are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. Let's also read Psalm 36:5-9.

The word faithfulness according to Webster means: firm adherence to promises or in observance of a duty. Faithfulness has several synonyms: dependability, reliability, trustworthiness, loyalty.

When faith is active it affects all of life. We see ourselves as stewards entrusted with time, talents, means, and concern to be used on behalf of God and our fellow man. Remember that God is the author and finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)

It only makes sense that if we observe God daily demonstrating his faithfulness to us it will increase and multiply our faith in him and it will demonstrate to the

world that we have personal faith in God.

In his book, A Gardener Looks at the Fruit of the Spirit, Philip Keller speaks of the principle of faithfulness which includes us having faith in others by learning to trust other people.²

What are some of the faithful things that you have seen God do in your life? (Allow time for response)

Faithfulness refers not only to our faith in God but faithfulness in every part of our lives. There are three areas in our daily lives where we need to evaluate faithfulness. First, how dependable are we in our jobs? Sometimes the worldly attitude is to do as little as possible. As Christians we ought to be responsible, hard-working, and dependable in carrying out our responsibilities. We need to also evaluate our faithfulness to the church of Jesus Christ. How dependable are we in performing our duties in the church? When you join our church you promise to uphold it with your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service. How faithful are you to these vows? Finally, we need to evaluate our faithfulness to our families. Do we carry out promises to our wives and children? Sometimes we are more guilty of being faithful to our jobs and careers than our families. Let's take a few moments and discuss our faithfulness in

²Philip Keller, A Gardener Looks at the Fruit of the Spirit (Waco: Word Books, 1982), p. 158.

these three areas. (Allow the group time to discuss.)

Developing the fruit of Self-control:

I believe that one of the areas with which we struggle most is the area of self-control. Take a moment and write down where you lack self-control in your physical life, in your mental life, and in your spiritual life. (Allow time for response.) If you are anything like me it probably was not too difficult.

What does self-control mean for Christians and more specifically what does it mean for men? It literally means that my "self," my whole person, or my whole being-body, mind, and soul comes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. It means that I am an individual governed by God. My entire life, every aspect of it, whether spiritual, moral, or physical has become subject to the sovereignty of God. I am a man "under authority," The governing of my affairs, my attitudes, and my actions are rights which I have relinquished to God's gracious Spirit's control. Remember we said in the first lesson on the fruit of the Spirit that since God was the gardener we must allow him the right to control the garden. Our whole spirit with its intuition, conscience, and communion with Christ can come under the control of Christ's Spirit. Our total personality with our mind, emotions, and will can be at Christ's command. Even our entire body can be under the control of God. Its appetites, drives, desires, and instincts can be governed by

God.

There is, however, a cost in all of this. It does not just happen. First, it means that you and I must give up our rights to God. Secondly, you and I must come to the point of relinquishing self-rule and turning ourselves over completely to God. Let's discuss one area which can be very troublesome in the area of self-control, our thought lives. Our minds and imaginations can become real monsters in our lives. Our minds and imaginations can monopolize our entire outlook on life. Our thought patterns can become so set against that which is good that even thoughts of God do not enter our minds.

Yet, what does Romans 12:1-3 tell us that we are to do? (Read scripture and allow time for response.) Here is a sample of a prayer of submission:

O Christ here I am with my grand thoughts and rampant imagination. I turn them over to you. Take them under your control. Invade this territory of mine. Lay claim to this your territory. I give it to you for your government. Manage it. Think your thoughts through me. Concentrate my interests in yourself. Center my attention on that which is beautiful, true, worthwhile, and remake me as you desire. Amen.

Our actions and reactions are too often controlled not by God but by hostility, anger, criticism, bitterness,

jealousy, hatred, our own selfish interests, as well as a score of other feelings. Galatians 5:19-21 calls them works of the flesh. We are to put these thoughts and attitudes off and assimilate the fruit of the Spirit into our lives.

The last area of our lives that must be under God's control is our wills. One can never please God as long as we determine to carry out our own plan and not God's. Only as the will is brought into harmony and submission to God's will do we discover and experience the meaning of peace in our lives.

Men, it is hard for us to relinquish total control of ourselves to God. But we must. Jesus, himself, had to learn that lesson. As a result of his willing submission Jesus was able to come to earth and carry out his Father's will and plan.

(After our prayer time we had a footwashing service. This could be optional, however, I felt that it is a very explicit way to express the fruits of humility and gentleness. I simply had a pitcher of warm water, a basin, and a towel in the middle of the circle. I started by washing one foot of the person to my right and then it continued around the circle. We sang some hymns and choruses as the footwashing took place. We would pray for the person as we were washing their feet and would give them a hug.)

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson IX: "The Journeys of John"

Lesson Goal: The participants will be able to list the two journeys of two Johns and the components of each journey.

Scripture References: Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 3:1-17; 4:18-21; 14:1-12; Mark 1:1-5, 29; 5:37; 9:38; Luke 9:51-56; John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7

Special Notes: Blackboard, complete the statement slips typed and pre-cut, scriptures on John the Baptist and John the Beloved.

Icebreaker: I'd like each of you to take a slip of paper from the basket and complete the statement.

Group Project: Divide the group in half and give each group a list of scriptures to read and ask them to write a summary of the qualities of the John which surface in the passages.

John the Baptist: Matthew 3:1-17; 14:1-12; Mark 1:1-5

John the Beloved: Matthew 4:18-21; Mark 1:29; 5:37; 9:38; Luke 9:51-56; John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7

These are difficult times for men. Today the American male is finding himself in a time of definition and redefinition of what it means to be a male. He must examine

himself in light of what he has always been taught about masculinity by the men in his life. A few of you shared in our icebreaker how or where you learned what it meant to be a man. Are there any others of you who would like to share who taught you what it was to be a man? (Allow time for response.)

For the last twenty years or more the role of women in America has been changing as women discover the masculine world which shunned them for centuries. This adventure has forced us into new experiences concerning their masculine roles.

Some of the research and writing which is presently emerging in the field of masculinity and femininity appears to be leaning toward the androgynous theory or what is called the "unisex" theory of humanity.¹ At the foundation of this theory is found the scripture from Genesis 1:26-27. Let's read that passage now.

I believe that those who hold this theory have expanded the scripture to its fullest extent. The basic premise of this line of thinking is that men and women totally lose their sex-oriented differences which are innately seen in the individual sexes. This theory is clearly neither biblical nor scientific. It is clearly evident that each person has a masculine and a feminine side to their

¹Smith, pp. 47-50.

personality since we are created in God's image and God created both male and female in his image. However, our masculine side if we are male and our feminine side if we are female should be stronger. Father Richard Rohr, a Catholic priest and founder of the New Jerusalem Community in Cincinnati, Ohio, has discussed in his lecture, "A Man's Approach to God, Four Talks on Male Spirituality", a well rounded interpretation of our masculine and feminine natures.

Father Rohr believes that men must take two different spiritual journeys. Men begin at what he calls the common masculine. He states that if a man remains in the common masculine he will become insensitive, tough, and "macho." Common masculinity is what you are taught about being male from your father, uncle, and grandfather. You also learn this from your community environment. Most of these lessons are absorbed through the unconscious mind; that is, no one specifically says this is what it takes to be a man.

Father Rohr believes that we as men need to take two journeys, the first of which is the Journey of John the Beloved. Have the group share their summary statements on the Johns. (Draw diagram of the journeys on the black board.) This journey is named after the disciple John who was not afraid to lay his head on the breast of Jesus during the Passover meal. During this journey men begin to discover the feminine side of their personalities. This

first journey can be defined as somewhat psychic, or spiritual in nature, an inner journey that is discovered through a man's relationships with the women in his life. During the last twenty years this journey has become more legitimized for many men. It has not, however, become the norm for all men. The awareness of the need for such a journey for men has increased because of the increasing number of women who are determined to discover the masculine side of their own nature. This has caused men to examine their present masculine roles, adapting their attitudes and behavior to meet new expectations. Our prime example can be found in the fact that the fathers of the 60's and 70's became more involved in the actual birth and care of their children which prior to 1960 was predominantly the female's responsibility. Let's take a moment to reflect: How much do you remember about your father caring for you during your pre-school years? (Allow time for response.)

There is a danger, however, if men only take the journey of John the Beloved. If a man only takes this journey he will become too feminine, exhibiting such traits as dependence, cloying, and over preoccupation with the establishment of the home. When men take only this journey they lose any kind of focus or determination or self-confidence or inner authority. It is imperative that a man take a second spiritual journey which Father Rohr has called the Journey of John the Baptist. The journey of John

the Baptist is best pictured as a man who lives alone in the desert, lonely, and driven. This wild man is driven into setting goals and establishing direction for his life.

There are seven masculine qualities which men need to develop and use in the spiritual journey of John the Baptist.

The first trait is masculine energy has intelligence. Men have respect for clarity and reason. We have to watch here because too often men over-identify with this quality.

Secondly, masculine energy is that of authority. It must be tamed, focussed, and compassionate authority. This type of energy is work-oriented, thing-oriented and service-oriented. If men can keep this role in perspective it can bring the church into dynamic outreach rather than just the narcissistic behavior often found in the church.

The third trait of masculine energy is that it is a positive power for the sake of the community. The feminine nature is generally concerned about its home and its contents. The masculine energy is concerned about the bigger world. The feminine energy gives the home its stability and depth which grounds and roots it. The masculine energy says the individual must make it better for future generations. If the church only functions in the feminine energy it will be only concerned with the nurture and security of itself. The masculine energy makes the church an agent of change for the hurting world.

Fourthly, masculine energy has a sense of conviction about it. It is risk-taking energy rather than just a goal oriented energy. By risk-taking, Rohr means, the individual is responsible for drawing his personality out from the center. The church needs to see herself as having principles and speaking forth the truth to a deceived world.

The fifth quality of masculine energy is that of being co-creator. It sees itself involved with the creator. Building the kingdom of God is being involved in the creating of life. Masculine energy sees itself in a sonship relationship with the Father.

The sixth quality of masculine energy is that of the ability to attack. If the church always nurtures it will end up being a flabby people incapable of sacrifice, incapable of discernment, and incapable of direction. Masculine energy would necessitate sacrifice and outreach.

The final quality of masculine energy is that of being self-possessed, a quality of aloneness. Men must be able to stand apart from the dominant consciousness. They should be able to stand in the alternate consciousness, able to stand alone with their thoughts, fears, and loneliness as John the Baptist did. The masculine energy forces the church to take a holy stance and speak prophetically to the world.¹

¹Richard Rohr, "A Man's Approach to God: Four Talks on Male Spirituality," cassette, (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, n.d.), t. 1.

Rohr believes that we do not have male spirituality because men do not know how to motivate themselves intrinsically. We need something from the outside to motivate us and reward us, and to get us going. This is precisely why we need each other in this fellowship group. Our fellowship enables us to mutually affirm one another in our walk with Jesus. One barrier stands between us and our goal of mutually exhorting each other and that is our basic competitive nature. Joseph Pleck in his book, Men and Masculinity, states the following:

One reason lies in the masculine need for getting ahead. It is in the eyes of other men that we are judged to be a success or a failure. Most of us are in real or imagined competition with other men for the rewards society offers...in almost everything we do, male culture encourages us to compare ourselves with other men, and see them as a standard showing what we should be able to do. No wonder we are so uneasy with men.²

Because of this competitive nature it is extremely difficult for men to experience the feminine journey of John the Beloved. We need each other to help us experience both the journey of John the Beloved and the journey of John the Baptist.

²Joseph Pleck and Jack Sawyer, eds., Men and Masculinity (Englefield Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974, p. 79.

Let me take a few moments to answer any questions that you might have concerning this whole concept.

Complete the statements
for Lesson IX

The most important thing I learned from my mother is...

The hardest thing about being a male for me is...

I would like my kids to remember me as...

I learned how to be a man from...and he taught me...

As a man I can show my emotions to another man if...

I like groups like this because...or I feel uncomfortable in groups like this because...

In my spiritual life I would like to...

I would make a good or poor spiritual leader of other men because...

If God would let me, I would like to...

I could be compared to John the beloved disciple because...

I remember my father as...

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 9: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Psalm 119:97-112

Saturday: I Timothy 2:8

Sunday: Acts 13:1-3

Monday: Matthew 20:25-29

Tuesday: Mark 6:31

Wednesday: James 5:16

Thursday: Matthew 6:16

Ministry: This week we are going to work on a confession exercise. Imagine that you and I are alone. We are having a conversation about our Christian life and growth. I say to you, " , I really believe that you are unaware of the tension between good and evil in your life. I don't believe that you are acknowledging the power of sin within you." Think about this. Is it true? How true is it? To what degree is it true? Write your response on the back of this sheet or better yet, share it with your prayer partner so that the two of you might have greater victory. Remember vulnerability comes when both are willing to share.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson X: "Godly Men"

Lesson Goal: The men will be able to list the spiritual disciplines discussed in the lesson and how important they are in their lives.

Scripture References: Psalm 133:1; Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 29:4-14; Romans 12:1,2,10; II Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 10:24-25; 13:1

Icebreaker: This evening I would like you to begin with a simple exercise. Let's turn to Jeremiah 29:4-14. Now imagine these words are addressed to you. Identify what your period of exile is and write it down. Secondly, write a letter back to God. Let's take a few minutes to share what we have written or what we have learned through doing this exercise.

There are many excellent books on developing and maintaining spiritual disciplines. Richard Foster has written a superb book called, Celebration of Discipline. He deals with twelve spiritual disciplines: meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplicity, solitude, submission, service, confession, worship, guidance, and celebration. All of these disciplines are important for our spiritual formation. We must, however, focus on just a few of these

disciplines. Tonight, we will focus our attention on three: the study of God's Word, prayer, and worship. Let's begin with the study of God's Word. Romans 12:1-2 says:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We are transformed by the renewal of our minds. The study of God's Word, therefore, is essential to the renewing of our minds and thus necessary for spiritual growth. We must confess that the study of God's Word is not high on our priority list. But, your willingness to meet together once a week means that you do want God's Word to have an active role in your life.

Paul's instructions to Timothy were: "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed, who correctly handles the Word of God." (II Timothy 2:15) How does this verse apply to your life? On a typical evening, the average Christian may sit and watch television for three hours, but only read his Bible for three minutes before bedtime. Is it any wonder why we lack spirituality?

II Timothy 3:14-17 tells us to study the Word of God

for the following reasons:

1. To come to know Jesus.
2. To grow spiritually.
3. To be equipped to do what God wants.

What keeps you from studying the Word of God? (Allow time for response.)

A second spiritual discipline that is important in our lives is that of worship. Hebrews 10:24-25 speaks of the importance of our regular attendance in church. We need each other as we worship God. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament stress the concept of the people of God. It is in the community that the dynamics of worship are deepened. We are responsible to him as individuals but we worship him best together. When we come together to worship we do so as a family, that is we come as brothers and sisters to mutually stimulate one another. (Read the following scriptures.)

Psalm 133:1

Hebrews 13:1

Romans 12:10

If we worship God before we approach the church building, when we enter, we enter deliberately to do in public that which we have already done in private. We come to adore the holy, living God.

You and I need to hear that we are loved and appreciated, and so does God. As Christians we need to

practice praising one another. As we learn to do this our praise to God will become more natural. Our ability to praise God in the community, at work, with our family, and with our friends will also be life-changing as we allow worship to transform our lives.

Worship is the highest form of love. "To worship is to quicken the conscious by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God." The classic description of worship is found in the first part of Isaiah 6 as Isaiah came into the presence of God. First, there was a vision of the awesomeness, holiness, and the power of God. Then Isaiah responds to the view of God's perfection and holiness by recognizing his own sinful state. With this recognition comes confession and God's act of cleansing and forgiveness. The Lord then reveals his plan and need for a messenger. Isaiah responds by saying, "Here am I, send me." That is what ought to happen to us as we enter worship. We ought to see God for who God is, and ourselves in light of God's holiness and come before the Almighty for cleansing and forgiveness and then listen to what God might have us to do.

All of us have had a time of knowing the presence of God in private moments. It takes work to have such

¹Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 138.

experiences on a regular basis. We have been in services of worship where we have been strongly moved by the presence of God. We have also known his presence while driving alone in our cars and at campfire meetings where our thoughts were on God. It is even possible to worship God on a busy street in Cleveland. Worship is a direct result of a state of mind not the result of our state of being or circumstance.

The third spiritual discipline that I would like us to talk about tonight is that of prayer. Let's begin by sharing an experience where you felt God's love in a time of prayer, or a time when you felt abandoned or separated by God. (Allow time for response.) Let's face it, we have all experienced those times when the presence of God seemed so real and other times when we have wondered where God was. It is during those absent times, however, when we do not know what to say, that we must simply say, "Lord, help!"

We need to remember that prayer is an encounter and a relationship. Prayer is the outgrowth of a deep relationship which cannot be forced as it is developed. Someone can tell me to pray but unless I really have a desire to commune with God then I will not really enter into a prayerful time with God.

Tonight we have focussed just on three of many spiritual disciplines that we need to develop. I believe that these three are very fundamental for us. As men we must motivate ourselves with God's help to develop the

disciplines of study of God's Word, the attendance at worship, and the development of our prayer lives.

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 10: Read each of the following passages and jot down
impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Acts 1:8

Saturday: John 17:18

Sunday: John 14:9

Monday: John 9:5 and Ephesians 5:8

Tuesday: Mark 6:31

Wednesday: James 5:16

Thursday: Matthew 6:16

Ministry: Meet with your prayer partner this week. Share
with one another who your evangelism target is
going to be and pray together for those persons.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson XI: "Witnessing Men"

Lesson Goal: The men will realize the importance of using life-style evangelism as a viable method of sharing one's faith.

Scripture References: Typed on handout.

Special Notes: An overhead projector is useful for this lesson for use with Maslow's hierarchy and Aldrich's solutions; make copies of scripture references as a handout; complete the statement slips for icebreaker.

Icebreaker: I would like each of one of you to take a slip of paper from the basket and complete the statement.

I believe that each one of us here tonight could name at least one person that we would like to see come into a personal relationship with Jesus. Maybe it is a friend, a neighbor, a relative, or one of your co-workers. How do you and I go about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ without appearing "holier than thou" or without coming on too strong, especially when we are dealing with other men? Joseph Aldrich has written a book on the cutting edge of evangelism called, Life-Style Evangelism. I believe that this work will be highly effective for us to incorporate as

we try to reach our world.

First, let's take a look at the basic kinds of evangelism so that we can decide which is most effective at different times in our lives.

First, there is what we call proclamational evangelism. This is what is used in most evangelistic services. Billy Graham Crusades would be an example of proclamational evangelism. The exposure is brief usually one to two hours. There will always be a place for this type of evangelism until Christ returns.

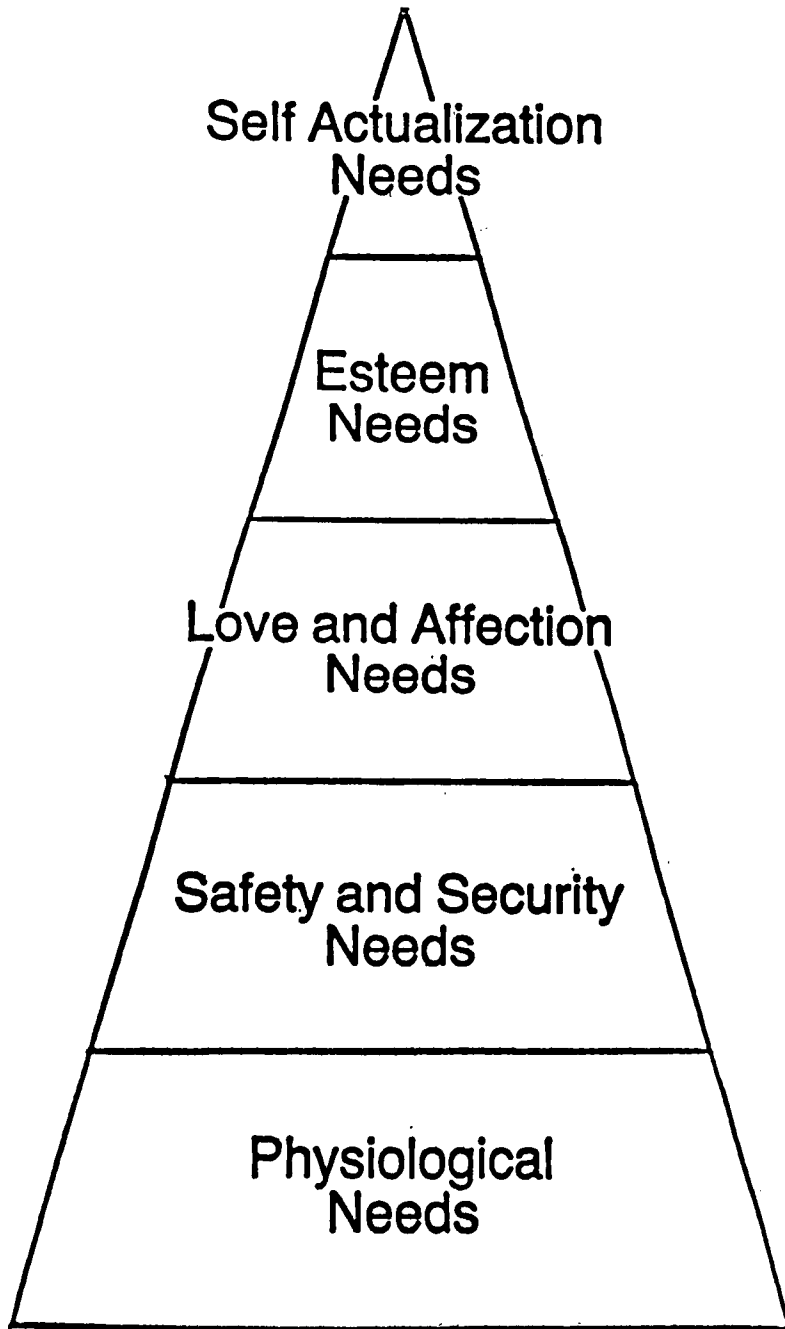
The second type of evangelism is what is called confrontational or intrusional evangelism. Generally the target person in this type of evangelism is a "stranger". The limited time factor makes this encounter a confrontation and an immediate concern. Examples of this type of evangelism are: street witnessing, witnessing to the person sitting next to you on the plane, or a hitchhiker you might pick up. This is called intrusional because you are interrupting a person's normal life with the message of Christ and his love. This method of evangelism is necessary also. Very few, however, will be truly effective in this type of evangelism. I believe that you need the gift of evangelism to really be effective here. As responsible witnesses of Christ's love each of us ought to know the basic verses or methodology to use this method when the opportunity arises.

The third type of evangelism is what Aldrich called, Incarnational or relational evangelism. The gospel becomes a visible presence rather than just a spoken word. He believes that as Christians we need to become the gospel visible to the world. As our friends see the gospel in us they will seek after it and come to the point of persuasion. When Christians live in an established community they must still confront, but they must also relate to those around them. The unbelievers see how the Christians live, how they react to life and its pressures, and how we love one another. People will not listen to the gospel message and respond unless it speaks to felt needs. This means that our sharing Christ as the solution to a person's real needs is necessary for effective evangelism.

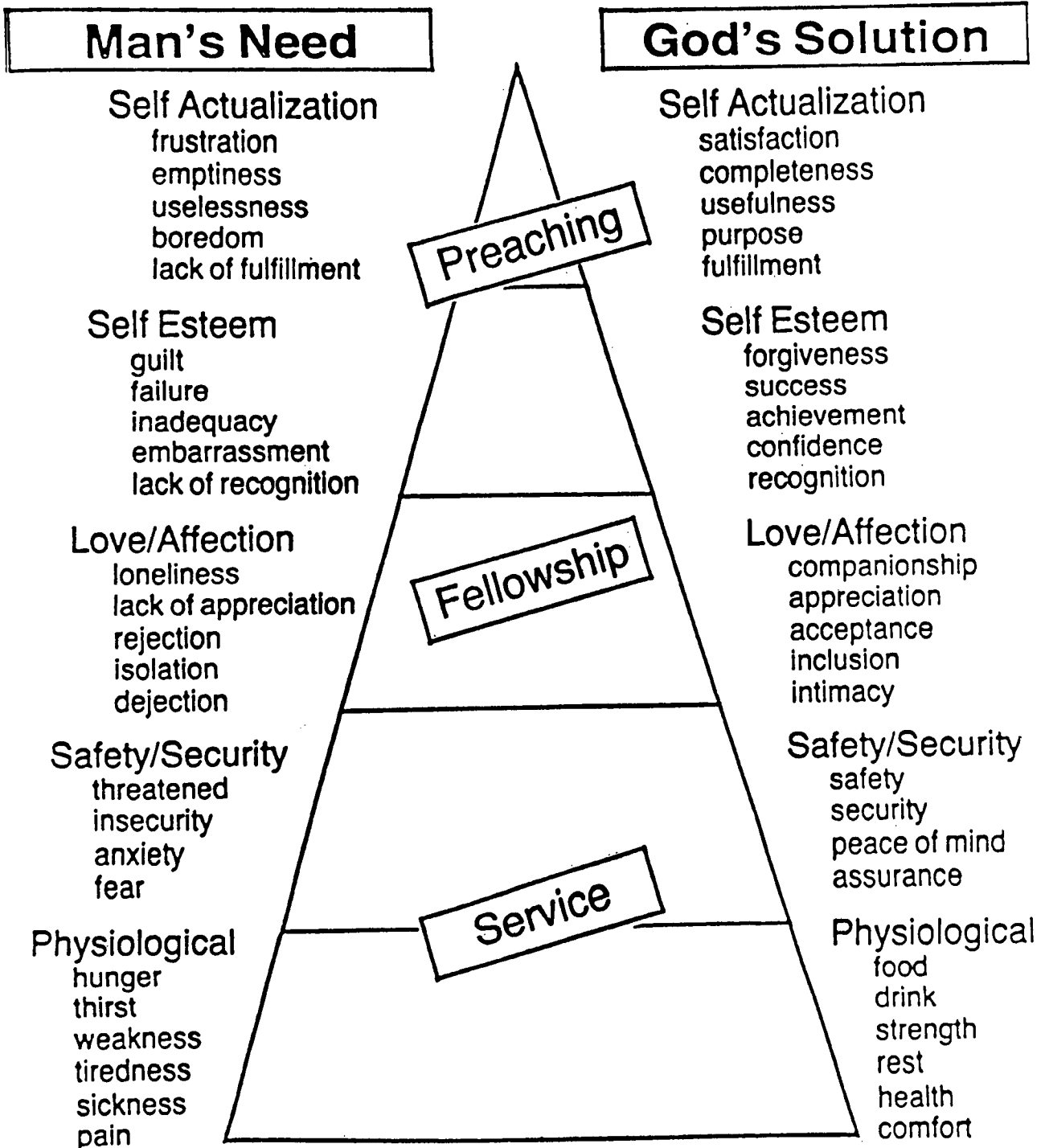
Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be very helpful according to Aldrich. Let's take a look at these using an overhead.

(I used many overlays for this presentation so that I could build the hierarchy from bottom to top.)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Aldrich's Response to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Scriptures related to Maslow's Hierarchy

* key passages in each section
(as you find new verses add them to this list)

Physiological Needs:

Food:

Genesis 1:29
Genesis 9:3
Job 36:31
Psalm 104:14
Psalm 136:25*
Psalm 145:15
Matthew 6:26*

Rest:

Exodus 33:14
Psalm 23:2
Matthew 11:29*

Comfort:

Isaiah 12:1
Isaiah 51:3
Isaiah 66:13
II Corinthians 1:3*
John 14:18*
John 16:33

Weakness:

Psalm 8:2
I Corinthians 1:27
II Corinthians 12:9*

God our Strength:

Exodus 15:2
II Samuel 22:23
Psalm 28:8*
Psalm 46:1*
Psalm 81:1
Psalm 73:26
Psalm 84:5
Psalm 89:21

Health

Jeremiah 30:17*

Safety/Security Needs:

Safety:

Psalm 91:10
 Psalm 112:8
 Psalm 121:3*
 Proverbs 1:33
 Proverbs 3:23
 Proverbs 12:21
 Proverbs 21:31
 Isaiah 32:18
 Jeremiah 23:6

Security:

Job 11:18
 Psalm 112:7
 Proverbs 3:24*
 Hebrews 13:6

Peace of Mind:

Psalm 29:11
 Isaiah 26:3
 John 14:27*
 John 16:33*
 Philippians 4:7*

Assurance:

Colossians 2:2
 I Thessalonians 1:5*
 II Timothy 1:12
 Hebrews 10:22
 I John 2:3
 I John 3:19
 I John 4:13
 I John 5:10

Fear:

Matthew 14:30
 Matthew 17:6
 II Timothy 1:7*

Love and Affection Needs:

Compassion:

Exodus 3:7
 Deuteronomy 30:3
 II Chronicles 36:15
 Psalm 78:38
 Psalm 86:15
 Matthew 9:36*
 Matthew 14:14
 Matthew 15:32

Intimacy:

John 11:36
 John 15:15*
 John 4:8*

Love/Appreciation:

Jeremiah 31:3
 John 3:16*
 Romans 5:8*
 Romans 8:35*
 Ephesians 2:4,5
 I John 3:1*

Acceptance:

Exodus 28:38*
 Ezekiel 20:40
 II Corinthians 5:9
 Ephesians 1:6
 Hebrews 10:35

Inclusion:

James 2:8,9
 II Peter 3:9*

Self-Esteem Needs:

Forgiveness:

Psalm 103:3
 Matthew 6:14
 Acts 5:31
 Ephesians 1:7
 I John 1:9*
 I John 5:14-15*

Success:

Deuteronomy 29:9*
 I Chronicles 22:13
 II Chronicles 26:5

Confidence:

Psalm 3:6
 Psalm 20:7
 Psalm 23:4
 Psalm 27:3
 Psalm 46:2
 Hebrews 10:19-22*

Recognition:

Deuteronomy 14:2
 Hosea 11:1
 Romans 8:15
 II Corinthians 6:18*
 Galatians 4:6*

Self-Actualization Needs:

Satisfaction:

Psalm 103:5*

Psalm 107:9

Psalm 147:14

Isaiah 55:2

Isaiah 58:10

Completeness:

John 15:11*

John 16:24

Colossians 2:10

James 1:4

I John 4:17*

Usefulness:

Ephesians 4:28

II Timothy 2:21*

Purpose:

Exodus 9:16

Proverbs 2:2

Proverbs 19:21

Isaiah 46:10

II Corinthians 5:5*

Fulfillment:

Proverbs 13:12

Proverbs 13:19*

Romans 13:8

Complete the statements
for Lesson XI

The hardest thing for me in sharing my faith is...

I heard the gospel message through...

I would love to share Jesus with...because

Jesus rescued me from...

The hardest thing for me to give up when I became a
Christian was...

The guys at work know that I am a Christian because...

The greatest need of my best non-Christian friend is...

I would witness more if...

The last time I witnessed, I...

The reason I tell people to go to church is...

My witness would be enhanced if...would happen in my life.

I would describe the new life Jesus gave me by saying...

Male Spiritual Formation
Weekly Devotional Sheet

Week 11: Read each of the following passages and jot down impressions the Lord gives you.

Friday: Romans 12

Saturday: Hebrews 10:25

Sunday: Philippians 1:3-5

Monday: Acts 2:42

Tuesday: II Corinthians 7:28

Wednesday: I Corinthians 12

Thursday: Ephesians 4:1-16

Ministry: Write a letter to the Lord explaining to him how you would like to serve his church better. Share that letter with your prayer partner.

Male Spiritual Formation Manual
Lesson XII: "Men in the Church"

Lesson Goal: The men will be able to identify their importance in the church.

Scripture References: Matthew 10:1-42; 16:5; 17:14-20; 26:36-46; Mark 3:13-18; 4:35-41; Luke 6:12-16; 9:54; John 9:2; 18:15; Acts 1:12-26; 2:42; Ephesians 2:20; I Peter 2:9-10

Special Notes: We had a meal together which we concluded by having Holy Communion. Need: Communion elements.

Icebreaker: Have each one share why they came to this church and what they like about it the most.

In his gospel, Matthew gives us the following list of disciples found in Matthew 10:2-4:

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these:

The first, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew, his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the Son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeaus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Frankly, these men were just like you and me, ordinary men. Matthew might have been the only one who had any

wealth which he most likely gained through extortion. None of them had any particular academic background. And as far as we know, none of them had any real social status. John did know the high priest (John 18:15) but only enough to go into his courtyard. They were just common people like us and some of those chosen twelve are still almost unknown except for their names being in a list of disciples. But these twelve were chosen from the common people to be agents of Christ and to set in motion the advancement of the Kingdom of God. They were pictured in the gospels as imperfect, as men with weaknesses. They became afraid in a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35-41). They were upset over Jesus being anointed by oil (Matthew 26:8). They forgot to bring food with them when they were crossing the sea (Matthew 16:5). Two of the disciples wanted to incinerate a town (Luke 9:54). They were rebuked by Jesus for their doubt which kept them from casting out a demon (Matthew 17:14-20). They had misconceptions when they thought that a man's sin or his parents caused his blindness (John 9:2). In Gethsemane they fell asleep when they were asked to pray (Matthew 26:36-46). Does that sound like any of us?

Does it sound like any one of us could have been a disciple? Yet these men became the collective foundation of the Christian church. Jesus' transforming power allowed those who were full of weakness to become men of great

character and strength. (Ephesians 2:20) Their example should inspire hope in us. If the Lord could use a group of men, not specifically educated or trained, or exceptionally talented, and transform them into his messengers of reconciliation, then there is definitely hope for you and me. Peter Marshall in his sermon, "Disciples of Clay," pictured the disciples appearing before an examining board appointed to choose Jesus' close associates. Peter stood there smelling of fish, uncouth and uncultured, impulsive and impetuous. Andrew and James and John also reeked of fish oil, and lacked refinement. Philip appeared indecisive. Thomas radiated cynicism. Matthew was considered a traitor to his country. Simon the Zealot was considered a dangerous revolutionary. Judas was a thief. They are certainly not the group "most likely to succeed." It is very likely that some of the disciples would not have even chosen each other to be a disciple.

Let's read together I Peter 2:9-10. What do these verses say about you and me and our importance in the kingdom of God? (Give the men time to respond.)

Your assignment from last week's devotional sheets was to write a letter to God explaining how you would like to better serve the church. I hope that God revealed to you ways to make this possible. You see God chooses to use

¹Catherine Marshall, ed., The Best of Peter Marshall (Carmel, NY: Guideposts, 1983), pp. 17-28.

people like you and me. Sure we are just like the disciples. We have our weaknesses and shortcomings but God is able to change us and make us into effective ministers of the gospel.

Acts 2:42 gives us some basic activities that should characterize believers who are actually seeking the Lord. Let's read those verses and see what some of our responsibilities should be. We are to give ourselves to study, fellowship, breaking the bread, and prayer. That is all part of what we have been doing for the past eleven weeks. We have been growing together and helping each other grow. It is my hope that as this twelve week study comes to an end that we might desire to keep meeting and growing into stronger men of God.

I would like to close tonight's lesson with a prayer that someone gave me which I keep in my Bible.

Lord, I have given you my fears and cares
Just as you directed me.

My fears keep me seeking your strength:

My frailties keep me seeking your wisdom.

These things I understand.

But something tells me I need to offer you my strength.

For when my world begins to crumble and when my hopes
lay smashed strength seduces me, saying:

"I can handle it; I can face anything; when the going
gets tough, the tough get going."

This strength keeps me from you.

For I cannot take your hand while clutching my shield.

So I offer you this shield- my plucky little man-made strength.

I lay it at your feet.

I step over it now, unhampered, I can stretch out my hand to yours.

I will lay down this shield for now, though sometimes I may forget and pick it up again.

While I am here with you It is not my friend.

Lord, I relinquish to you my strength.

Deanna Hutchings²

²Deanna Hutchings, "Lord, I Relinquish to You my Strength," publisher and date unknown.

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