

## Kickoff Meeting

### Welcome

- Introduce Elders/Deacons
- Guidelines for the evening
- Divide into small groups for introductions
- Explain policy regarding recording the sessions- be present, confidentiality...
- Why a "training camp"?
  - Don't want to retreat, and don't want a touchy, feely time where we cry and hold hands...a time when we address head-on the issues of today - and wrestle with how to overcome them
  - A time to "train" in God's Word – as men!

### "We have a problem"

- Small-group discussion posing the question, "What are the specific challenges facing men today?"
  - Each group then contributes one issue to the whole group, via a representative from the group
- **Some examples:**
  - So-called "equality"
  - Roles
    - Blurring and Blending
  - Hostility toward the concept of patriarchy
  - Lack of training for the next generation - or poor or wrong training!
  - Need for men at all
    - View "The End of Men" TED Talk, by Hanna Rosin

### "How Did We Get Here?"

#### **Review the Progression –**

- Humanistic ideals of democracy in government - American & French Revolution...with power vested in citizens not king (but land-owning citizens)
- Push for voting for all male citizens (heads of household)
- Push for voting for women
- Push for "equality" - freedom from standards of roles and responsibilities, work roles, education differences
- Push for freedom from moral absolutes in regard to sexuality and etc
- The "free love" 60's... But it wasn't free! Ideas have consequences
- The "war between the sexes" – women are the same as men
- Patriarchy is repressive
- Toxic masculinity
- There is no such thing as "completely male" or completely female – it is on a spectrum

What is the **fruit**? Blurring of the differences between men and women -

- Abortion

Introduction...We have a Problem.

- Homosexuality promotion
- Transgenderism
- Men - why get married?

**Ideas have consequences! What should we do? Why are you and I here?**

## **1. Learn God's Way Thoroughly – Soundly**

- Learn what the Bible says about God's expectations of a man
- We must have an "against the grain" dedication to a continued regular regime of learning.
- We must know what God's standards are, we must be able to defend God's standards, and explain God's standards. In other words, we must be on a constant quest for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom in God's way. - learning of God's instructions, God's instructions, God's help, and God's plan for us as men.

### **Example:**

Does the Bible teach "patriarchy? If so, what is it? What is the definition?

What is it that we need to learn about being a Christian man?

It's not enough to be "**aware**" of the problem. The solution is not going to be found in "creating a movement to save men". And its not going to be found in wringing our hands, or getting angry.

And it's not acceptable to "go into a cave"

- The "Man-Cave" idea plays off two threads
  - **Withdrawing** - ie. you are not responsible for the home - it is not your castle - in fact you don't really even belong there unless it is in a corner somewhere!
  - **Entertainment...**sports, fantasy football, large-screen TV

In the middle of this confusion of what men are supposed to be and do, we have a general reaction of men against "religion" in our culture – yet the Bible is the one source of stability and absolutes...Because God knows the beginning from the end. He knows what the consequences will be!

## **2. Build Bonds of Brotherhood**

Not based on a "game" - but on real shared purpose!

What Is a Christian Brother?

- Sons of God the Father (Romans 8:15)
- Fellow heirs of a common spiritual inheritance (Galatians 4:7)
- Men who apply the "one another's" to members of God's family.
  - Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
  - Encourage one another (1 Thessalonians. 5:11)
  - Admonish one another (Colossians. 3:16)
  - Love one another (John 13: 34-35)
  - Serve one another (Mark 10:45)
  - Forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32)

Introduction...We have a Problem.

- Example of David and Jonathan – who was a significantly older mentor. We need to develop connections between older and younger men.
- Think about what happened with Peter, with Thomas come up with other disciples...things that were said and done as they lived together for 3 ½ years. There were times when things were said and done that were not kind, or positive. But they had to get to the point where they trusted each other.
  - Trusted each other's judgment.
  - Trust each other's conviction.
  - Trusted each other's heart and motivation
  - They were not just together because of proximity, but because of heart, goals, convictions, and trust

They were really "better together" - like rowing a boat with the oars in coordination...think of the confusion that can occurs otherwise!

They were...CALLED TO BE BROTHERS. And...they were called to be men like Christ!

In fact, its not what we have in common "naturally" that brings us together...it is God's calling to His Body. Christ CALLED His disciples and melded them together. They were not of the same background, not of the same profession... They were not "stars" either - have you noticed that God's plan is not about recognizing, acknowledging and promoting "stars". In fact, He plainly tells us in 1 Corinthians that we AREN'T stars. Man's philosophy is to be the best, the fastest, the highest...In other words, a quest to be better than others. But in reality, there is always someone better than us, or someone who will surpass us later. Instead, we should be driven to be like Christ...to have THAT level of quality, and help each other to achieve that!

### **3. Honor God**

Exodus 20...do we lead in the honoring of God – in our homes...here!

We need God's help and strength to confront these modern challenges with Grace, kindness, and strength. Anything we do can blow up in our faces - it is not our intentions that count. There are consequences to bad ideas and there are consequences to wrong opinions.

Example:

1 Samuel 13 - Saul and his excuses at doing the offerings

#### **Conclusion**

Perhaps what we are facing is more like the Alamo than the Olympics. We're not competing against each other for the gold, but desperately depending on each other as men who are up against a force bigger and more powerful than us.

We, as brothers, need to turn to the only real source of help - God, our father and patriarch and mentor through His Son Jesus Christ.