

WELCOME & CHALLENGE by Myles Sweeney, Lead Pastor

The C.O.R.E. Men's Ministry is clearly one of the most exciting and effective ministries in GCF. And it's my belief that it is also one of the most important. Studies show that if Mom comes to church, there's a 15% chance the family will. But if Dad comes, 93% of the time the rest of the family will come along behind him.

The numbers for the church in America tell the sad story. On any given Sunday here in the U.S., there are thirteen million more women than men in church. One out of every four married women goes to church without her husband. Almost never do we see the husband go without his wife. Less than 10% of young men ages 20 to 35 attend church regularly, and over 90% of youth boys now attending church will no longer attend when they leave home.

What is wrong with this picture? Some have said that women are more spiritually inclined than men, but that's simply not the case. In every other major religion of the world (including Judaism), men outnumber women.

There are more issues than can be

covered in a short article, so let's tackle three of the bigger ones in brief.

First, the worship in many churches makes it difficult for men to join in. The music is pitched in a higher key, and many times there is no strong male voice to follow. Since most men don't sing well, they also aren't going to sing out when it's not loud around them. At GCF our worship team faithfully changes keys on songs to pitch them down so men can get off the bench and into the game, and we want it loud enough to free them to make a noise – even if it sounds more like a elk in rut than Luciano Pavarotti. For that matter, my goal is for our services (from worship to message to testimonies) to be more rowdy; less like a polite religious service, and more like a playoff game.

Second, most churches look more like a little girl's bedroom than a hunting lodge. Pastels and flowery fabric dominate, and we wonder why more men aren't comfortable there. At GCF the design, colors, furniture, etc. is intentionally masculine, relaxed, and comfortable.

Third, most churches use terminology that communicates more clearly to women than men. For example, they talk about the need to have a "personal relationship" with Jesus. That's obviously true, but couldn't we see the benefit of also phrasing it in a way that appeals to the masculine nature of men? Jesus said, "Follow me." In other words, "Come with Me. Take a risk. Go on an adventure with Me." Many churches speak of the "family of God". But Jesus never once used that term (which speaks much more effectively to women). He talked about the "Kingdom of God". That speaks of battle, rule, authority, order out of chaos. This is men's language.

Don't misunderstand me. We aren't talking about chauvinism masquerading as men's ministry. We are talking about attracting and retaining and discipling men. We are talking about the making of real men – men who will lay down their lives for their wives, their families, their church, and their God. And when that happens, the biggest beneficiaries are all those around them.

PROVERBS 27:17 - As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 7th - Super Bowl Party
- April 18th - C.O.R.E. Stake Night
- May 1st - Father & Daughter Dinner

IN THIS ISSUE:

- The Challenge of Tithing (Jim Sebesta)
- The Importance of Order (Gary Wilson)
- Resolve: Do You Have It? (Landon McClain)

THE CHALLENGE OF TITHING by Jim Sebesta

Several years ago, I heard a Christian financial advisor say, “It’s your Christian obligation to pay your debts first.” If you didn’t, it destroyed your witness as a follower of Christ. In my head I would figure our bills for the week and would put enough money in the bank to cover our bills and also our tithe. However, by Sunday morning when I would write out my check to the church, there would not be enough funds left to cover a full tithe.

Also, another fallacy I used in tithing was that I would count special gifts to Christian organizations and ministries as part of my tithe. I did not realize that because I did not want to give over and above my tithe that I was stealing from God. I would worry and lose sleep at night because I was trying to figure how to pay all of my bills.

Now I have learned that my 10% I bring to the church is not a tithe if it isn’t the 1st 10%. Give to God first

and the rest is blessed. If you don’t give to God first, none of it is blessed. The challenge was to write that first check to God and know there would be plenty left. The more you give the more you are blessed. We have received greater blessings when we gave to special offering and ministries above the tithe. It is no longer a challenge but an exciting opportunity to give over and above the tithe. However, you don’t give to get -- you give to give.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORDER by Gary Wilson

When a young couple bought their first house, there was nothing inside of it except blank walls, bare floors and cobwebs. Even the light bulbs and fixtures had been removed by its previous owners. The couple immediately began dreaming of the different ways they could decorate and fill each room. Over the years, she moved things, changed things, and eventually threw some things away. Some rooms were fixed and replaced by the husband, but others were left empty and without much care. Over time, those parts of the house became in need of serious repair due to neglect. The couple seemed to find money and time for other things, but not for those gradually forgotten rooms. They occasionally would clean out the familiar and unwanted cobwebs of one room, move on to the next, only to discover that each time they went back to check on the previously cleared room, other “things” had moved in along with those familiar cobwebs—“things” like...bugs, and mould, and... mildew.

Ever notice how easy it can be for a man’s life to start out like the couple’s

“house of dreams” and gradually become the “house of dread”? As a new Christian, you started out clean and empty of all the sin and junk from your old life. You couldn’t wait to get started on the plans God had for your new life. Soon, however, you discovered how a job, new family, and life in general gradually began to squeeze and crowd out things like Bible study, church, prayer, and time alone with God and your family. If you’re not careful, the clutter of the world will begin to fill the space in your heart, the dwelling place of Jesus. The clutter soon begins to pile up around the door of your heart, almost squeezing Jesus out. Once things are out of order, you may find yourself trying to go back and forth getting rid of the junk in all the different areas of your life. Each time you come back to one of the areas, you find it worse than it was when you started. (See Luke 11:24)

The spiritual “things” that we tend to neglect and allow the world to squeeze out of our lives are the very “things” Jesus found to be of the utmost importance in His life. Ecclesi-

astes 3:1,2 tells us there is a season—a time for everything. Jesus knew the truth of His father’s word when it spoke of an orderly life, and applied it regularly. Here are a few of the basics you need to apply if you want to regain and maintain order in your life:

VISION: pray for God to show His vision/goals for your life (Prov. 29:18).
PRAYER TIME: make and spend time alone with God (Lk. 22:39; 14:23).
QUALITY TIME: When at work, focus on your work (Jn. 19:25). When with your family, focus on your family, not just yourself. Jesus did it His entire life, even unto the cross (Lk. 2; 19:25-27).

Having and maintaining order is one of the biggest challenges C.O.R.E. men face. Without it, Challenge becomes Chaos; Resolve becomes Ruin; Equip becomes Emptiness.

“Let all things be done decently and in order.” (I Corinthians 14:40)

RESOLVE: DO YOU HAVE IT? by Landon McClain, C.O.R.E. Men's Leader

Resolves. Resolving. Resolved. Resolute. Resolution. Resolvability. Resolvable-ness. Resolvable. Resolvedly. Resolver.

When looking at these words, what do they all have in common? As part of C.O.R.E., the “R” represents the word *resolve*. According to Webster, the word *resolve* can be a verb, a noun an adverb or even an adjective. It can give meaning, direction, purpose, character, steadiness, determination, bullheadedness, obstinacy, self-will or steadfastness. Its definitions can range from making a firm decision, to cause, to decide, to change, to convert, to bring to a usually successful conclusion, to cause progress from dissonance to consonance as with a musical chord or firmness of purpose. What I want to accomplish in this short time is to analyze the word *resolve*, looking at its make up, context, origin and meaning and come to a conclusion of how we as men can truly influence our world if we choose resolve.

When looking at the word *resolve*, you must first look at its prefix, *re-*. The prefix *re-* indicates a return to the previous condition, or repetition of a

previous action. The synonym of “re” is the word *again*. Our conclusion of the prefix therefore has to indicate that this word is something that has to be continually determined, continually evaluated, and continually repeated to accomplish its task as well as ultimate meaning.

Next, the second part of the word *resolve* is *solve*. “Solve” is a verb whose origins date back to the 1400-1500’s. When used with an object, its meaning can range from to find the answer or explanation for; clear up; explain; to work out the answer or solution to a problem or decision, to unravel, untangle, loosen, free or to release. The interesting thing about the word solve is its “noun cousin” ... solver. A solver is someone who actively participates in accomplishing their destiny. Basically, a solver is one who determines what needs to be solved and again and again, makes a conscious decision to accomplish a means to a “successful conclusion”.

You might be saying, “But how does this fit into our C.O.R.E. beliefs?” Without *resolve* in our heart, mind,

body and soul, it doesn’t matter how much we are challenged, how much order we think we have in our home, work or church, or all the equipping we are given ... we will not accomplish our task if we do not have “resolve” in our character. We as men of C.O.R.E. must have the *resolve* in every ounce of our being to become everything that God has called us to be! Without that, we will waver in our purpose, our character will fail, our families will fail ... we will allow others to determine our destiny!

If we do not have the *resolve* to stand for something, we will waver and fall for anything! David wrapped it all up in Psalms 17:3 by stating, “Though you probe my heart and examine me at night, though you test me, you will find nothing. I have resolved that my mouth will not sin.”

I want to challenge each of you to have the *resolve* to be everything God has created you to be ... a Godly man, willing to stand up for His purpose and His calling in your life!

EQUIPPED by Paul E. Tsika II

What words come to mind when you recall the word “equip”? For me, provide, furnish, outfit, endow, supply, train and stock are the words that come to my mind. The passion of the C.O.R.E. leadership is to pour all of these verbs into your lives.

Now, when I think about getting equipped, hunting comes to mind. A couple of years ago, a good friend invited the men of our family on an

elk hunt. He was so gracious to pay for the food, lodging and hunting. Boy, did we feel like that was a good deal! It was, if we wanted to walk to Montana and hunt with a stick and be butt-naked during the hunt! Well, as you can imagine, we didn’t want that. We got online and booked our flights and then off we went to Gander Mountain for the express purpose of getting equipped (or in hunting terms,

“outfitted”). We needed under-clothes and middle-clothes and outer clothes; boots, socks, gloves, bullets, and a lot of other things. The cost of getting outfitted was near or at the same level as the cost of the hunt.

What is the point? I will remember many wonderful things about that hunt. I will remember the great time me and my dad and brother had getting outfitted. Every time I put on

those clothes I remember getting outfitted for our trip. We were equipped for the task of hunting. Getting equipped for the hunt does have a cost -- but is worth every penny.

Let's take a second and make some application to our lives. In Matthew 28:18, we read this: *"When Jesus came near, he spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.'"*

Matthew 28:19: *"So wherever you go, make disciples of all nations: baptize them in the name of the Father, and of*

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

And finally, Matthew 28:20: *"Teach them to do everything I have commanded you. And remember that I am always with you until the end of time."*

God has called each of us to be equippers of men. When you interpret these passages correctly, you will discover the word "teach" in Matthew 28:20 is a command to each and every believer. Men of God, we need to realize that the work God has called us to do is the work of building the Kingdom of God by building men! Before

Jesus tells us to teach, "equip" lets us know that we will have the authority to accomplish our work. Thank God for the authority!

I challenge you not to back down from your task--nay, your responsibility--of being equippers of men.

Each of us must see ourselves in the "Gander Mountain of Life" and realize that God has called each and every man to be equippers of men.

REAL STORIES by Emilio Mata

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"The Men's Ministry made a big impact on my walk with the Lord, even before I became a member. I'm older than most of the men in the ministry, and still I'm afforded the respect that a relationship should have; but I'm younger in the Lord than all of them, so there is also the father in faith and son relationship, one which I appreciate more.

When I came thru the doors of Grace, my whole life was under an umbrella of sin. There was not one area of my life that was inline with the Lord; I could not look any of the men

in the eye. They were bankers, lawyers, teachers, business men... and me. I did not feel like I belonged, but these men loved and accepted me; they said I had value. What the world called "baggage", they said were ministry tools in the Kingdom of the Lord and that I had worth. There has not been a day when these men have not influenced me in some way, at times without saying a word. I carry them with me where ever I go. They are truly my Brothers in Christ, there is nothing I have to go thru alone, and nothing I cannot share with anyone of them.

When I was asked to become one of the leaders of the men's ministry, I was both excited and humbled. One of the biggest lies the enemy tells men who have gone through what I have is that no one will trust you again, nobody will depend on, you have run out of second chances, no one wants to be around you, etc. But our Lord says that is just not true. The men of this ministry have given me hope that I can impact someone else's life, and have a role in bringing other men to Christ."

THE CORE PURPOSE AND VISION

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Connecting men to be (C.O.R.E.) with their passion, worship, and discipleship for the expanding of the Kingdom. We seek to Challenge our men to have Order in their home, work, and Church; to have Resolve to be all they have been called to be in the Kingdom; and to Equip each man with the tools to succeed.

RECOMMENDED READING by Michael Limas, Pastor

The Man in the Mirror

by Patrick Morley

Waking the Dead

by John Eldredge

Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time

by Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, Mike Yorkey

Holiness, Truth and the Presence of God

by Francis Frangipane

Cracking the Communication Code

by Emerson Eggerichs

The Measure of A Man

by Gene Getz

THE C.O.R.E. LEADERSHIP

LANDON MCCLAIN

(Point Man) El Campo, TX

JIM SEBESTA

El Campo, TX

MYLES SWEENEY

Wharton, TX

LARRY BROOKS

Wharton, TX

GARY WILSON

Wharton, TX

DOUG AMERSON

Wharton, TX

GERARD SCRANTON

Wharton, TX

EMILIO MATA

Wharton, TX

TOD MUND

Wharton, TX

PAUL TSIKA II

Midfield, TX

DENNIS KELLY

Wharton, TX

BOB CARTWRIGHT

Wharton, TX

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