

## Study & Obedience

- Well, howdy. My name is Pastor Landon and welcome to Real Men at Real Faith. We are so glad you're jumping on to join us right now. If you are a men's group that gathers somewhere in the country in the world, we'd love to hear your story. You can email hello at realfaith.com. If this content's helpful, we'd love to hear your group story. We had a group the other week come out from the East Coast. They flew all the way to Arizona 'cause it's much better to be in Arizona right now than the East Coast. The East Coast sucks. Best Coast, West Coast. Just kidding, we're not on the coast. But they came out, they brought their whole men's group and their men's group, three of their guys got baptized. It was so, so, so cool, so special to share that with them and to know that Real Men makes an impact in their lives. We're hoping it makes an impact in your life. And if you're a senior pastor of a church and you want to come check out Real Men, see how we do it, see how we bring this many men together every week. There's like 300 plus men gathering together, talking about Jesus and growing to be better, stronger men together. If you wanna hear how we do it, you can email us hello at realfaith.com and you can come check it out with us. We'll tour you around Trinity Church, we'll tell you our secret sauce and we'll get you introduced to a lot of good men and we'd love to meet you. I'd love to meet you, pastor Mark would love to meet you and we'll buy you some dinner. So come on out. We'd love to have you. So with that, we are getting to the best part of the day, Real Men, the talk, I'd encourage you guys to like, comment, subscribe, share, smash it, smash it, smash it, 'cause we want a lot of people hearing about Jesus and that's the way you can help us defeat the algorithm demons. So hop on, get ready, Real Men up next.

- [Announcer] Men, you've got a lot to do. You wake up early, you stay late, you fix things, lots of things. You don't have time to meditate. What's the lotus position anyway? Who has time to journal or study Greek language when you're just trying to understand what your wife is saying? Men, this study is for you. An eight-week Real Men series starting January 11th from Pastor Mark Driscoll, in person at Trinity Church Wednesdays at 6:30 or online at realfaith.com. Spiritual disciplines for regular guys.

- All right, best night of the week, right? Hey, welcome back to Real Men. Such an honor to have you, guys. Man, the house is full. There's a Hooters down the street and we got more guys. Yay. That's a win for team Jesus. So good to see you, guys. If you are new, you made a great decision, you're in the right place with the best guys, and God's got a destiny for you, he's got a word for you and he is got a few brothers to come alongside and help for the journey. My name's Pastor Mark, really excited and honored to welcome you. Here's what we say at Real Men. We build men up to bless women and children. Your wives are glad because of the kind of men you are. Your children are blessed because of the kind of men that you are. And I just want to begin by honoring you as God's men, by building you up in a world that beats you down. And what we're doing this semester is a short series, eight weeks on something called the Spiritual Disciplines for Regular Guys. Some of you are very mature, you've been Christians a long time, you got off the ark and you've been rolling with Jesus ever since, and some of you guys are really young and you're brand new Christians and we wanna help one another, invest in one another, encouraging one another, so that day by day, step by step, we become more like Jesus

Christ who we're all following. It's really exciting 'cause in the room we've got guys that are in their early teens all the way up to guys that are in their mid-90s. And so yeah, I'm gonna keep my sermon short. Those guys gotta get to bed. But we have all these, we have all these ages and ranges and it's awesome. So what I want to talk about with spiritual disciplines is because we live in a fallen cursed, sinful world, what do you need to do to see something break, fall apart, or just deteriorate? Answer: nothing. If you want things to go worse, all you've gotta do is be passive, inactive and do nothing. If you don't do the maintenance on your home, it's gonna fall apart. If you don't do a little work for your health, you're gonna get sick. If you don't watch your money, you're gonna go broke. If you don't invest in your wife, you're gonna be divorced. Everything just continues in a deterioration process, unless the man is activated with a plan to do something different. And that's what disciplines are. It is saying, if I am not active, present as a man with some healthy habits, my life and the people who follow me are not going to be blessed. There's going to be instead a burden. And here's the big idea. How many of you guys are old enough to realize that there is no such thing as a shortcut in life? Have you tried that? How many of you guys have tried the diet pill and it didn't work 'cause you washed it down with ice cream? How many of you guys, you've tried to get rich quick and you've found that you got poor quick. And there's always just an attempt to shortcut a painful process. God grows men through pain, through resistance, through training and through hardship. There's no shortcut, there's no easy way to be physically healthy. There's no easy way to be financially prosperous. There is no easy way to be spiritually maturing. So we're just gonna put the work in, that's what we're gonna do this semester. And when you talk about spiritual disciplines, we're talking about habits. Some of you need to start them, some of you need to strengthen them. And over the course of eight weeks, I'm gonna give you spiritual disciplines, healthy habits to grow you as a man of God. And I have them in two categories, things that pour into you and then things that pour through you and out of you. So here's where we're going. If you've got the chart, I'm gonna talk about study and obedience. That's what we're gonna get into today. Shoot me the next slide. Let me jump to this one. Okay, so here's the pouring in. This is what we're gonna deal with today. Study is how God pours into you. Obedience is how you pour out. Solitude is getting time with the Lord to hear from him. Fellowship or friendship is how then you pour out to others. Silence is how God speaks to you. And then you pour out by speaking to others. Prayer is how you spend time hearing from God, discerning as well. And then activism and being activated is how you pour out. Sabbath is the day that God pours into you. The six days at work or the days that you pour out. Worship is where you spend time just growing in your relationship with God. And then you pour out helping others meet and know that same God. Journaling is where you gather your thoughts in God's presence. And then service is where you go out to take your wisdom and invest it in others. Fasting is where you practice self-control, and feasting is where you celebrate. We're gonna go through these over the course of the semester and you as men, you're always pouring out, you're teaching, you're serving, you've got jobs, you've got families, you've got ministries, you've got responsibilities. The disciplines are where your father, and God is your father, your Son, he loves you, he wants to pour into you, so that then he can pour through you into others. That's the big concept of the spiritual disciplines. I'll jump in and we'll start in 1st Timothy 4:7. If you go back to that slide please. Here's what he says. There's a man named Paul and he's like a spiritual father speaking to Timothy, who's like a son. In the spirit, I

just feel like I'm supposed to say this. Lemme just break there. Paul, there's no indication that he had a child, but he had a spiritual son named Timothy. Had another one named Titus and another one named Onesimus. Some of you don't have a father who loves the Lord, some of you don't have a father. And what you can get is a spiritual Father. I didn't need to think of this until this moment, but ultimately Paul pulled into a town, he preached. This young man, Timothy was saved. He started following Paul. Paul became for him a spiritual father. An older man to mentor him and to love him and to help him and to pour into him. And then Timothy would pour his life out. You younger men that are here, think like Timothy, look for spiritual fathers. Find godly older men. Figure out business or marriage or ministry or ultimately fatherhood. There are some of the best men in the world in the room. You need to know that. There are some guys here who have a father's heart and they're here to help. The reason that we're not segmenting by age, younger guys over here and older guys over there, is that younger men need the wisdom of the older men. And the older men need the enthusiasm and the strength and the power of the younger men. And a young man is like a sail and an older man is like a rudder. You put 'em together, it's powerful. If all you do is let the young men roll together, they will quickly sink their ship. And if you put the old guys together, they will never leave the dock. They'll just sit on it and complain about the government. That's all they're all going to do. So what we want to do, we want the older men to be like rudders to help direct like fathers. And we want the young men to be passionate like sails moving forward in the will of God. That's what we see here with Timothy and ultimately Paul. Paul is writing to Timothy and here's what he tells him. He tells him "discipline," and some English translations will say, teach, train, exercise, work, "yourself for the purpose of," what? Godliness, that is becoming more like God. Our God is Jesus. Our purpose is to become more like our God, Jesus Christ. "For while bodily training is of some value." How many of you're at the gym bros? You're here with your protein shake, you got your tank top on, you smell like Axe body spray. We still glad to have you in spite of all those things. "Bodily training is of some value. Godliness is of value in," what way? Every way. "When you work out your body, that's good for your body. When you work out your soul, it's good for every aspect of you as it holds promise for the present life and also the life to come. Here's what Paul is telling Timothy, is like, Timothy, you have a good exercise routine, you take good care of your body. You're exercising, you're going to the gym, you're lifting, you're in good shape. That's good. But what's even better is disciplining not just your body but your soul and your entire self. Because if you exercise your body, that's good for your body. But what about your mind? What about your heart? What about your soul? What about your emotions and your will and your decision making? Those things need to go to the proverbial gym as well. Furthermore, physical exercise is only good as long as you're alive. Once you die, it's no more benefit. But if you are building your character, if you're building your soul, if you're building yourself, that goes into the presence of God, and you take all of that investment with you. So ultimately what I'm saying is that life is not about balance, but tension. How do you live your life and also live your life with God in such a way that your job balances with your faith, your marriage is intention with your faith, that raising of your children is intention with your faith, and you're learning how to live in that tension and it makes you stronger as a man of God. And so what we're gonna talk about is spiritual disciplines. And I'm gonna start with the first one today. And that is study and then obedience. And we're just gonna work through the Word of God. And before I jump in, some of you guys

are new. Let me just tell you what this is, okay? This is a Bible. You need at least one and so does everybody in your family. This is the book that God wrote. It's the only perfect thing on the earth. No one on the earth is perfect and nothing on the earth is perfect except for this book. This is a library of books, 66 books written over the course of a few thousand years by 40-some authors, 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 in the New. And the hero of this entire story is Jesus Christ. And ultimately we believe that this is the Word of God. We believe that God has written a book and he has chosen to speak to us. We believe that when we open that book, God gives us a word. And let me tell you, man, just as I was singing in worship with you off to the side, it just hit me, how many voices are in your ear, in your head? How many people are telling you what to be or what to do? How many people are telling you what to think or how to behave? We have a world with an infinite amount of noise. And what we need to do is learn to just close our ears to everything and to open our ears to our heavenly Father to see what he would have to say to us as his sons through his Word. And and I'm telling you that ultimately once you know that God has spoken to you, you just live differently.

- [Congregation] Amen.

- Your fear is replaced with faith. Your insecurity is replaced with a God-given humble confidence. Men who have a hard time being activated because they're not sure what to say or do, once they hear from God, they know exactly what to say and do. You don't need to be a strong man. You don't need to be a brave man. You don't need to be a bold man. You just need to be an obedient man. And once God speaks, you know exactly who you are, you know exactly who your Father is and you know exactly what to do. So we're gonna start with the Word of God. And this is how God speaks to you and pours into you. Here's just a few things that the scriptures say. Instruct a wise man, he'll be wiser still. The point is, even if you're mature, you can get more mature. That every man is in a process and no man is perfect, so everyone has something to learn. Teach a righteous man, he will add to his learning. Here's what Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all your mind." God wants mindful sons, not mindless sons who think biblically and accurately. Jesus says in one place in his high priestly prayer, "sanctify them," that is grow them up, mature them, take them from boys to men. "Sanctify them in the truth." What is the truth? The Word is truth. In addition, in the next slide, I love this one. 2nd Timothy 2:15, do your best to present yourself as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling, what? The word of truth. Let me tell you this, guys, Satan knows the Bible so you need to know it. Satan uses the Bible so you need to use it. The first thing that Satan did when he showed up to our first father, he misquoted the Word of God and attacked him. And so really you and I, we've gotta learn how to accurately, rightly interpret the Word of God. And then I love this in 2nd Timothy 2:16 and 17, again, a spiritual father speaking to his spiritual son. How much scripture? All. And every guy's like, "Well, there's parts I don't like." Well, it's all good, it's all there. And it's all breathed out by God. God, his Holy Spirit worked through human authors to bring us the Word of God, breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching. That's learning things, reproof, correction, training in righteousness, that who can become complete, equipped for every good work? The man of God. Here's what Paul is telling Timothy. There is no man of God without the Word of God. Let me say this, there is no man of

God without the Word of God. That the Word of God equips the man of God. And that's the purpose of the Word of God. And so my question to you would be, how's it going time in God's Word? And I'm not saying that to be judgmental, but for you to judge yourself. I'm not saying that to create comparison because we're all somewhere in the process. Around the table there's gonna be some guys who have been deeply in the Word of God for a very long time and there's a few guys that have made it to the table of contents and gotten no further. Either way, I don't want you to beat one another down. I want you to build one another up. If you're a guy who's been in the Word for a while, I want you to take the other guys and say, "This is great. Welcome to it. Let's get started." For some guys, spiritually speaking, this is very uncomfortable and vulnerable, because everywhere they go, they're the expert, they're strong, they know what to do. They get on the job, they're like, "I know what to do here." They sit down, do their taxes, "I know what to do here." They go repair their house, they're like, "I know what to do here." You sit down with the Bible, they're like, "I don't know what to do here." We all start at zero. We all start with no knowledge or information. And so we wanna be the guys that help you take the next step. And I'll say this as well, if you're joining us and you don't have a good Bible, you let your table lead know we will give you this Bible. It's called ESV, English Standard Version. And by the way, we're not snobs about translations. The best translation is the one you'll read. That's where I'm at. If you'll read it, that's a good translation. Okay? But at the end of the day, we'll give you, and this is a study Bible with notes. If you don't have one, it is my great honor to give some of you men your very first Bible, and God will use it to change your life. God used his Word to change my life. I was just completely lost. I did not know the Lord. I didn't know the things of the Lord. A gal named Grace, now my wife, gave me a Bible at the age of 17. I got saved reading it at 19. I've been studying God's Word now. I'm 52 years of age. So I have been consistently in the Word of God for 33 years. I've been a husband for 30 years. I've been a senior pastor for 27 years and a father for 26 years. And I can tell you, every time I obeyed God's Word, God bless my life. And every time I disobeyed God's Word, I hurt myself and the people that I love. And so ultimately we want you to be the Bible guys. And so ultimately the question is how do you get God's Word into you? And I'll give you some, I wanna make this very practical because what happens, when we start talking about these things, sometimes the pastor is the professional religious guy went to Bible college or seminary. He's a total nerd. He's got nothing else to do. And so he set some weird bar of expectation that is unreasonable for a guy who's got a regular job, right? We worship Jesus. He had a job. He was a construction worker, a carpenter, part of the family business with his dad. He didn't sit around all day in the lotus position, you know, just chanting, drinking herbal tea and envisioning world peace. He had a job to do. You guys gotta go to work. My grandpa was a diesel mechanic. My dad was a drywaller. One of my first jobs, I was a longshoreman. I think that we need to get Christianity back into the hands of heterosexual, Bible-believing, church-attending, job-working husbands and fathers. That's what we're doing. And if you were triggered, you're wrong. Okay? So. Here's some various ways to get the Word. Let me make this very practical. First, there are different levels. Hearing, reading, memorizing, and studying. Those are different levels of depth. And let's start with hearing God's Word. Roman says, faith comes by hearing the Word of God, right? Hearing the Word of God. Some practical ways to do that: be in charge, hear the Word of God taught and preach. Thank you for letting me teach. You guys vote with your feet. You don't have to be here, but you're

here. And it means the world to me, 'cause you matter, your wives matter, your kids matter, your grandkids matter, your businesses matter, your legacies matter. I'm here 'cause you guys are my priority. And it's an honor that you would give me that I could help you learn God's Word. Other ways to hear God's Word, you can read it aloud, and if you'll just start reading God's Word, you can actually read it aloud, it'll help your retention. If you're reading it and speaking it, it will help your retention. Some of you guys as well, you're not the most studious guys, let's just say it right? I mean, some of you guys are like, "I read a book once and then I graduated and I'm done with that." So the question is, what do we do with those guys who aren't super readers? Well, we now live in an amazing age of technology. Most of what's on the internet is garbage and porn and politics, which is just various kinds of garbage. But there is some wonderful tools that can help you. I'm gonna recommend something called the YouVersion Bible app. It's put out by a friend of mine, pastor Craig Groeschel at Life Church. Great man of God, great church. And you can just download this free app and they will give you Bible reading plans. Maybe you are saying, "Okay, I wanna go through a book of the Bible." Great. You can either read it or they will read it to you. You could just hit play. Maybe it's a character study or a thematic study. On the YouVersion app I've got a 365-day Bible plan, every day take you through the totality of God's Word for free. I think last year 150,000 people joined us in doing that. And one of the things some of you guys alike, it'll read it to you. So when you're driving to work, you can have the Word of God read to you. If you're working out or you've got a job where you've got some ability to put some earbuds in and listen, then it'll literally read the Word of God to you, okay? You wanna level up? Lemme tell you what, read the Bible to your wife, have your wife read the Bible to you. I'm guaranteeing you, this is a game changer for your marriage. Because when it talks about an Ephesians to wash your wife with the Word of God, when you're reading the Bible to your wife and she's reading it to you, I'm telling you, game changer, date night, better. Just telling you, little few bonus rounds on the side. You read the Bible with your wife. In addition, one of the things I did a lot with our kids growing up, I always kept a Bible on the dining room table. We'd sit down and, you know, sometimes the kids wanted to talk about other stuff, which is fine, but if there was a lull, I'd pick a part of the Bible, I'd read it and we'd just talk about it as a family, just a daily drip of God's Word. And one of the best things you can do if you're a dad or a granddad, have your kid or grandkid read the Bible to you. When my kids were little, even with the kids' Bible, I'd be like, "Hey, you can read now, read that to dad." And I'll tell you what, there's one thing hearing the Word of God, there's another thing hearing it on the lips of your own child. It's the greatest thing in the world. Hearing the Word of God, reading it for yourself. If you don't know what to do, I would suggest to you grab a Bible and start in the Gospel of Luke and then just keep reading. Just keep reading. If you don't know where to start, ask some guys around your table. If you want a good Bible study, the study Bible that I recommend is the ESV Study Bible. It's got a good introduction to all the books and then notes, so if you're reading it and you're like, "I don't know what that means," well, there's a little explanation down there to help you out. In addition, like I said, on YouVersion there's Bible reading plans. And you can say, "well, I wanna read through the Old Testament, the New Testament or the whole Bible," or "I want to go through the Bible this year chronologically," and they'll put it together in historical order. It doesn't matter to me. It's about tools, not rules. Whatever works for you, works. The best plan is the plan that you'll stick with. And then the next version is, the next level, I should

say, is memorizing God's Word. And memorizing God's Word is where you take certain scriptures that the Holy Spirit highlights for you and memorizing them so you can bring them back into a moment when you need them most desperately. The best way to memorize God's Word, if you're reading it and something really sticks out, highlight it. Write in your Bible, make notes. It's a tool. You know, a guy is good at his job when his tools are beaten up and dirty. You know, a guy is not doing his job when his tools are clean. Don't feel bad getting your Bible a little beat up and a little dirty. It's a tool. So write in it, make notes, highlight it. And as you're reading it, if you come across a scripture and you're like, "Wow! The Holy Spirit just kinda lit that one up for me," write it down and memorize it. The best way to memorize the verse is to literally write it out a few times. The act of writing with your hand, it activates something in your brain. And what I would tell you is this. What if you read God's Word every day for 50 years? What if you memorize the verse every week for 50 years? What we tend to do, we tend to think that we can accomplish more in a short time than we really can and we can accomplish a lot more in a long time than we think we can. Reading God's Word, hearing God's Word, memorizing God's Word, and then studying God's Word. And this is kind of the next level of depth. This can be taking a book of the Bible and saying, I just wanna really focus on this book of the Bible. It may be a theme or a topic, I wanna learn about forgiveness, or how to be a good husband or how to be a good dad or how to handle my finances. You can learn to do a topical study. And then the third form is a character study. You're like, "I'm like Peter, I got a big mouth, and I gotta learn to be quiet. I'm gonna study Peter." You're a guy like Nehemiah, you're like, "I'm the CEO, CFO of a business and I got a lot of responsibilities and I wanna be a good leader," study Nehemiah, right? You're a young man, you're like, "I wanna figure out how to get my head on straight, meet a good girl and have a good family," get to know a guy named Boaz in the Bible. Sometimes a character study is what God has for you. And it's all good, it's all great. Just pick whatever works for you. A couple of things before I move on. Number one, the Bible is the only book that studies you as you study it. I've read a lot of books, I've got 5,000 books on the shelf at my house. I've got three, four times that on my laptop. I read a lot of books. When I read this book, it reads me. It shows me my motives and my desires and my pride and my selfishness. It reveals me. It's unlike any other book that's ever been written 'cause it's the book that God wrote. In addition, the Bible is the only book that when you sit down to read it, the author will meet with you and help you understand it. This is amazing. I have seen men who didn't do well in school but they do well in the Bible, because to do well in school you need to be smart. But to do well in the Bible, you just need to be humble. It's not about how smart you are, it's about how humble you are. 'Cause you can't learn anything if you're arrogant. But you can learn anything if you're humble. I just feel like sharing this, it comes to mind. When I was a brand new Christian, I joined a men's Bible study and I got into the men's Bible study and there was one guy in the study, he hardly ever said anything, but as soon as he did, we all just grabbed our pen, shut our mouths and wrote down whatever he said. He was that guy. It was like the book of Proverbs, you know, wore a John Deere hat. He was that guy. And when he spoke, the guy just, he knew the scriptures, he knew the Lord and he was wise. And I remember, I'll never forget, I remember I was in this Bible study with him, I was a college student, I was like, "Man, where did you learn all of this?" I said, "Where'd you go to school?" And I think he told me, "I dropped out in the eighth grade 'cause I had to go work on the family farm." And he said, "I've been farming the

family farm my whole life." He said, "But I get up every morning, I talk to Jesus, I read the Bible," and he had the Bible on cassette. This is back, you know, when we had cassettes. The good days before socialism and supply chain issues. I missed those days. So we had cassettes, and he said, "I have the Bible on cassette and I'm in the tractor or in the combiner or out in the truck and I'm in the fields and I continually listened to the Bible and I've been listening to the Bible," at that point, I think it was like 50 years. He was the wisest man that I had ever met to that point. He was helpful, insightful, godly, spirit-filled with an eighth grade education. One of the myths is you need to be smart. You don't need to be smart, you need to be humble. That's all you need. Because when you open the Bible, the author meets with you, right? If you're opening the Bible, you're like, "Holy Spirit, I know you wrote this book. Help me understand it," he's gonna show up and do that. You're gonna have supernatural encounters with the Holy Spirit if you prayerfully and humbly open the Word of God. In addition, pick whatever plan works for you. Here we are in January, you got a whole year, pick a plan. Whatever works for you, works for me. And I'll end with this quote from Charles Spurgeon, one of my favorite preachers. He said, "A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to a person whose life isn't falling apart." So what do you do once you open the Bible? Here's my last point, you do what it says. So studying the Bible is God pouring in, obedience is you pouring out. We don't read the Bible to argue with Christians. We don't read the Bible to tell people how smart we are. We don't read the Bible so that we can out argue one another. We don't read the Bible so we can impress one another. We read the Bible to hear what God says and do what God says. That's the whole goal for Bible study is obedience. So I'll give you a couple of scriptures. Joshua says, 1:8-9, "Study this book of instruction," how often? Continually. Lifestyle, habit. Maybe you gotta get up early, maybe you gotta stay up late. Maybe you gotta listen to it on your commute. Maybe you gotta read it during your lunch break. Maybe you gotta have it on your dinner table and part of your family discussion. "Meditate on it day and night." You need God's Word all day. "So you'll be sure to obey." How many of you are dad? Dads? How many of you dads love your sons? How many of you tell your sons to do things? Okay, God's a father, you're his son, he's gonna tell you to do some things. Just know when he tells you to do something, it's from a father who loves you and he is trying to help you. I've got three boys. I love my boys, I love my girls too, but I love my boys with all my heart. And when I sit down with 'em and I tell 'em something, it's because I know more than them and I love them and I don't want them to hurt themselves. And if they'll listen to me, it'll benefit them. God is your father. He's gonna tell you to do some things so he can help you. "Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. This is my command. Be strong and courageous." And I would say this, you can't be strong and courageous unless you've heard from God. "Do not be afraid or discouraged for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Here's what Joshua is saying. God's a Father and he speaks to us through his Word. When we hear his Word, we need to obey it. And if we obey it, then he goes with us and he helps us and he blesses us. One of the things that I like to say here at Trinity Church, and I say it all the time is God doesn't bless people. He blesses a place. That place is under his Word. So if you want to be blessed, place yourself in the place that God blesses: obedience to his Word. God blesses those who obey his Word. Some of you, you've got some difficult decisions, find the will of God. Some of you have strong temptations, obey the Word of God. Some of you have a very difficult year that is shaping up before you. Get in the Word. Get the



Word in you. Seek God's will. Obey God's will. He'll go with you and he will help you. How many of you are dads? Okay, dads, back to you. Okay dad, you got a little boy and you look at your boy and you're like, "Okay, son, here's what, don't do this, do that," okay? If that boy looks at you and says, "Dad, I trust you. I want to do what you're telling me to do." And then your boy asks you this question, "Dad, will you help me?" answer? Absolutely! You're a son that wants to obey your father because you trust the goodness of your father. And if you honor my authority as your father, and I tell you something 'cause I love you and you trust me and you wanna obey me and you want me to help you, guess what? That's the best day ever being a dad. Amen? And so when the Father speaks to you, just be a good son. So, okay, dad, I trust you. I know that's right. And then ask him, "Will you help me?" And guess what? The Father always says yes to the son who wants to obey. In addition, I'll give you a couple more scriptures. Luke 11:28. Jesus replied, :blessed are those who,: what? "Hear the Word of God," and what? "Obey it." Are you blessed if you hear it? No, not until you obey it. This is like having a gym membership and never go into the gym, right? I mean, unless you do it, you're not blessed by it. Here's what Jesus says, "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them," that's obedience. 1st Corinthians 8:1, knowledge puffs up. Let me just unpack this for a moment. I'm a nerd. I know I don't look like it. I'm in a car hard hat with a Shrek size head and a homeless beard. But I am a bit of a nerd. I like books. I like to study. I find it very curious. How many of you guys are like me? You're a little bit of a nerd. Okay? Here's what I find: knowledge puffs up. Sometimes guys who can't win at work and they can't win at sports and they can't win at business, they can win at church because they're good at arguing and memorizing things and quoting dead guys and acting intelligent. We're not those guys. We would rather be men who are obedient than men who win arguments. We would rather... Here's a big idea. Our goal is not to win arguments but to win other men. We try to win people not arguments. What happens, sometimes in a men's ministry like this, the Pharisees, the religious guys, the nerds, and I'm a nerd, they start to get proud and arrogant and make everybody else feel stupid. And they're sort of impressing with their verse quoting and their Greek knowledge and their Latin tenses and their dead guy to amaze. That's not what we're doing. My dad hung drywall for a living. My dad is a man of God. My dad is a good husband, my dad is a good father. My dad is a good grandfather. And I would say that ultimately the test of whether or not you are a good quote unquote theologian is not how you argue, but how you live. If your wife is smiling and your kids like you, you're a good theologian. And if they don't, you may be a false teacher. You may be saying something that you're not living. Our goal is to build men up to bless women and children. It's very practical, it's obedience. And then I'll give you the last one. Here's Jesus' brother James. James is the blue collar guy, the New Testament. He's all about getting stuff done. "Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves," what? "Do what it says." So the question is, what are you supposed to do? Here's what I find. I've been doing ministry 27 years. You guys wanna know the secret to counseling. You guys can all do counseling by the way. You ready to learn how to do it? It's easy. You look at somebody, you're like, "What are you supposed to do?" And they tell you and they ask him if they're doing it and they say no, and they tell 'em to do it. That's counseling. It's real easy. I get it all the time. Like I meet with a guy like, what are you supposed to do? I'm supposed to love my wife and listen better and watch my temper. Okay, are you doing that? Nope. All right, do that. Most of the time, it's not that we don't know what to do, it's that

we're not doing what we've been told to do. And oftentimes then we're looking for more information and more perspective and more wise counselors and more... And it's like, no, you just gotta do what you've already been told to do. And let me close with the power of four. Back to the Bible was an organization. They went out and they surveyed 400,000 people, I've shared this before, and they were trying to figure out what difference does God's Word make in someone's life? And they came up with something that was a bit unexpected called the power of four. And here's what they found. If you are in God's Word one day a week, minimal impact, two days a week, minimal impact, three days a week, minimal impact. Four days a week, massive impact. Because when God's Word is the majority of your week, your whole week changes. Okay? So here's what they found. People that are in the Bible four or more times a week, they're 407% more likely to memorize scripture, 228% more likely to share their faith with others, 59% less likely to view pornography, and 30% less likely to struggle with loneliness. In addition, they have markedly lower sexual sin, gambling, drunkenness, addiction, and other behaviors. I'll just tell you this, they won't tell you this at ASU, but if they were honest, they would say, you know what? If you really want to help people, you should probably buy 'em a Bible. 'Cause ultimately it's the Word of God that God uses to change people, to transform people and to change lives and legacies. So here's the two big ideas. God pours into you through the scriptures and then you pour out through obedience. And I've got an analogy from Pastor Jimmy Evans, one of my pastors, is gonna come preach for us in March, being honored to have him, but I'm gonna use one of his illustrations. And what he says is, he says that a man who is living against the will of God is like a man who is rowing a boat upstream. Any of you tried to row upstream, it's exhausting, it's overwhelming, it's frustrating, the progress is slow. And as soon as you stop, you go backwards really fast. And he says that a man who obeys God, it's like a guy rowing his boat downstream. All of a sudden you're like, oh, the Holy Spirit is helping, God is for me. All of a sudden circumstances are coming together. Brothers in Christ are coming alongside to help. And all of a sudden you're making great momentum if you're rowing downstream. I'm telling you, if you will open the Word of God and obey it, you're gonna turn your boat around. Some of you guys, I love you and this is not to be negative or pejorative or critical, but the reason life is hard is 'cause God loves you. You're rowing the wrong direction. So he is making it hard. And it's his way of saying, turn the boat around, right? Your ears have been closed. Get 'em open. Your heart's been closed. Get it open. Your mind's been closed. Get it open. You know what to do, but you're not doing it. Bible says He who knows what to do and doesn't do it, that's by definition sin. And repentance is literally, you know what? Okay, I'm gonna turn this boat around. I'm gonna listen to what the father says, I'm gonna do what the Father commands and I'm gonna go the direction that the Father decrees. I want you guys to know the Father loves you. The Father cares about you. The Father wants the best for you. The Father wants to be connected to you. The Father wants to go to work with you. The Father wants to help you be a better man, be a better husband, be a better father, be a better brother, to be a better employer, to be a better worker. And the Father's just waiting to meet with you. He's waiting for you to open his Word so he can speak to you as his son. And then he is gonna send the Holy Spirit to help you to live in obedience, to get your proverbial boat turned around. And this is the perfect time of year. It's January. It's like, okay, God, what do you have to say? What do you have for me to do? I'll break you into table groups in just a second. And thanks to

everybody who's joining us online, first thing we just want you to do is introduce yourself. Just anything you wanna share. We'd love to get to know you. For the Bible guys in the group, what tips, if any, would you share to help the other guys learn the Bible? You're like, this is what's worked for me. Tools, not rules. And then number three, before we go, we always pray for every man. How can we pray for something you need to obey? How can we pray for what you need to obey? Father, thanks for an opportunity to get together with the men of God. Thank you to open the Word of God. Thank you, it's Holy Spirit, that you'll make us like Jesus, the Son of God. And God, as we look at disciplines, we know that to be a disciple requires discipline. It's the same root word. We can't be Jesus disciples unless we're discipling ourselves by living disciplined lives. God, I pray that this wouldn't be a have-to, but a get-to. I pray this wouldn't be so that we can outperform one another, but we could spur one another on to love and good deeds. And God, I pray for every man that the Bible would be open and that you would be obeyed. And that this year we'd all get our boats going downstream, rowing with the Holy Spirit, making good progress. In Jesus' name. Amen.