**The Solution to STUCK**

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**By the Man in the Mirror Team**

In this uncharted territory we find ourselves in, many of our circumstances look different. The same is true for the men in your church. We have differing health statuses, reopening restrictions, levels of job security, family situations, education needs for our children, levels of discipleship activity, and the list goes on.

But as Christians, at the heart of it all we share the same, one-size-fits-all goal: to abide in Christ, to love others as Christ loved us, and to bear fruit.

So why do so many of us feel stuck right now? And could there also be a one-size-fits-all *solution*? After decades of working with men and churches, we believe there is.

For men who either are already growing, want to grow, or *want to* want to grow, we’ve seen that focusing on just three things has immense power to get them unstuck and growing: a Bible, a small group, and serving someone else.

**A Bible**

The first question to ask when you are feeling stuck is if you’re spending regular time in the Bible. Often, the answer is no. The next question is why.

Has your routine been changed radically with job or childcare adjustments? Are you spending all your free time on the news? Are you binge-watching a show instead of reading to escape from stress? Have you never had a consistent Bible-reading time?

Whatever the reason, get started today. Being in your Bible daily means that you’re exposed to truth daily. In the shifting sands of our culture, news cycles, and circumstances, having a rock to stand firm on will bring freedom and clarity to your mind and spirit.

[Hebrews 4:12-13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%204.12-13) tells us:

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

When we prayerfully read the Bible, we gain discernment regarding our own hearts—our motivations, our sin, our calling, our desires. We give the One who made us an opportunity to show us more about ourselves and more about Him.

We’re also given wisdom. In Matthew 22, the Sadducees ask Jesus questions about the resurrection to test Him. He answers them, “You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” (verse 29). We can’t get unstuck without knowing the Scriptures. It releases the power of God in our lives.

If you’re not sure where to begin, there are several tools that can help—Bible-reading apps for your smart phone ([here’s a good one](https://www.readscripture.org/)), daily devotionals that go through scripture passages, even free videos online to help explain books and stories from the Bible. Choose a time each day when you’re fresh and can be alone without distractions. It’s okay to start small—even just 15 minutes in the Word of God can change *everything.*

Abide in Christ through spending time each day prayerfully reading the Bible.

**A Small Group**

This year, we’ve had to actively resist isolating ourselves, something men are often already prone to do. With social distancing measures in place, churches having closed their doors for a period of time, working from home, and other changes, a sense of community has taken some amount of work to maintain.

If you are feeling stuck, ask yourself if you’re actively part of a close community or if you’re isolated right now.

“One of the best treatments for depression, PTSD, burnout, or numbness has proven to be talk therapy,” Patrick Morley shared at a men’s Bible study. “You and I have a desperate desire to understand and to be understood, to know and to be known, to love and to be loved.”

Having a small group of other men to talk to and do life with is powerful. Even Jesus chose to minister and do life with a small group!

[Hebrews 3:12-13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Heb%203.12-13) admonishes us:

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

This passage reveals that beyond providing us with support and community, a small group also sharpens us through exhortation and protects us from the deceitfulness of sin. Men, we need each other if we’re going to get unstuck and grow.

A small group can look many different ways, whether you’re able to meet in person or by video. [Click here for suggested study resources](https://maninthemirror.org/2020/06/30/losing-the-church/) to use as a small group or [here for tips on how to lead one](https://maninthemirror.org/2019/11/18/how-to-make-the-best-mens-small-group/).

We have the opportunity to love others as Christ loved us within the community of a small group.

**Serving Someone Else**

If you’re feeling stuck, one thing to ask yourself is when the last time was that you met a need by serving someone else.

Jesus gives us this extraordinary example of how we can be like Him in serving other people, sacrificing something of ourselves to help others. In [Luke 22:24-27](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2022.24-27), the disciples ask Jesus about greatness:

A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

Serving someone else is to be like Jesus. He was among them as the one who served!

It also allows us to meet practical needs, through which we can show God’s care and love for that person. And it can widen our perspective and broaden our understanding along the way.

The last few months have left no shortage of needs to meet. Who in your church is hurting or suffering in some way right now? Is someone newly-unemployed that could use groceries dropped off or resume-writing help? Is there a high-risk person who needs errands run? A widow whose yard needs mowed? A parent who could use a couple of hours of childcare because their spouse is deployed with the National Guard or working long hours in essential services? Could you volunteer to organize items at a local food pantry?

Look around you and ask God to reveal opportunities for you to serve. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” ([Ephesians 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Eph%202.10)).

Serving someone else will allow you to bear tangible fruit and make a difference in the lives of others.

**The Goal**

If you had to focus on only these three things for both your personal growth and ministry-wide growth, we believe you’d see a powerful change in yourself and in your men.

If you feel stuck, which of these three are you missing in your life? If your ministry feels stuck, which of these three are your men missing?

THE BIG IDEA: The solution to stuck is a Bible, a small group, and serving someone else.

Abiding in Christ through the regular reading of the Bible, loving others as Christ loved us in the context of a small group, and bearing fruit by earnestly serving others—apart from the Holy Spirit working in us through these three things, the most trendy, researched ministry strategy in the world can’t produce transformed lives.

*For more about the big idea and spiritual growth, read Chapter 3, Growth: Becoming a More Kingdom-Minded Man, in*[*The Christian Man*](https://maninthemirror.org/the-christian-man/)*by Patrick Morley.*

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