

# Newsletter

## *From the Founder*

### **The Tragic Disconnect**

When I was 12 years old a good friend, Dave, talked me into joining a baseball team. My friend had been playing baseball since he was 5 years old and he was an amazing player. I remember how scared I was showing up to our first practice. You see...I had never played baseball with a hard ball up to this point in my life. I also had never swung a bat at a fast pitched ball.

When the coach asked me, "What position do you play?" I had no idea what all the positions were. All the other guys who had been playing for many years and who knew each other were listening intently, hoping I was not going to want to play the position they wanted to play. Little did they know how ignorant and unskilled I was at this point, I couldn't even be classified as a rookie! As I stood there dumbfounded over how to answer that simple question, my buddy Dave saved the day and said, "He plays outfield, Coach."

It didn't take long for the other players to realize they had nothing to worry about. I was not going to be stealing their position from them anytime soon. I couldn't hit the ball, throw very far, or field a high flying ball. The first game that we played, the other team was short one player in order to play the game. The Umpire said if our team gave them one of our players, then they could play. Well...who do you think our team gave the other team? The village idiot...me!

My temporary team was in the field first. The first 3 players on my home team all got on base and then Dave was up to bat. Guess where he hit the ball? Yep...right at me! It was a high pop-fly to center field. As I ran up, then back, then up again, the ball landed 20 feet behind me. The other players on the field started yelling, "He meant to do that!" "That's not fair!" and they were throwing their gloves. I tried to shrug it off as if I did mean to do it but I and all the guys on my team knew the truth. I remember coming into that dugout and all the other players sitting 5 feet away from me and giving me the dirtiest looks.

For half of that season I spent most of the time sitting on the bench. I wanted to quit so many times but my buddy, Dave, kept encouraging me to hang in there. Dave and I started meeting at the park and practicing. He'd hit balls to me, taught me the strategy of the game, and we'd go to the batting cages so I could learn how to hit the ball. He helped me with my stance, where to grip the bat, and how to put my body into it. That year our team took first place and I got the "Most Improved Player" trophy. I was also in the top 10 batting averages for that year.

If my buddy, Dave, had not taken the time to encourage me and mentor me, I would have either quit or sat on the bench most of that year because I was unskilled in how to play the game.

As men, we know when it comes to things like our vocation, playing sports, or being proficient in our hobbies, that we need to spend some time studying to know how to do the task and practicing to develop the skill to do it well and if you want to really improve yourself, you look for a mentor who has experience in doing it correctly for a time.

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Why is it, for most men, when it comes to being a husband or father, there seems to be a disconnect to this basic truth and practice?

We know when we stand before the Lord one day that asking about how well we made money, played a sport, or how well we perfected our hobby is not going to be at the top of His list. For sure His concern is how we tended to our daily relationship with Him, our spouse, and our children. These are things that are truly valuable and important to Him.

Most Christian men know this truth intellectually but their life and practice do not reflect that these things are a priority to God.

How strange is it today for a Christian man to know and look for a mentor (disciple) to walk with him for a season of life to teach him how to be a godly husband and father; especially because over 95% of Christian men today did not have a godly example given to them by their fathers. And just as strange as it is to ask for this help, it is equally as strange for a Christian man to offer to disciple another man in these areas.

It is very clear today by the statistics within the Church that whatever we are doing it is NOT working. Unless we want to accept that 600,000 + divorces a year and over 70% of children being raised in Christian homes are walking away from their faith after leaving home is ok and acceptable to God.

Weekend retreats, powering out books, and sending people to therapists is NOT working. We don't need a revival in the Church, we need better understanding of what God has called ALL Christians to become – Disciples. We need better teaching and more emphasis on what it means to be discipled by others in the important things God has given us to do and tend to. This is the priority and main purpose of the Church. Yet again, there seems to be a disconnect.

*Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

**ALL means ALL and that is ALL that ALL means!**

*Please join us as we pray for more disciples who are willing to learn and disciple others. Thank you.*

### **Pressing On...**

Dear Pastor Craig,

My name is Cherri. I attend a local church in the San Diego area. I took the marriage class that was through our church last year, my husband did not. Long story short...I was going to "fix him" and learn. Well...what I learned was that *I* was the one that needed "fixing". Everything I accused my husband of, God threw right back at me and it made me sick. You see...I didn't know that God's Word provided me the guideline on marriage. I did it all wrong. I didn't know. It has been a long haul and my marriage is so much better for both of us. I have been so blessed by the class God inspired you to put together. I can't wait to take it again – maybe my husband will too. I know God will show me more and bless us together as husband & wife.

Thank you, Cherri

## Seeing the Fruit...from Russia

*John 15:8 by this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*

Dear Craig!

Thank you for your letter. Thank you for asking how things are. As far as our family is concerned: We have been devoting much time and resources to Lera's eye treatment during this year. She has had a surgery and is going to have one more soon. Alina is finishing her 2<sup>nd</sup> year at the University studying law. She is an A student, which means she is always busy with her studies. But God is good, last Monday she got her American visa and is traveling to the USA for 2 months. She's been saving her stipend which the University pays to A students and is paying for her trip herself. I (Marianna) continue to teach English at the University. Vlad asked me to become one of the women's ministry leaders, and I also teach a Bible study for younger ladies. Pastor Vlad asked Kostya to become a full-time Assistant Pastor and this is what God has put on Kostya's heart. There is no financial support for our family at the church, and it means we are going to live on a much tougher budget, but we all have a peace about it, because Kostya said that he feels that God leads him this way. Thank you, Craig, that you taught me to trust my husband. It helps in this new situation.

As for the ministry: Kostya is doing all those things the Assistant Pastor normally does: helps the Senior Pastor have enough time to preach and meet people for counseling. He oversees Sunday school, meets with Sunday school teachers and parents; disciple's Youth Ministers, and deals with family issues of the church members. He also has 3 Pastors from other cities that he helps to deal with family issues on a continuous basis.

He taught a conference in Perm in February 20-23 and one in Nizhny – it was regional, we had people from Nizhny and some churches from nearby cities (nearby here means an overnight trip ☺). Kostya was so passionate and persuasive about it that people paid themselves! We were able to take them out from the city to a nice retreat center, and the majority paid their own expenses themselves. Kostya has been discipling a great young man from our church and handed over his Bible study to Vova. Kostya has a request from Max to teach parenting and marriage at his church in September; a request from Pastor Dima to teach in Feodosia, from Pastor Haidar from Jordan (can you imagine how the Lord connects people?). Kostya was in Hungary at CC Bible College in March. They have "speaker's week" every year for the Bible College students. Kostya thinks it might be a good opportunity to come and teach future Leaders and Pastors marriage with you during this week. There are many, many things going on in our life. We love all of it what God does and how He transforms us through hurt and joy. We would love to hear how your family is doing. I know how busy you are, but maybe you could tell us a bit about them? At least say 'Hi' to everyone for us. God bless you, Craig, and thanks again for all your support for our family.

## Did you know...?

Did you know that the *Parenting is a Ministry* and *Marriage is a Ministry* DVD's & their workbooks are available for **FREE** on our website? We also have materials available in other languages as well. Check them out sometime at [www.parentingministry.org](http://www.parentingministry.org). Feel free to refer them to your friends!

## Praise Reports

1. We thank the Lord for the many families that have been blessed and transformed by going through our FREE online marriage and parenting courses.
2. New relationships we have formed with churches who are implementing the FDM resources in their body.
3. For the many who are answering the call to be disciples and are coming alongside others and teaching them how to be godly husbands, wives, and parents.

## Prayer Requests

1. Finances needed to complete the translation of materials into the Swahili and German languages.
  2. Family conference in Germany, July 20-24. Please pray that the hearts of those who attend will be open to the Lord's instructions.
  3. For the saints who are able and willing to pray for and/or financially support this ministry.
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