

Men's Group

by

Writer # 95

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR DRIVING--AFTERNOON

A middle aged man in casual business attire is at the wheel on his way home from work. He dialogues with the camera.

JERRY

(Proud of himself)

I'm on my way to meet my first possible candidate for a men's group inspired by a very convicting sermon last Sunday. Pastor Bob challenged us to take the "Bro Dare." What is the Bro Dare? Its basically a time of intense male intimacy.

Pauses

JERRY (CONT'D)

Let me rephrase that. It is a time of intense male *bonding* in the form of accountability and honesty.

The car pulls into a driveway. Jerry shuts the ignition off, gets out and walks toward the front door. As he does so he explains his visit.

JERRY (CONT'D)

This is my friend Brett's house. He's an ex semi pro athlete. Great guy, but he has a bit of an.. (changes to whisper) *anger problem*.

Looking a little nervous, he takes a few deep breaths, and rings the doorbell. From inside sounds can be heard. Someone shouts.

BRETT (MUFFLED ROAR FROM INSIDE)

Will someone get the door!

No one seems to be coming to the door, and Jerry finally knocks again. Muffled cursing ensues.

BRETT (AS HE UNLOCKS THE DOOR)

(CONT'D)

Lousy salesman! Right in the middle of the game every time!

He flings open the door, and without seeing who it is beings to shout.

BRETT (CONT'D)
My cable is fine, I gave at the
office, and the I hate Thin Mints,
Tagalongs and Dosido's!

He goes to shut the door, but Jerry pipes up.

JERRY
Wait Brett, its me Jerry.

Brett pauses before the door closes, and opens it back up a little, as if suspicious that it might not really be Jerry. Seeing it is, his demeanor changes.

BRETT
Jerry! He how's it goin? Sorry,
had a lot of salesmen lately--in
spite of the sign!

Points to a "no solicitors" sign.

BRETT (CONT'D)
Anyway, what's up?

JERRY
Just wanted to remind you about the
group.

BRETT
(Confused)
Group?

JERRY
The uh men's group we talked about
Sunday. Just swingin' by on my way
home tryin' to keep it personal.

BRETT
Oh yeah, great. Wouldn't miss it.
See you there.

Jerry smiles, and Brett starts to close the door and then pauses.

BRETT (CONT'D)
When is it?

CUT TO:

EXT. AFTERNOON

Jerry is standing outside a large house with an immaculate lawn and high end car sitting out front.

JERRY

This is Todd's house. He's another good friend of mine, but he tends to be a little...well...

Jerry nods his head in a way that indicates the opulence around him. He then rings the doorbell. A loud Gothic gong sounds. In a moment a good looking man in a dark suit and white shirt with no tie answers the door. He is on a cell phone. He acknowledges Jerry, and signals for him to hold on for a second.

TODD

And don't forget to put in the stop loss. Right...right, oh and get me 10,000 units of the commodities. Love it. Bye.

He clicks the phone off and finally acknowledges Jerry.

TODD (CONT'D)

Jerry my man, what's the word?

JERRY

I just wanted to make sure you're good for the meeting I talked to you about.

TODD (WRACKING HIS BRAIN)

Yeah...the investing group right?

JERRY

Well kind of...you know...in each other.

Todd does not really appear to register the last remark, but before Jerry can explain further Todd's phone rings again.

TODD

Gotta take this. I'll be there, but don't forget to text me a reminder.

CUT TO:

EXT. AFTERNOON

Jerry is at his last stop an apartment complex. As Jerry walks up the stairs he explains his presence here.

JERRY

This is Mike's house. My wife made me come here. He's a new believer and she said I should "reach out" a little. But...(makes a face) I'm kind of hoping he can't make it.
(Whispers) *He's a little weird.*

He reaches the landing and knocks lightly. No one immediately answers.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I guess he's not home, Oh well I tried.

Jerry starts to walk away when the door opens. A heavy set disheveled man in a batman tee shirt and sweats is standing there. There are remnants of sauce...or something on the front of his shirt.

MIKE

Hello, uh Jeremy right?

JERRY

Jerry.

MIKE

Sorry Jerry. What are you doing here?

JERRY

I uh..wanted to invite you to a men's group.

MIKE

Men's group? What's that? It sounds a little weird.

JERRY (LAUGHING A LITTLE)

Oh, its just a few guys getting together to talk about life, and stuff...

MIKE

Still sounds a little weird,
(pauses) but yeah, I'll come.

JERRY (FAKE SMILE)
Great. Saturday 9 o'clock sharp.

CUT TO:

INT. NEXT DAY

Inside Jerry's house. It is the day of the first meeting. He is nervously running around the house trying to make sure everything is in order. He arranges the chairs, rearranges them, and then grabs some snack items and places them carefully on the table. He stands back to assess his work, and then compulsively rearranges everything again. Just then the doorbell rings. Jerry jumps a little and then composes himself.

JERRY
(Smiling)
First customer!

He walks to the door takes a deep breath and opens it. Todd immediately steps in and starts walking toward the living room.

TODD
Hey buddy! Got the text! Shall we
fire this thing up?

Jerry looks at Todd uncertainly.

JERRY
Uhhh...

Todd takes a seat, pops a chip in his mouth and looks down at his watch in a clear sign he is ready to begin.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Uh, we're just waiting for some
others, I...

Just then the doorbell rings. Jerry looking relieved rushes to the door, and opens it. Brett is there in a baseball uniform.

BRETT
He chief. Got a game in a hour.
Ready to rumble?

JERRY
Uh, yeah, yeah. Lets do it.

Brett and Jerry walk to the living room, and Jerry sits down in an armchair he has reserved for himself as group leader. Just as his tush is about to make contact, the doorbell rings. Looking a little annoyed he shoots an apologetic glance to his friends, and gets the door. He opens it to find Mike there looking harried.

MIKE

Hey, sorry I'm late.

Jerry looks at the clock which reads 9:01. He sighs with thinly veiled annoyance.

JERRY

Its fine. We were just starting.

They get seated again, and Jerry regains his composure.

JERRY (CONT'D)

So. I thought we'd begin by talking about something personal.

Both Todd and Brett look concerned, but Mike looks interested.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Nothing too intimate, just share how you came to Christ.

This seems not to allay the fears on Todd and Brett's part, but Jerry plows ahead unfazed.

JERRY (CONT'D)

My story is not very exciting...*sometimes I wish it were*, but I was raised in the church, and "walked the aisle" when I was about five, and well the rest is history. So who'd like to go next?

Nobody is volunteering.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Brett how about you?

Brett thinks for a moment.

BRETT

Okay...well, I was playing ball in college, and was having some problems with focus. My coach was a Christian and said J.C.

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

could help me get a handle on my game. I thought it was bogus, but I tried praying before my next game, and WHAMMO! (pounds his fist into his palm as everyone flinches) Victory. Told my coach I was *in*.

Brett smiles like this makes perfect sense. Everyone else looks slightly bewildered.

JERRY

Interesting. Well the Lord works in mysterious ways. Todd can you tell us how you came to the Lord?

Todd looks a little taken off guard since he was expecting to have to answer questions about finance.

TODD

Uh yeah well my stories not much different. I was watching TV, and I saw this preacher talking about getting the most out of life. In fact he said something funny. He said that God wants to bless the *Hell* out of us. And he wasn't even cussing. I knew right there that was the message I needed to hear. Been walking the streets of gold ever since.

Jerry smiles at these testimonies, and finally turns to Mike. Mike seems confused by the nature of his fellow group member's stories, but does his best.

MIKE

Well. About a month ago, I was really down, and I was watching this horror movie, and it scared the crap out of me. Uh...sorry can I say crap?

JERRY

Crap is fine.

MIKE

So it scared the crap out me, and the next thing I know I'm on my knees praying to I don't know what to save me. The following day is Sunday, and I'm driving down the street, pass this church and I know have to go in. So I do.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Well I corner the pastor after the service, and he prays with me. I ask Jesus to save me and well, I felt brand new. The pastor said I should talk to some other men about growing in Christ, but I don't even really know what that means, so I was glad when Jerry stopped by.

The group is silent for a moment as no one seems to know what to do with this information.

JERRY

Well thank you Mike. (He pauses for a moment) So...I would like to move on to our next topic. Sin.

Brett and Todd look at each other nervously.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Just share a little something that you have never told anyone else. I'll start. OK here goes.

He takes a deep breath.

Sometimes I get a little short tempered with people.

BRETT

I'll second that!

TODD

There's a lot of idiocracy ut there.

Jerry looks relieved to get the validation.

JERRY

Well that's a load off! You know, just because I started the group doesn't mean I'm perfect. Transparency though. That's what its about. Does anyone else want to give it a try?

TODD

Well. Sometimes I think I may also get uh...you know a little irritable with people.

JERRY

Good, good. Way to open up. How about you Brett. Any anger issues?

He looks back at the camera knowingly.

BRETT

No. Not really. But I think I should eat better.

He looks down at the table and examines the snacks with a look of disgust.

BRETT (ANGRILY) (CONT'D)

What's with the chips anyway?

He throws a chip that was on its way into his mouth back into the bowl.

JERRY

Sorry.

He is a little abashed at Brett's rebuke but composes himself.

JERRY (CONT'D)

So this has been really good. Does anyone else have anything to share?

Pregnant pause.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Well why don't we close in pray...

MIKE

Wait!

JERRY

Yes...?

MIKE

I have something. I...I struggle with...this is really embarrassing. I mean every guy does it. But still I just...I struggle with mast..

The guys look at each other in horror anticipating what he might say.

MIKE (CONT'D)

mast...mastering my time.

The others look at each other in profound relief.

JERRY
That's great!

Mike looks up at him confused.

JERRY (CONT'D)
I mean, I know, that's tough.

MIKE
But its not just that...

Todd and Brett give each other a "hear it comes" look.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Its my whole life. I mean I just became a Christian, but I still have all these old habits. I don't just get irritated I get really angry. I struggle with lust, sleep late a lot, feel really lonely and look at cat videos on the internet.

Brett and Todd exchange the "it came" look.

When I go to church I feel this great swell of emotion when I sing the songs and hear the sermon, but when I get home I don't know what to do. I don't know how to live this new life. I'm a mess. You guys all seem to have it so together. (pauses)
Doesn't anyone struggle like me?

Overcome with emotion, Mike bends over and buries his face in his hands unable to make eye contact with the other men. He is even crying a little. Everyone figits uncomfortably and finally Todd pretends to find his watch.

TODD
Well look at the time!

BRETT
Yeah I hate to run, but I gotta game to play.

TODD
See ya Jerry. That was the weirdest investment group ever.

JERRY
(a little out of sorts)
Uh...yeah thanks guys, so uh...same
time next week?

Todd is already out the door on his phone, and Brett winks and gives the fake gun shot with his hand signal to Jerry. Jerry now alone with Mike is not sure what to do.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Uh. Mike. The meeting is over,
you can go home.

Mike looks up a little disoriented.

MIKE
Oh, uh sorry, okay.

Mike stands up and wiping his eyes. Heads to the door. Jerry follows.

JERRY
So, I'll uh see you next week?

MIKE
Yeah, I guess.

Mike lumbers out the door, and Jerry closes it softly behind him. He is struggling with some inner turmoil when finally he comes to a decision and opens the door back up. Mike has not gotten far when Jerry stops him.

JERRY
Mike wait!

Mike stops and slowly turns around.

MIKE
Yeah?

Jerry looks at his feet for a moment, but finally gaining courage takes the plunge.

JERRY
I do...all except the cat videos.
Do you want talk about it?

Mike smiles in affirmation.

FADE TO BLACK.