

The following is a phonetic reading of the [YouTube Video](#): X-Factor Multiplication.

All emphasis and notes mine, [mfairlady.com](http://mfairlady.com).

**NEXT/ Week 3/ X FACTOR MULTIPLICATION | Dave Ferguson, WILLOW CREEK  
COMMUNITY CHURCH, FEBRUARY 28, 2021**

Several years ago I was in America's town of Georgia, a little town, for a meeting with the founder of Habitat for Humanity Millard Fuller. My hope was to get just an hour of Fuller's time to ask him some questions about an idea I had. Not only did he give me an hour, he like gave me most of the day. The guy, he drove me around town showing me different Habitat for Humanity homes they built, he took me out to lunch, he answered all of my questions, he treated me like I was his best friend. But I'll never forget when we got back to his office we sat down and he looked me in the eye great enthusiasm, asked me, he said, "**Now Dave, don't you think everyone deserves a simple decent place to live?**" And then for emphasis he kind of repeated it, "Don't you think everybody deserves a single decent place to live?" Well the answer was obvious but at the time there were like 100 million people around the world without a home so I had no idea how do you accomplish that vision?

But I agreed yeah everybody ought to have a simple decent place to live and it was then that Fuller explained to me his strategy—It's what I now call uh, the X-Factor. He explained, he said, "I know that I can't eliminate homelessness on my own. I know that in fact I'll have to build millions of homes and I have to find a way to apprentice everyday people who follow Jesus to volunteer and swing a hammer to build these homes. And then I have to make heroes out of those volunteer home builders and the vision can't be just about building great organization it has to be about building God's kingdom(1:33)."

And that's exactly what he did. Him and his predecessors over the next several decades—they turned everyday people into home builders and heroes. And today, and I've been one of them, every year more than two million people swing a hammer to build a home for Habitat. And guess what, guess who is the biggest home builder in the entire planet today? You probably know, Habitat for Humanity. They have helped more than 29 million people have a simple decent place to live. Fuller also told me, he said(2:06), "And Habitat homes there also the best built homes in the world, too." I said, "Why's that?" He said, "Because we use three times as many nails as any other builder." Alright, this isn't really a Habitat commercial, I'm headed somewhere.

The question is how did that happen? How did he create this movement of millions and millions of volunteers? How did they build 29 million homes? And what was the catalyst for them becoming this global movement? What Fuller did(2:39) is **he took his desire** for every person, and that's an important place to start, people, to have a simple decent place to live and then he applied the X-Factor. The X-Factor that he learned from being a follower of Jesus.

Alright, so what is the X-Factor? (2:56) The X-Factor is what **allows Jesus heart for individual people to actually get multiplied and reach a city or a country or the world**. Because Jesus' heart was no doubt for people: "Love your neighbor as yourself." That's what He said, "Seek and save the lost." "Bring the good news to the poor." I mean his heart was clearly for people, but Jesus also had a vision that was not just one person then were done, but he said "all people." And we know that because right before he leaves planet earth he says to his closest followers, he says this, "And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.(Acts 1:8)." (3:31)

See the X-Factor is what empowers his love and compassion for individual people to go to the ends of the earth. The X, well the X stands for multiplication and it's that X-Factor for you individually and as a church and take a moment of loving and then turn it into a movement of love. It can take the seeds of service that we plant regularly and then suddenly grow this forest of different making. It can take a single drop of kindness to a person and then turn it into a tidal wave of compassion across a city or a country. (4:30)

I've known your pastor for years. Dave has a heart just like Jesus for people, but Dave also has a vision for movement, and I want you to know I am honored to be here to help explain this part of **Willow's vision. To become this multiplying, really movement-making church.** So here's what I'm going to ask you to do, we only have a little of time together, I'm going to ask you, (4:49) "Please, let's lean in while explain to you this X-Factor, why it's so important for you as a part of this church but also why it's so important to this whole church. Al right, so let's ask, "How do you apply the X-Factor as a follower of Jesus?" **Well, here's the first way-- it starts with everyone having an APPRENTICE. (5:11) An apprentice, I really like this term apprentice. I got this from Dallas Willard who probably knows more about spiritual formation than anyone else in our lifetime.** And he would use the term apprentice often instead of disciple because what he saw was discipleship had often come to mean "well, just cram more stuff in your brain; take a class about spirituality, or learn more facts about the Bible." (5:32) But apprenticeship, apprenticing with Jesus it includes both the knowing and the doing. It's both the head and the hands. So when Jesus wanted to start a movement that would go from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria to the ends of the earth, what's the first thing he did? He surrounded himself with 12 apprentices and he taught them, yes what he knew, but also showed them how to love. How do you do that?

There's this easily overlooked verse, you've probably ran past it lots of times in John 3:22 and it reads like this, it says, "Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent time with them." Now, I want to highlight to spend some time with them. You go like, well what's the big deal? That's a BIG DEAL. (6:21) That's a very big deal, that phrase right there. Because that phrase, "spend some time," in the original language it's a Greek word, is the word diatribo. **And wherever you are just you can just say it out loud you'll learn some Greek, okay? "Diatribo"—there you go "Diatribo." And it's actually a composite of two words "dia" which means against, and "tribo" which means to rub. And if you put it together it literally means like to rub against or you might say to rub off.** And what it's saying is Jesus spent some time kind of just rubbing off on them.

That's what he did and you know how diatribo works, you spend enough time with someone pretty soon I mean you start talking like each other right? You start caring about the same stuff as each other. **You become more and more like each other.** I've seen old married couples who've been together maybe (7:09), I don't know 50 or 60 years I don't know some of them seem like they start looking like each other and I think what happens is you know stuff just rubs off—that's, that's how diatribo works. And it was through diatribo that Jesus apprenticed a small group of followers and then they did the same and then they did the same and he catalyzes this movement.

**Notice this, even Jesus, God in the flesh, didn't try to change the world on his own he diatriboed.** (7:39) And see that's exactly what Jesus wants us to do. He wants you and me to love individual people but then find an apprentice and just spend some time with them. Teach them, this is what disciple making is, teach them both what you know and then also what to do.

So how do we actually, I mean rubber meets the road apply this? This means starting now every small group leader needs to have an apprentice leader. Every person who works in promiseland or student

impact you need to have an apprentice. Every artist that takes one of the stages, you might give it a different name, maybe you call it understudy or second chair or back up but you have an apprentice. This happens everywhere wherever you serve. You love people, maybe it's inside the church building or maybe it's out in the community, but you find an apprentice and here's what you do you teach them what you know and also show them what to do. This is how you apply the X-Factor(8:44) And when you do that you start multiplying yourself and you turn those moments of love and service into a movement of love and service.

So let me ask you this we're going to apply it. Who's the person, or maybe persons for you? I want you to be able to name one, two, three people that you could apprentice before I get done talking. You can do a couple of things, you can listen to me and think about that at the same time, okay? So who are you going to diatribo?

Now, one of the people that apprenticed me was a guy by the name of Bob Buford. Bob was a guy who had made just a ton of money in cable tv. He knew how to scale anything and really he taught me this X-Factor (9:26). And one habit that Bob had was that he would always carry with him a little 3x5 card and he'd keep it in his front pocket, maybe sometimes in his wallet, but he had a 3x5 card where he'd have names of like 10, 11, 12 younger emerging (9:42) leaders that he was investing in both relationally and financially. And for awhile I was one of the names on his apprentice list. **Now Bob had a saying that explains exactly how this X-Factor works and I would love to hear you just repeat this over and over and over again, make it a part of your culture.** Here's what he **used to say, "My fruit grows on other people's trees."** My fruit grows on other people's trees.

One of my apprentices, um, wow, (10:13) 17-18 years ago was a guy by the name of Dave Dummitt. I remember meeting Dave for the very first time. He showed up at one of our locations at community the church I pastor. He wanted to learn more about church planting because Dave and a bunch of his friends had started this college ministry and it just taken off growing really fast and they were trying to figure out, okay what's next. Well, before an hour was up I could tell Dave was just this naturally gifted leader I mean he had this god-give kind of charisma and I knew this guy's going to make a great church planter. But what Dave didn't know at the time was the X-Factor. (10:50) He didn't know how to multiply the gifts that God had give him by apprenticing others so here's what I told Dave I said, "Dave, you should definitely plant a church, but before you do I want you to come to Chicago and hang out with me. Let me apprentice you." And then I made him a promise I said, "I'll tell you what, if you do that you'll learn not only how to start a church, but also how to start a movement." And so Dave and Rach, before they moved to Michigan to plant a church, they first moved their family for just a few months to Chicago. And during those few months he learned that every part of the church, by Jesus' design whether it's the lead pastor, or it's a staff member, or a leader in a small group(11:34), or just an attender, everyone needs to have an apprentice. And that church plant that they planted in Michigan, I mean, it grew very large. Great church, but I'll tell you what the greater impact that they made was that during those 15 years or so they actually started 38 brand new churches.

I've been apprenticing leaders like Dave and so is he now for the last 20 some years. As a result myself, Dave and a few others we started a **church planting (12:05) movement called New Thing.** Last year, by God's grace and his goodness and applying this X-Factor, 982 brand new churches were started. We can both remember, we look back like man remember when there was only 3 churches and now there's 6,000 plus multiplying churches around the world in 40 countries.

How did that happen? **Because we have a very kind God and, what we learned from Jesus(John 3:22), this X-Factor.** And the first thing is this, the X-Factor REQUIRES EVERYONE TO HAVE AN APPRENTICE.(12:40) Now some of you might be thinking, well, hold, hold, hold on, you apprenticed

Dave? If you apprenticed Dave why was his church in Michigan bigger than yours? And why is he the lead pastor at Willow? Seems like maybe Ferguson you did too good a job I mean he's done bigger and better things than you. And I would say, "Right!" That is the goal. Remember what I said, "My fruit grows on other people's trees."(13:03)

Which, this leads us to the next way, that both you and Willow need to apply the X-Factor, and here it is. I love this one. "Your ambition is not to be the hero (of this unfolding story that we're a part of, but instead), but be a HERO MAKER." If you look closely at the relationship with Jesus with his apprentices, what you're going to discover was that **Jesus was not trying to be the hero, but instead in his relationship with them he was the hero maker. (13:33)** Now, here's why I say that, and check this out, in John 14:12 Jesus gathers his apprentices, right? And here's what he says to them, hear this like your hearing this for the first time, he says, "Truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I've been doing, he's saying-- "Hey, you're going to do what I've been doing," which is a big deal. Imagine doing what Jesus was doing. But then he goes on and he says you're going to do even greater things than these.

What Jesus was telling them was, "I'm going to train you to reach more people than I ever did. I'm going to show you how you can take the gospel to more places than I ever did"--**this is Jesus talking. You're going to write the best-selling book of all time, the Bible, not me. You're going to have a far greater impact in your lifetime than I will during my three-year ministry.** Jesus was a hero maker. (14:27) Now some people will say well hold, hold, hold on, hold on isn't Jesus our hero? Yes, **yeah he stretched out his arms and he died on the cross but when you look at how he interacted and apprenticed the 12, with them, he was a hero maker.**

So, what does it mean for us to be a hero maker? Here, think about this, **hero makers they create platforms and then they invite other people to stand on it.** Hero makers say, "My fruit grows on other people's trees." **Hero makers tell their apprentices, "Listen, here's the goal, your gonna do even greater things than me."**

One of my favorite examples of a hero maker is uh, Shalane Flanagan.(15:11) I don't know if we've got any distance runners here. If you're a distance runner you know, you know the name Shalane Flanagan. I've never met her. I would love to get to know her. If you know her connect me. She's amazing. Um, over the last decade she's probably been America's best female distance runner. Why? Here's why, in 2017 she won the New York City Marathon. She was the first female American to win it in 40 years and if you know anything about running she did it at a blistering time of 2:26 which is just stinking fast. Okay, that's heroic, but the next day after she won the New York Times came out with an article that explains what makes her a hero maker.(15:49) This is right out of the New York times, hang with me this is worth it okay it says, "When Shalane Flanagan won the New York City Marathon last week, her victory was about more than just an athletic achievement... perhaps Flanagan's bigger accomplishment lies in nurturing and promoting the rising talent around her(very true), a rare quality in the cutthroat world of elite sports." And then it goes on and says this, "Every single one of her training partners, 11 women total(on team Nike, imagine this), has made it to the Olympics while training with her(imagine you just get close to her and you you go to the Olympics they call it I love this they call it the Shalane Effect I would love it if I would have a Dave Effect—you know, the Shalane Effect! And here's what it is), "You serve as a rocket booster for the careers of the women who work alongside you, while also catapulting forward yourself."(16:44) And and hear this last part okay this is important for every leader in our churches staff or volunteer, "Shalane has pioneered a brand of 'team mom' to those young and up-and-comers, with a confidence not to tear others down or to try to protect her place in the hierarchy..." Is that awesome? That's a hero maker. So, Shalane wins the New York City Marathon in

2017—first time female American wins in 40 years, well the next year comes the Boston Marathon in 2018 (17:15). No female American had won that race in 33 years. What do you think happened? If you guessed she won, no she didn't win. She does better than that because remember she's a hero maker. Here's what she does—go Google this story—she puts her arm around Des Linden, who's another great female distance runner who over and over had come so close to winning the big one but never quite won, she pulls her aside and says, “Des this race is yours you're gonna win Boston.” And it's a crazy story because Shalane and Des run together most of the race, they actually make a bathroom stop together, and it's the worst conditions maybe of any race, and Des Linden wins becoming the first female American to win the Boston Marathon in 33 years. Okay, now if that wasn't enough, this story gets out and women all across the country are inspired by what Shalane has done and they start running. They're inspired by these 11 women who were on her training team who qualified for the Olympics. They're inspired by what she did for Des Linden in Boston, how she won Boston. So, when it comes time for the Olympic Marathon trials in 2020, this is remarkable, the United States had almost 500 women who ran an Olympic qualifying time and the reason that's so impressive is because that is quadruple, 4 times the number who ran an Olympic qualifying time in the marathon in 2016.(18:43) 4 times more, why? The whole running community could only point to one reason, they said it was the Shalane Effect. **She was a hero and she turned it into a movement and I'm telling you those people that you're going to disciple, those people that you're going to apprentice, it is your job, just like Jesus, just like Shalane, to make sure that they are successful. And here's the deal, your fruit grows on other people's trees.** And here's the deal, I mean the whole world wants to be the hero—oh, they want to be the hero. And as followers of Jesus we understand that the kingdom then gets multiplied when we step into it and we and we say, “Hey, we'll be hero makers.” If you want to apply the X-Factor, first thing you have to do—have an apprentice, second thing—your ambition, be a hero maker.

Here's the last thing:(19:45) “A Vision not to Build My Castle, but to **Build GOD'S KINGDOM.**” This was clearly Jesus' vision. Matthew 6:33, again with his disciples he says, “But seek first his kingdom.” God's kingdom, that's the first thing and I want you to consider this, **maybe God placed you where you are with your influence and affluence not only to grow Willow, but to grow God's kingdom locally and globally and I would suggest specifically by starting brand new churches.** Maybe you didn't know this, but brand new churches, this comes from research with 200,000 churches in the US, brand new churches will reach 3-4 times more people for Jesus than an established church of 10 years of age or more. That's why it's so important we have to multiply.

I vividly remember the day I looked at my schedule(20:52) and it said I had an appointment with a guy named Sam. Now, not knowing who Sam was, I asked my assistant Pat, I said, “Pat, who's Sam on my schedule here?” And she said, “I thought you knew him.” She said, “All I know is he's a guy from India and he's already in the cafe and he's waiting for you.” And I'm like, “You're in charge of my schedule you got me meeting with people I don't know. What's going on here?” So, I wasn't really happy about it so I went in the meeting not knowing anything about this guy but I put on a happy face and extended my hand I said, “Hi Sam, tell me your story.” Sam begins to tell me that back in the 1960s his father had started a mission to plant churches in India.(21:29) By 1992, they had started 200 churches. I was like wow, 200 churches. Now the guy had my attention. And Sam is like this super humble guy I'm dragging every detail out of him. He goes on to explain, he says, “Well, it was there in '92 that I remember I was at my mom and dad's home and I stayed up late in the night talking to my dad. The last thing he said to me before I left—he said, hey son, whatever you do don't lose the vision. Whatever you do don't lose the vision. I left but that night my father got very sick and was taken to the hospital actually went into a coma and then later died.” And Sam told me, “That's the last thing I ever heard my dad say—don't lose the vision. So, I took over this mission and um pretty quickly I made a

few changes.” He said, “First I asked everyone of our church planters I said, 'I want you to have at least one apprentice every year so you lead your church and you apprentice someone and you start a new church. So every year you leave your church, you apprentice someone, and you help them plant a new church.’”(22:26) “And the second thing I asked them to do I said I want you to do everything you can to make that apprentice successful.” And then finally he said, “I told him I wasn't nearly as concerned about how big their church was, but rather that they multiply brand new churches and then our measurement of success would be growing God's kingdom.” Alright, now he had my attention. I was curious—I was like alright, “So how's it going since then?” And he just casually replies to me, “Well, so far we've started about 70,000 new churches.” I was, I mean I was glad I was sitting down. It was incredible and I was, I said, “Well how many people does that represent?”(23:07) And his reply took my breath away, he said, “Ah, about 3.5 million people.” And I don't know if he thought I wasn't impressed, but then he goes, “Oh, but we're praying for 100,000 new churches 5 million people.”

I talked to Sam, now Sam Stevens of the India Gospel League, just a couple of weeks ago and they have now planted their 100,00<sup>th</sup> new church and they're reaching more than 5 million new people. Okay, now the question, “How did that kind of movement happen?” Sam's a follower of Jesus who just applied the X-Factor. He insisted everyone have an apprentice. He told his leaders it's their job not to be the hero but to be a hero maker. And the focus was not on building individual castles, but on building God's kingdom.

I'll tell you, Willow Creek, (23:59) by God's design you were created for movement. You have everything you need to do it and here's the thing you keep loving individual people, you keep serving individual people, you keep caring for people inside your building and outside your buildings. You're great at that, but now what I want you to do is, I want you to turn all of those moments of loving into this movement of love. All those seeds of service you're planting into this grand forest of difference making. And, and every single drop of kindness I want to see it become this tidal wave across Chicago in the country and around the world of compassion. **How? By applying the X-Factor where everyone has an apprentice.** You don't try to be the hero, but instead a hero maker and I'll tell you what, let your vision be greater than growing just this castle, Willow Creek, but instead by multiplying God's kingdom.