

God's Kind of Husband

"A Husbands Number One Priority: Following Hard After God"

June 5, 2011

Introduction

- Men, we are so excited that you have chosen to be a part of this class - "God's Kind of Husband."
- We are trusting God to reform our hearts, our minds, and our marriages over the next 13 weeks as we study His Word.
- As we were planning our 13 weeks together we discussed how pivotal the content of this first week is...
- My title is "A Husbands Number One Priority: Following Hard After God."
- Here is the reality...Before we can begin to talk about your roles and responsibilities as a Christian husband, we must first lay a solid foundation on which to begin to build.
- That foundation is our personal worship of Christ.
- In other words, becoming the husband that God desires us to be has everything to do with cultivating our personal walk with Christ.
- Let me give you a distilled definition of God's kind of Husband:
- God's kind of husband is a God-fearing worshiper who leads both himself and his family out of a devotion to Christ and a desire to please Him.
- Men, I hope that you all want to be men like David who, according to God in 1 Samuel 13, was a man after God's own heart.
- Is that true of you?
- Are you seeking Christ as if he were the most valuable **treasure**?
- Are you committed to **pursuing** and **knowing** him?

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.

2 Chronicles 16:9a

- Listen to What A.W. Tozer has to say about the pursuit of God...

Being made in His image we have within us the capacity to know Him. In our sins we lack only the power. The moment the Spirit has quickened us to life in regeneration our whole being senses its kinship to God and leaps up in joyous recognition. That is the heavenly birth without which we cannot see the Kingdom of God. *It is, however, not an end but an inception, for now begins the glorious pursuit, the heart's happy exploration of the infinite riches of the Godhead.* That is where we begin, I say, but where we stop no man has yet discovered, for there is in the awful and mysterious depths of the Triune God neither limit nor end.

A.W. Tozer

- How to we do this:
 1. Following hard after God though His Word.
 2. Following hard after God through fervent prayer.

I. Following Hard After God Through His Word: The Necessity of a Daily Quiet Time:

- Men, Let me ask you this question... Where is your primary intake of the Word coming from?
- If it coming from 40 minutes of preaching on a Sunday morning, you are spiritually emaciating yourself.
- If that is the case, then you are only eating once a week.
- You know what the physical ramifications of only eating once a week are... Think about the spiritual ramifications...
- Men, you were made to **feast**.
- You were made to drink from deep wells.
- You were made to delight your soul in the rich **food** of the Word.

- In Isaiah 55:2b God says, "Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me; hear, that your soul may live."

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts.

Jeremiah 15:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

4 Reasons to Let the Word Dwell in you Richly:

1. You need to let the Word of God **satisfy** you so you aren't tempted seek satisfaction through any other sinful desires.
2. You need to let the Word of God **feed** you so that you are spiritually nourished - "Strong in the faith". *1 Cor. 16:13*
3. You need to let the Word of God impart **wisdom** so that you know how to walk uprightly and to lead your family.
4. You need to let the Word of God develop deep **conviction** so that you have a moral backbone in a world that neither honors God nor gives Him strength.

A Picture of Following Hard After God in Psalm 63:1-8:

Thirsting for God (v.1-2)

- Who's God? **My** God!
- **Earnestly** (Early dawn) I seek You

Do not have your concert first, and then tune your instrument afterwards. Begin the day with the Word of God and prayer, and get first of all into harmony with Him.

J. Hudson Taylor

What first lays hold of the heart in the morning is likely to occupy the place all the day. First impressions are the most durable, because there is not a multitude of ideas to drive them out.

Adam Clarke

- My soul **thirsts** for you
- My flesh **faints** for you
- I have looked upon you and **beheld** your glory

How tragic that we in this dark day have had our seeking done for us by our teachers. Everything is made to center upon the initial act of 'accepting' Christ (a term, incidentally, which is not found in the Bible) and we are not expected thereafter to crave any further revelation of God to our souls. We have been snared in the coils of a spurious logic which insists that if we have found Him we need no more seek Him.

A.W. Tozer

Satisfied in God (v.3-5)

- Your steadfast love is better than life
- I will **bless** you as long as I live
- My soul will be **satisfied**

Meditating on God (v.6-7)

- When I *remember* you
- **Meditate** on you in the watches of the night

Pursuing God (v.8)

- My soul **clings** (catching by pursuit) to you

- Scripture is chalked full of passages about pursuing God...
- Lets look at a few passages to glean the heart of God on the matter of knowing Him.

Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers,
as the spring rains that water the earth."

Hosea 6:3

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love
kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matthew 5:6

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deuteronomy 6:5

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

Psalms 63:8

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?

Psalms 42:1–2

And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17:3

But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the
surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them
as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes
from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that
I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

Philippians 3:7–10

Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

Psalms 34:8

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of
my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

Psalms 27:4

II. Following hard after God through fervent prayer:

The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.

Samuel Chadwick

Trust in him at all times, O people; *pour out* your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

Psalms 62:8

Our prayer life reflects our:

1. Dependence on God.

God is the all-sufficient benefactor and I am the ever-needy beneficiary...

Unknown

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever *abides in me and I in him*, he it is that bears much fruit, *for apart from me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5

2. Submission to God.

- Shows that you are God and I am not!

I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; *I bow down toward your holy temple* and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

Psalms 138:1–2

3. Joy in God. (Prayer is the place where God's glory and our joy meet!)

And I will do whatever you *ask* in my name, so that the Son may bring *glory* to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

John 14:13-14

Until now you have not *asked* for anything in my name. *Ask* and you will receive, and your *joy* will be complete.

John 16:24

4 Killers to following hard after God:

1. Business

- a. Are your **priorities** right? We will always do the things that are a priority...
- b. Are you **tiring** yourself in the RIGHT things?
- c. What can you **slim** down to free up time to meet with God. (If you can't find anything then desire is the issue)

2. Contentment

- a. Are you content with where you are spiritually? *Philippians 3:13-14*
- b. Have you stopped **pedaling** and started coasting?
- c. Content men are satisfied to just go through the **motions**. (Work...Church...Work...Church...)
- d. Content men have lost sight of their constant need for grace. (Prayer/Word/Fellowship as a means of grace)
- e. One of the tale tale signs of contentment is a man who makes **excuses**.
- f. The result of prolonged spiritual contentment is **arrogance**.
- g. If you always do what you've always done, you'll always have what you've already got!

3. Apathy

- a. Can your walk with Christ be described using the adjectives – Enthusiasm, zeal, fervor, eagerness?
- b. One of the reasons that we can be so prone to spiritual apathy is because we know so **little** about God.
- c. We are lovers of **pleasure** (laziness) rather than lovers of God. *2 Timothy 3:4*
- d. Knowing God requires work. Spiritual mining is laborious, but the **payoff** is out of this world!

It would seem that admission to the inner circle of deepening intimacy with God is the outcome of *deep desire*. Only those who count such intimacy a prize worth sacrificing anything else for, are likely to attain it. If other intimacies are more desirable to us, we will not gain entry to that circle . . . We are now, and we will be in the future, only as intimate with God as we really choose to be.

J. Oswald Sanders (Enjoying Intimacy with God)

4. Idolatry

Let us beware lest we in our pride accept the erroneous notion that idolatry consists only in kneeling before visible objects of adoration, and that civilized peoples are therefore free from it.

A.W. Tozer

- a. Whatever it is that keeps you from pursuing hard after God...that is an idol.
- b. Whatever it is that your mind gives more **attention** than God...that is an idol.
- c. Whatever it is that brings more **joy** to your heart than God...that is an idol.
- d. Whatever it is that raises your **affections** more than God...that is an idol.
- e. Show me a man's planner and his pocketbook and I will show you his idols...

Questions:

Are you worshiping your Job / career?
Are you worshiping your paycheck?
Are you worshiping your free time?
Are you worshiping comfort?
Are you worshiping _____?

I Wish She Came With An Owners Manual

Good morning. Unfortunately I was on vacation last week and wasn't able to be here for Eric's teaching. I heard we had a good turn out and that Eric gave a good challenge. Today I hope to build on that lesson. Have you ever said "I wish my wife came with an Owner's manual"? Your car comes with one, your TV comes with one, I just got a Kindle and it comes with one. Everything we have seems to have some sort of a manual. Some manuals are very good and detailed. They explain all the features and how they work. There are pictures and arrows and exploded views and bold print and notes. Then there are others that are in 47 different languages and once you find the portion that is in English it only tells you how to open up the packaging, which by the way you've already opened to get to the product. This is a room full of men so I feel that I can comfortably admit this: I don't read owner's manuals when I get a new toy or product. As a man, I usually feel like I can just take the thing and figure it out. When I get something new I have laser focus. I get tunnel vision. I'm at the table or sitting on the floor with this thing for as long as it takes to figure it out. Turning it over in my hands. Turning switches on and off, opening doors, twisting, prodding, clipping and unclipping, pushing buttons. You know what I mean? Am I alone here?

I'm a gadget fiend. I love electronic gadgets. I am drawn to all those toys. I follow news stories and blogs. I go to stores to play with them. I'm not obsessed, just intently interested. I like to read and paper books are so 20th century. So I just got this Kindle. It is an electronic book reader. A small tablet the size of a paperback book and as thin as a pencil. It does one thing, but it does it well. I was reading a book and my wife asks me what page I'm on. Let me remind you that this thing is an electronic book reader. It's job is to take a paper book and display it in a digital form. The books I read in paper have a page number usually on the bottom of the page, sometimes at the top, but always somewhere there is a page number. Well, this didn't. It just had a percentage. I didn't know what the percentage meant, but it sure didn't correspond to any page number. I looked and looked and I was finally humbled enough to go online and look at the owners manual to figure it out.

I knew it was there. I just had to go and look at it. I had to make the effort to look at the manual. Take the time to read and learn. If I had done that from the beginning, then I would have had a better idea on how to use my new toy. I have a little video to start out my lesson that outlines what I was just talking about. I think this will hit on issues we've all run into and will give us ideas on how to handle ourselves if we get into situations where we wish we'd read the owner's manual.

Start with Manslater video

Ok. Now let's get a bit serious. Let me open us in prayer and we'll finally get to some meat.

So let me start out by saying that your wife does come with an owner's manual. The reason you've never seen it with your eyes is because it is tucked away in her heart. Deep down in her heart is all the personal information you need to understand and nurture your wife according to the Bible. Really the ultimate owners manual is the Bible. All of the essential information that you and your wife need to understand and interpret life is found in its pages.

We see this is in 2 Peter 1:3 - "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence."

Another familiar verse - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - "All Scripture is God breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work."

Now there is one catch: You're the one who's supposed to get it out of her. It's your job to get that valuable information out of her heart and, if necessary, transpose it onto a hard copy. "A plan in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out." Proverbs 20:5. The responsibility for understanding your wife is given by God to you in 1 Peter 3:7. "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." The Bible places the burden of understanding on us the husbands. We are the ones who must take the initiative to draw out of your wife the information necessary to develop and maintain the one-flesh intimacy God intends you to have with her.

Elisabeth Elliot, in her book *The Mark of a Man*, explains the concept of the man as the initiator:

The important thing for you, as a man to remember...is that a woman cannot properly be the responder unless the man is properly the initiator. He must take the lead in order that she may follow, as in a dance. The willingness of each to perform the 'steps' that have been choreographed gives the other freedom.

So to begin with we'll need to understand both the biblical view of marriage and the importance of communication in marriage.

Many people believe that the propagation of the human race is the only purpose of marriage. But marriage was designed by God to deal with the issue of loneliness.

- *Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18*

Really God has made most of us so that we would be lonely without an intimate companion with whom to live. Dr. Albert Mohler once said on this topic: One end of marriage is companionship throughout life, through good and bad, comfort and loss, sickness and health, until death parts the husband and wife. The mystery of

completeness is expressed in the statement that the two shall become one. When a man and a woman exchange marriage vows, they become one solitary unit. After the exchange of these vows, we can no longer speak of the husband without the wife, or of the wife without the husband. They have become one, both in the physical union of the marital act and in the metaphysical union of the marital bond. As a married couple—husband and wife—they will live to the glory of God with each other, for each other, and to each other.

God provided Eve not only or even primarily as Adam's helper but as his companion. Adam as all other husbands after him is to provide companionship to her. In the Bible, marriage is described in terms of companionship.

Proverbs 2:17 "the strange woman..forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God."

The word translated "companion" in this verse has in it the idea of "one that is tamed" (like speaking of animals) or "one that has a close, intimate relationship with another." It's obviously hard to establish a close relationship with a wild animal, but not nearly so with a domesticated or tame animal. And really guys, how many of us were like a wild animal before our wives got a hold of us. Are you with me? The core meaning has to do with a close, intimate relationship, and that is exactly what marriage companionship is - the close, intimate relationship of a husband and a wife to one another. The concept of "marriage as companionship" also appears in Malachi 2:14, where a different, but very complementary, term is used:

"The Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth to whom you have been faithless, although she is your companion and your wife by covenant."

Now the word here translated "companion" has as its kernel the idea of union or association. A companion, therefore, is the person with whom one enters into a close union or relationship. In putting the two terms together, we come to a full sense of the idea of companionship: A companion is one with whom you are intimately united in thoughts, goals, plans, efforts, and in the case of marriage - bodies.

So we see in Proverbs and in Malachi its clear that for both husband and wife, companionship is the ideal. In Proverbs the husband is called the companion showing that he too provides companionship for his wife; and in Malachi the wife is designated this way. For both, then, entrance into marriage should mean the desire to meet each other's need for companionship. Love in marriage focuses upon giving one's spouse the companionship they need to eliminate loneliness.

In order to establish, maintain, and mature this companionship, something of great significance is required. Have you ever considered that were it not for the Bible you wouldn't be able to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ? Think about it: If it weren't for God revealing Himself to us we wouldn't know enough about Him to become a Christian. So to the extent that God revealed Himself in the Bible and we understood it, you could have an intimate relationship with Him. To the extent that He did not reveal Himself to you through the Bible or to the extent that you didn't

understand that revelation you would not be able to have a personal relationship with Him. Revelation is a prerequisite for having a relationship. This isn't only true of your relationship with God, but with people also. I can know a lot of stuff about people from the news or web or television. I can see different things about them, but they didn't tell that to me. I know things about the president of the United States, but I have no personal relationship to him. He has not revealed anything to me directly and I haven't revealed anything to him. So we don't have personal relationship.

Since marriage is the most intimate of interpersonal relationships, it stands to reason that a husband and wife ought to reveal themselves more to each other than to anyone else. Like in Genesis 2:25 they should be naked and unashamed on every level (physical, intellectual, emotional, and others). But sadly this is too often not the case. Because of sin, husbands and wives are ashamed and afraid to reveal themselves to one another. This lack of openness and honesty, really a lack of revelation, keeps most couples, even most Christian couples from experiencing the security, refreshment, and bliss that God intended for them within the oasis of marriage.

Think about this right now: To what extent do you reveal yourself to your wife? Are you afraid and ashamed to do so? Do selfishness, pride, laziness, or ignorance keep you from disclosing that information to your wife?

To what extent does your wife reveal herself to you? Is she afraid or ashamed to do so? What would you say prevents her from disclosing that information to you?

We live in this Genesis 3 world and things don't happen how they should. We've seen that today in regards to revealing ourselves to our spouses. We've seen that revelation is the key, but to understand your wife you have to overcome some hinderances to revelation. You need to be revealing yourself to your wife and she needs to be reciprocating. Let's talk about some hinderances and how to overcome them.

1. Fear

Perhaps the greatest hindrance to revelation is fear. Remember in Genesis 3 - They both ate of the fruit and their eyes were opened. They then knew they were naked and made clothes out of fig leaves and loin coverings. When God was looking for them they hid because they were scared.

Guys we do that. We realize the sinfulness of our own hearts and we don't want to reveal that for fear of embarrassment or rejection. We don't like it when someone else knows our sins. So we hide it and we don't talk about it and we are fearful that they might find out. But as Christian couples who are one flesh with each other ought to be committed to each other's mutual sanctification and shouldn't fear that. We should realize that two sinners got married. That means that we both sin. Instead of being surprised when sin happens we should just expect that its inevitable. Rather than concealing sin from one another, we ought to feel free to reveal to each other our

struggles with indwelling sin in the hope of finding assistance to overcome it. We husbands, as the one who is to wash our wives with the water of God's Word and our wives as our helper are to participate actively in the sanctification process of one another.

2. Selfishness

There's a very real connection in the Bible between sinful fear and selfishness. People who are selfish tend to be fearful. People who are fearful are necessarily selfish. Let's look at some definitions to help us understand this corollary.

Love - is being more concerned with what I can give than with what I can get.

Selfishness - is being more concerned with what I can get than with what I can give.

Fear - is being more concerned with what I might lose than with what I can give.

When you allow the fear of your wife's rejection to keep you from loving her by not revealing to her what is biblically necessary for her to know about you, you're being selfish. You are, at the moment, more concerned about how such a revelation may hurt you than you are concerned about how it may help your wife. When you fail to love your wife who is your closest neighbor in this way, you simultaneously fail to fully love God, and you then break the first and second greatest commandments (to love God and love your neighbor.)

3. Pride

The sin of pride carries with it God's swiftest and most severe punishment. It blinds you to other sins in your life and hinders you from repenting of them. Pride is like AIDS. People don't die from AIDS, they die from another disease they contract because AIDS has disabled their bodies ability to fight off infection. Pride blinds you not only to itself, but to every other sin tucked away in the recesses of your heart and life. It causes you to hate correction and reproof. It hides your sin from you, it justifies your sin, it excuses your sin, and it keeps you from repenting of your sin. It deceives you into thinking that you're spiritually well when, in fact, you have a deadly cancer and are in desperate need of the Great Physician's balm.

It's your pride that resists revealing those things to your wife about which you're ashamed. Because she's your wife, she has a biblical need to know certain things about your life that affect your relationship with her. Because she's your helper, she has a biblical need to know about certain things in your life that affect your relationship with God. Remember: if God wants your believing wife to help you with anything its to help you to be a better Christian! When you proudly resist revealing these things to her, you sin against God, against your wife, and against your marriage.

4. Laziness

If you're going to take God's commands to you as a husband seriously, you'll need to invest a considerable amount of time, effort, and thought in studying and implementing

Scripture. It's likely that you'll have to change the way you think, act, and speak and also prioritize your other responsibilities. These changes will be difficult at first, but remember there's something harder than changing - not changing. Proverbs 13:15 says "The way of the unfaithful is hard." So you have a choice: hard work now with the hope of God's blessing in the future, or an "easy" way now with the assurance of a hard road to travel under God's discipline in the future.

5. Ignorance

Adam needed God's wisdom in the Garden of Eden even in his unfallen state. How much more do we need His wisdom as we attempt to love our wives and live with them in an understanding way!

In Mark 12:24 Christ says: "Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures, or the power of God?"

So before this lesson you may not have realized that 1 Peter 3:7 was a command to you the believing husband. So as a command you must learn how to understand your wife. Or you may not understand the power of God. Whenever you see a biblical command which seems impossible to obey, you should remember that God never asks a Christian to obey Him without providing three powerful resources.

- God promises to give you the wisdom to obey Him:
 - *James 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given him.*

If you don't know how to obey, ask God to teach you. This promise is first because it's usually necessary to know how to obey God before you are able to do so.

- God promises to give you the ability to change:
 - *Philippians 2:13 says It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

As you step out in faith to obey what God has directed you to do in His Word, He provides the enabling power necessary to do even that which once may have seemed impossible.

- God promises to give you the desire to change:
 - *Looking again at Philippians 2:13 It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

It's after you've obeyed that directive which you learned how to do that you will likely experience the desire to walk in obedience to Scripture. All three of these promises are made only to Christians, who, in dependence upon God's Spirit and in conjunction with His Word, receive and implement them.

So you see men that our wives do come with owners manuals. Please don't be like me with my gadgets and ignore it. Don't think that you can just figure it out with enough time and fiddling. As opposed to my gadgets you and you're wife have to be engaged in each other's lives. Revelation has to take place. Your wife revealing to you and you revealing to her. At times it is best to lead by example and this could be one of those times. You may need to go to your wife on a quiet night once the kids go to bed. Tell her that you desire to know her better. Maybe you need to confess that you were or are afraid of what she will think, but you desire to deepen your marriage and strengthen the bond you have. Tell her that you want to know her more deeply and you want to grow together more firmly. Encourage her that you want to better understand her and how you can better fulfill your biblical responsibilities to her. This will be a good step towards being God's kind of husband. Let's pray.

God's Kind of Husband

"Lionhearted and Lamblike: Foundations of Headship"

June 19, 2011

Introduction

What is Headship?

Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take **primary** responsibility for Christlike, servant **leadership** in the home.

Why is the topic of Headship important?

1. Ephesians 5:23 says, "The husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church," therefore, we need to know what this biblical declaration means so that we can rightly **live it out**.
2. There are few things more **broken** in our day than manhood and headship in relation to women and families.

What is the basis for headship?

- The basis for headship is the relationship of **Christ** and the **church**.
- The marriage relationship is compared to the most intimate of divine relationships, Christ and His bride.

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:31–32

- There are a few of things that I want us to notice from this text:
- The first step in taking on the role of headship is leaving your father and mother.
- 1. A man cannot fulfill his God-given role as the head of his family if he has not **cut** ties with his father and mother.**
- Rather he leaves his father and his mother to become one flesh with his wife.
- 2. A man cannot fulfill his God-given role as the head of his family apart from the covenant relationship of **marriage**.**
- 3. A man cannot fulfill his God-given role as the head of his family without a proper **relationship** with Christ, which is necessary to properly understand the mystery of marriage.**
- Here is what I mean by that...
- When Paul says, "This mystery is profound," he doesn't mean that that it is too complex, deep, or obscure...
- Rather he means that a previously hidden purpose of God is now revealed for us to understand and enjoy.
- The marriage union is referred to as a mystery because its deepest meaning was concealed during the OT period, but has now been openly revealed that marriage is ultimately a small picture of Christ and the church.
- Another way that we can look at this is to say that marriage is like a metaphor, image, picture, parable, or model that stands as a representative of the covenant keeping love between Christ and His bride, the church.
- And of the relationship between Christ and the Church, Christ is the head.

... Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Ephesians 5:23b–24

- So the basis for headship in marriage comes from the relationship that Christ has with the church.
- Christ is the head of the church and likewise Husbands, mirroring that relationship, are to be the head of their wives.
- There is nothing ugly or undesirable about the roles of headship and submission when they are seen in the light of the gospel of **grace**.

- When a man loves and leads his family, it is easy(ier) for his wife to respond respectfully and submissively out of a love for her husband and even more importantly out of a love for Christ.
- Egalitarians get a hold over Ephesians 5:21, which says, "Submitting to one another out of a reverence for Christ," and use it to try and destroy any definitive roles in marriage...
- They say, See...it is not just the wives who are to submit, we are to submit to one another..."
- Here is the reality... We are called to mutually submit to one another, and you don't need to deny mutual submission to affirm the importance of the unique role of the husband as head and the unique calling of the wife to submit to that headship.
- Remember Jesus got down on his hands and feet to wash his disciples feet.
- Jesus was a servant leader.
- In Matthew 20:28 he said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- Servanthood, of which you are called to embody, does not nullify headship and leadership, rather, it **defines** it!
- Do you know what has twisted headship and made it an ugly thing? SIN.
- When sin entered the world, it ruined the harmony of marriage because it twisted man's humble, loving headship towards hostile domination in some men and lazy indifference in others.
- And it twisted woman's willing and happy submission toward manipulation in some women and brazen insubordination in others.
- Headship is designed by God and **Christ** is our model.
- Headship doesn't mean that I have a right to control, abuse or neglect.
- Rather it means that I have the **responsibility** to love like Christ in my leadership, provision and protection of my wife and family.
- Our role as head then means not so much authoritarian as it does servant leader!

What is the meaning headship?

- If you distil the meaning of headship down to one word, I think we would find that the meaning of headship is **leadership**.
- We see this in Ephesians 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church."
- Just as Christ is the head and leader of the church, we are to take on the unique role as leaders of our homes.
- How are you doing at that men?
- Are you leading or are you just living.
- That is leading by design or living by default...
- Again we can look to the example of Jesus in his leadership initiative with the church.
- When we look at Christ's sacrifice for his bride we cannot miss the fact that Jesus took decisive action.
- He wasn't responding to the church...
- The church did not plan its own salvation and sanctification – Christ did!
- And he took the lead to save his bride by laying down his life and dying for her.
- That, brothers, is leadership!
- You see leadership is not mainly a right and a privilege, but more a burden and a responsibility.
- If you can remember from our definition of headship:

Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christlike, servant leadership, provision, and protection in the home.

- Headship is expressed in two ways...

Provision

In the same way husbands should *love* their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but *nourishes* and *cherishes* it, just as Christ does the church,

Ephesians 5:28–29

Protection

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and *gave himself up for her*, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5:25–27

- Jesus *gave himself up*...taking our place.
- He bore our sin (1 Pt. 2:24)
- He became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13)
- He died for us (Rom. 5:8)
- He saved us from his wrath...
- If there was ever an example of leadership that took the initiative to save and protect his bride, this is it!

1. You are to lead as a provider.

a. Physical provision

- Husbands, you bear the *primary* responsibility to put bread on the table.
- Not necessarily the *sole* responsibility, but definitely the *primary* responsibility.
- The normal spheres of work are man: breadwinner; wife: domestic manager and nurturer to your children.
- This does not mean that your wife cannot work outside of the home, nor does it mean that you are exempt from sharing in the domestic burdens.
- The man who does not *lay down* his life to provide for his family both compromises his divine design and sends a skewed message to wife and children.
- Important to note that there are exceptions here... physical, mental impairment.
- There are also temporary exceptions...Schooling, involuntarily laid off.
- But to the man who is able, he ought to be working towards using his mind and hands to provide physically for his wife and children.

b. Spiritual provision.

- To provide spiritual food for the family, you must know how to *obtain* it
- This means that you must be a man who follows hard after God!
- You cannot *give* what you do not *have*.
- In order to lead spiritually, you must be growing in your own knowledge and love for God.
- If you are feeding your own soul, you will be drawn to feed your wife and children.
- Family devotions / Bible reading / worship... what ever you call it, take the initiative to *gather* your family.
- Take some time to ask your wife questions that help you diagnose her spiritual state and then seek to *minister* the Word to her.
- See to it that your family prays, reads the Bible, goes to church, discusses spiritual and moral issues, learns the means of grace, grows in knowledge, and all of this by watching your *example*!

2. You are to lead as a protector.

a. Physical protection.

- This really goes without saying...
- Men...If there is a bump in the night, you had better be the first one walking down the hall to investigate.
- You don't role over to your wife and say, "This is an egalitarian marriage and it is your turn to go check it out..."
- Your wife may have to finish off what you started, but if that is the case you had better make sure that you are *unconscious* on the floor or you are no man.
- Think for your family... Don't put them in a position that compromises their physical protection.

b. Spiritual protection.

- The dangers that beset your family are **innumerable**.
- They are often subtle and, without a discerning heart and mind, can work themselves right into your home.
- Men, you are called to be valiant **warriors** of your home.
- 1 Peter 5:8 Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may **devour**.
- Here are a few ways that you can provide spiritual protection for your family:
 1. **Pray** with and for them daily. *"Lead them not into temptation but deliver them from evil."*
 2. Help establish biblical **standards** (convictions) for your wife and family. *Ex. Dress, TV, movies, music, friends, reading material*
 3. Do not let the sun go down on your **anger**, and give no opportunity to the devil. *Ephesians 4:26-27*
 - Leadership means taking the initiative in reconciliation.
 - Who took the initiative to make all things new?
 - Who took the initiative to leave glory and put mercy to work at Calvary?
 - Men, this was the model of Christ!

Conclusion:

- Men, as head, you bear the primary burden of leadership for your family.
- Remember after Adam and Eve sinned against God in the garden...who did God approach first?
- He said, "**Adam**, where are you?" *Genesis 3:9*
- Likewise, if things are not working right at your house and Jesus comes knocking on the door you better believe the first thing he is going to ask is, "Where is the man of the house?"
- Men, when you take primary responsibility for servant leadership (provision and protection) of the home, for the discipline and biblical education of your children, for the stewardship of the finances, for the holding of a steady job, and for being the initiator of restoration...your wife will never be **sorry** that she married you!
- And not only that, but it **honors** God as you live out your divine design as head!

“Me a Spiritual Leader?”

We’ve all heard the term spiritual leader. Maybe to some of us it brings visions of some guru in a toga speaking with an accent telling you how to reach enlightenment. Or maybe you think of one of our great evangelical preachers of a mega church. Perhaps your mind goes to your father or a deacon or an elder or a Sunday School teacher. We all come to the conversation with preconceptions. So I think the best way to start this talk today is to start out with the question; “What does it mean to be a spiritual leader?”

Rather than giving one short answer to this commonly asked question, I’m going to ask you to think of spiritual leadership from several perspectives. Like a pizza that is sliced into several pieces, each piece comprising a part of the whole pie, spiritual leadership can be defined one slice at a time.

I’ve got 8 slices listed here. We’ve already or will talk about later in this class 6 of these slices which deal with various responsibilities of spiritual leadership. The last two are what we’ll discuss today. I will breeze through the first six giving a brief overview with a bit of explanation. Please don’t interpret my brevity as a sign that I feel these are unimportant, but rather because we’ve either already covered them, or will cover them in upcoming lessons.

1. Two weeks ago I spoke about your wife having a user manual. **A spiritual leader is a man who lives with his wife in an understanding way.** It’s our responsibility to understand our wives; to get to know them deeper and deeper daily. They are our companions in this journey, we are called to understand them, to be interested in them, to know them, and to lead them.
2. **A spiritual leader is a man who knows how to communicate biblically.** This is an aspect that flows in to most of the other responsibilities. You have to be able to communicate effectively, lovingly, biblically to lead your wife. A man who doesn’t communicate or doesn’t communicate well tears down his marriage and his wife. That isn’t leading. Men aren’t always the best communicators. We are like cavemen - grunting, pointing, and occasionally a coherent thought is brought forth.
3. **A spiritual leader is a man who loves his wife as Christ loves the church.** That is a difficult thing to accomplish. Let’s face it men, we love ourselves. In our fallen state, even as believers, we battle self love daily. I lash out at my wife because she didn’t do things my way. I argue with my wife because she isn’t seeing things my way. I selfishly choose to rest while my wife is working hard to keep up with the house and children. Christ laid down His life for the church. Do I always, daily, continually, nonstop, without a second thought give of my life for my wife and think of her more highly than myself? Unfortunately I can’t say that I do, but that’s what I’m called to do. That’s what we all are called to do.
4. **A spiritual leader is a man who can discern the spiritual condition of his wife and lovingly lead her to spiritual maturity.** You can see how all these pieces fit together. For me to know where my wife is spiritually and to lead her, I’ve got to

communicate with her. I've got to know her thoughts on spiritual matters. I've got to have conversations with her about her quiet times and study of God's Word. I need to initiate these conversations. And if I'm called to discern my wife then this implies that I need to be in God's Word. I have to have my own walk before I can investigate my wife's. To help lead her to maturity, I need to be on my own path of spiritual maturity.

5. **A spiritual leader is a man who knows the dangers his wife is facing and knows how to protect her from those dangers.** I know the sins my wife has a proclivity towards and I do what I can as much as it depends upon me to not lead her into that sin. Or to make it easy for her to commit that sin. Example: Let's say my wife has propensity to gossip given the right circumstances. My responsibilities as her spiritual leader and husband is to not give opportunities in our conversations for her to gossip. I also need to instruct her in ways that I see where she may have blind spots and falls into the sin and how to avoid gossip when she is with others. I'm not her conscience or her parent. What I'm doing is I'm thinking for her and looking out like a shepherd looks for out for wolves.

6. **A spiritual leader is a man who honors his wife as a weaker vessel.** Like treating her as a fragile vase. 1 Peter 3:7 says: *"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."* Let me point out that it's precisely this lack of honor that so often disposes a husband to be domineering, dictatorial, and harsh in his attempts to be the manager of his home. Rather than being the "loving leader", a husband who does not honor his wife as the Bible commands tends to become a bully. If your wife accuses you of abusing your spiritual leadership, it may be that your lack of respect for her, and for the position and place that God has given her in your life, has impaired your ability to lead her effectively. The honor or preciousness that the husband must bestow on his wife is not only the recognition of her place in God's ordinance of marriage; it is the honor that is theirs as one of God's precious and holy people.

Turn to Ephesians 1:22. This is where we see Christ having been given all things and He is established as the head of the church. Hold your finger there because we are going to come right back to it. Now turn to Ephesians 5:23. I want to start here. We see in Ephesians 5:23 an aspect of spiritual leadership that has to do with your being the head of your wife. *"For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."* What does it mean to be the head of your wife? You may ask. Being your wife's head means that you're responsible. You're responsible to preside over her, and you're responsible to provide for her. You're ultimately responsible for what is happening in her life. You're responsible to be aware of what your wife is doing and how she's doing it. You're responsible to dwell with her according to knowledge, to sanctify her, and to protect her. But most of all, as her head, you're responsible to love her.

Look back to Ephesians 1:22, where Paul describes that headship of Christ over the church. If a husband wants to know what headship over his wife must be like, and how it

parallels the headship of Christ over the church, he can find out in this verse. It says, *“And He (God) put all things under His (Jesus’) feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body,”* In other words, all things that have been given to Jesus Christ are given to him for his church, and he exercises headship over his church for her blessing, for her benefit, and for her good. The power, authority, glory, honor, and headship at the very right hand of the Father have been given to Him that He may exercise and mediate them for His church. His headship is a headship oriented toward the church. The church is His body. The head feeds the body, nourishes the body, and cares for the body. The head doesn’t run off on it’s own, but the head is always concerned about the body. Always sending out the messages that will bring restoration and provide for the safety and welfare of the various parts of the body, the head preserves and cares for the body.

The headship of Jesus Christ involves a deep concern for the church. That is the kind of leadership that husbands are called to exercise over their wives. They’re heads over wives as Christ is head over His church, which means that they do not exercise an independent headship, standing aloof on a pedestal while their wives kneel and scrape on the floor beneath. Rather, it is a headship that ministers to the wife, a headship that is concerned about her. It is a headship in love that is oriented toward doing all that one can for his wife. Christ loved the church enough to die for her. Will he not freely give her all things then? Of course, says Paul. And so it should be for one’s wife. No tyrannical or arbitrary headship is allowed. Headship means love; that is, the giving of oneself.

So I’ve given you 6 slices of pizza now with a brief overview of each. Let’s get to the final two today to round out the whole thing and get the full picture of Spiritual Leadership as it pertains to you as godly husbands.

7. A Spiritual Leader is a man who assumes responsibility for the management of his own household. Scripture records the characteristics of the kind of men that are qualified for church leadership. Both pastors and deacons are required to demonstrate proficiency as household managers. We see this call in 1 Timothy 3:4-5,12. *“He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?...Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.”* Guys I’m not saying that you all are called to be an elder or a deacon. You may not be. What I’m saying is that all men are to manage their household. Church officers are to do it well. A spiritual leader is a manager. He manages his family in accordance with biblical principles. It’s not that he does everything himself, but he sees to it that each member of the household fulfills his or her biblical responsibilities. Neither is he a micro-manager with his hands into everything. Instead he’s aware of everything that’s going on in his home. He knows what needs to be done, but he also knows how to delegate responsibilities to those who are capable and responsible to fulfill them.

Here's a quote from Jay Adam's: "Headship" doesn't mean crushing a wife's talents and gifts. It doesn't mean making all of the decisions without reference to her or the children, or giving to her no power to make decisions or to do anything on her own. Precisely the opposite is true of the Biblical picture. A good manager knows how to put other people to work. A good manager knows how to keep his children and his wife busy too. Certainly that man sitting among the elders of the gate was a good manager. He had recognized in his wife all sorts of abilities, all sorts of gifts from God that he had encouraged her to develop and use. And she was using these for the benefit of her husband and the whole household. That is what a good manager does. He will be careful not to neglect or destroy his wife's abilities. Rather, he will use them to the fullest. The good manager will recognize that God has provided his wife as a helper for him. He remembers the Scripture that reads, "Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing." He doesn't consider her someone to be dragged along. Rather, he thinks of her as a useful, helpful, and wonderful blessing from God. She is a helper, as a helper he will let her help. He will encourage her to help.

So when there are problems within his household, a good manager sees to it that they're resolved scripturally. This means he listens to his wife, he may consult his wife, and discusses with his wife. When there are conflicts in his home, he sees to it that they're resolved biblically. He helps with coordination of scheduling. He sees to it that everyone in his household is treated with justice and equity. Additionally, should someone be temporarily unable to pull his or her load, he is willing to roll up his sleeves and "pinch hit" for one of his incapacitated team members.

Which leads into our last pizza slice:

8. A spiritual leader is a man who has learned to be a servant to his wife.

If you're truly a servant to your wife, you'll not become an overbearing, domineering, dictatorial bully. Being a servant and being a bully are mutually exclusive.

Do you remember the story in Matthew 20 where the mother of the sons of Zebedee asks Christ that her sons sit at the right and left side of Him in Heaven? Jesus answers her that she doesn't know what she's asking and then asks her "Are you able to drink the cup I'm going to drink?" The sons say they can. Then Jesus tells them that he can't give those positions; they are for those that God has already determined and prepared. Then Jesus calls the disciples to Him and says: "*You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*"

In this passage, what exactly were John and James asking for? The preeminent position of honor in the kingdom of heaven over all the saints of God who had ever lived before and after them! Now that's what I call ambition! We see in this passage after that exchange the other 10 were indignant with those two. Not puzzled or concerned. This

reveals a couple of things: 1- They knew John and his brother's desire for preeminence and 2- it reveals their own struggle with the lust of preeminence. Jesus in his wisdom uses this as a teaching time. He calls all twelve to Himself. He says: *"It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave"* Jesus is explaining to the disciples that both they and the Gentiles have it all wrong. Their selfish motives had inverted and perverted the only real way of obtaining greatness. Jesus was speaking of an entirely different kind of greatness than the sort James and John were seeking and that the world promotes. This kind of greatness is pleasing to God because it is humble and self-giving rather than proud and self-serving. The way to true greatness is through pleasing Him and serving others in His name. In God's eyes, the one who is great is the one who is a willing servant. Can you see the implications here for you and your leadership in your marriage? The same call in our lives for humility and esteeming others higher than ourselves is the same call for us in our marriages as the spiritual leader. We have to lead like Christ lead. He humbled himself and washed the disciples feet. He humbled himself by leaving his high position with the father and became a man. He humbled himself and gave the ultimate sacrifice of laying down his life for you and me. We must lay our lives down for those God has entrusted to us.

Now that we've discussed the necessity of serving (ministering to) your wife, let's look at some of the specific ways you can become more of a servant-leader.

1. Make a list of the ways that you've abused your authority over your wife. This is a tough one, because it involves really looking at your life and picking out sin. It is so good, but it can be painful and will probably involve asking your wife's input. Here are a few common ones to get you started: (Show slide)
2. Ask her forgiveness for the specific ways you've lorded your authority over her and for not having a servant's heart. Do you know the proper format for asking for forgiveness? Do you know that saying sorry and asking for forgiveness are two very different things?
 1. Acknowledge that you have sinned against her.
 2. Identify your specific sin by its biblical name.
 3. Acknowledge the harm your offense caused her.
 4. Identify an alternative biblical behavior to demonstrate repentance.
 5. Ask for her forgiveness.
3. Regularly pray for her and for your attitude toward her, asking God to give you the wisdom and humility to be a servant: (show slide)
4. Make it your goal to help her achieve her God-honoring goals.
 - Become excited about helping her be successful. Ask your wife for her goals and how you can help her achieve them. Ascertain and list those goals, and then seek to assist your wife in meeting them, by the grace of God.
5. Look for opportunities to minister to her in other ways. Invest your time, effort, thought, and money in ministering to her; discover what her needs are and use your resources to meet them.
6. Assist her in fulfilling her chores and other responsibilities.

- Some husbands think that there is something unmasculine about doing the dishes, cleaning the house, taking care of the children, or going shopping..They won't lift a finger to do anything they consider to be women's work. He can be in a room where the baby begins to cry, and the wife can be at the other end of the house, but the husband won't find out why the baby is crying. Instead he calls, "Hey Jane, the baby is crying. Come here and do something about it." And she has to drop what she is doing and come all the way to where he is. This kind of a husband doesn't understand true biblical leadership.

7. Learn to esteem her more highly than you esteem yourself.

- Look for those virtuous qualities in her that you are most in need of yourself, and seek her help in acquiring them.
- When making a decision, consider how that decision will affect your own interests and hers.
- Commend her for those qualities that are biblically worthy of praise. Remind yourself of them frequently.
- Guard your heart from developing a pattern of critical, condemnatory, accusatory, judgmental thoughts about her. Such thoughts make it very difficult for you (if not impossible) to esteem her better than yourself.

To finish this up I want to tie these last two working definitions (the last two slices of the pizza) of spiritual leadership together, showing you how they relate to one another. Perhaps you were wondering as we were talking today #1 "How am I ever going to get my wife to come under my authority as the spiritual leader in our home?" The answer to that often-asked question is found in definition #2: You bring her under your authority by being a servant to her; by loving her the way Christ loves the church. That is really the best way to motivate her to be submissive to you. As you model being a servant she will, in all likelihood, increasingly find it easier to submit to your authority. She will, like the church does to Christ, love you because you first loved her.

Communication, Conflict and Forgiveness

How did you guys do on your homework I gave last week? Did you tell your wife how/why you appreciate her? Did you point out ways God has used her to work in your life?

FYI the ladies are getting the same lesson that we men are getting today. So don't be surprised if you leave church today and hear from your wife some of the same things you hear in here. MaryBeth and I worked on this lesson together so they are very similar.

Intro: MaryBeth and I have had the opportunity over the last several years to shepherd a small group that started off as a bunch of single/newly married people. Those singles started pairing up and got married, and now several of them are beginning families. It's been so neat to see how God draws people first to Himself, and then begins to draw them into union with each other. One night, we had a young guy hang out in our home, and he began drilling us on our marriage as he sought to think about his own future, a girl he had his eye on, and how he could lay a successful foundation before he even made his intentions known. And he said something like, "well, you guys have been married a long time and I'm sure you don't even really fight anymore." We both laughed...and as we began sharing our life and marriage with him, the one thing we both agreed tripped us up more than anything else was our communication. That when we aren't communicating well or understanding where the other one is coming from, trouble starts brewing. It doesn't even have to be on things we disagree about. Sometimes, a lack of communication or how we communicate in either sending or receiving the right message can be an obstacle in our marriage.

Communication is the vehicle that is used to accomplish many responsibilities and relational aspects of marriage. One can neither address issues without it, nor resolve conflict without it. How we communicate with each other will either produce good or bad consequences. Good communication is essential to a good marriage relationship. (Stuart Scott)

When we have good communication:

- God is honored by a good testimony for Christ
- The relationship will be strengthened and meaningful
- Companionship and oneness will be enjoyed more
- Harmony will be present
- Any disagreement can be handled quickly and without conflict
- Problem issues can be clarified and resolved
- Wrong ideas can be corrected
- Forgiveness and trust will be exercised easier
- Good decision-making will be enhanced.

But, even more important than that, is the fact that good communication is extremely important to God. It involves self-control and discipline. It involves ruling our spirit, our tongue, our body, and going against our feelings when they contradict what we know to be true. Communication involves the heart, which is of great importance to God—because as we have already seen this principle many times in this class, "...the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart." Matthew 12:34.

My communication reveals what is really in my heart. If I want to really exemplify Christ, I need to be seeking to be a good communicator.

Stuart Scott has this great little booklet that I am going to be using as my resource called "Communication and Conflict Resolution". We only have about 45 minutes so today I'm going to run thru some of the principles in this booklet. This is a big topic and we could discuss it for many meetings, but if this is an area of struggle in your marriage or if there is a lot of conflict, I would encourage you to go to Faith Baptist's Resource center and order this little booklet. It is totally worth the \$3.30 plus shipping that it will cost you because it is absolutely rich in Biblical Truth and practical application.

When you are in college and are signing up for classes you have to make sure that you have taken care of any pre-requisites for the particular class. You have to take a 101 class before you take a 201 class. You have to have algebra before you take trigonometry and so on. I remember talking about the pre-reqs and needing to get them out of the way before moving on to the next class.

Well right now before we talk in specifics, I want to give you some general pre-req's to good communication.

1. You must want to please God more than anything else. *2 Cor 5:9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.*
You must want to please Him more than being right, having your own way, or being vindicated.
2. You must be humble. *Eph 4:1-3 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
Humility involves not reacting in pride to what someone says, being patient when misunderstood or when you don't like what is being said to you.
3. You must recognize you are accountable to God. *Matthew 12:36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,*
I will give an account to God for every careless word I say.
4. You must know how to listen. *Proverbs 18:13 If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame, James 1:19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger;*
Communication involves listening more than you speak and not jumping to conclusions. It involves concentrating on what the other person says, not interrupting, not coming up with your own argument while the other is talking, not talking too much-the other needs time to think about the information, asking for clarification, and not talking over another.
5. You must recognize communication involves more than just words. Do your actions reflect what you are saying? *James 4:17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.* Don't just say what is right, do what is right.
Watch the volume of your voice, its tone, facial expressions, hand gestures, sighing, rolling eyes, body posture.
6. It may take time. *Romans 12:10-12 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*
We need to talk sometimes when we don't want to talk or listen when we don't want to listen. Just because we are ill, tired, or not much of a talker does not release us from responsibility to work at good communication.

So, that being said...How should we communicate? Like Christ, whose communication was holy, purposeful, clear and timely.

HOLY—Ephesian 4:25

- a. Everything you say should be completely true. No form of deceit, with all accuracy.
Guard against: an outright lie, an exaggeration, a truth plus a lie, a half or partial truth, an evasion of the truth
- b. Filled with righteousness (Ephesians 4:29-32)
Bitterness: a fixed attitude of sharpness or harshness
Wrath: A temporary outburst of anger
Anger: A slow burn of indignation
Clamor: yelling, loud quarreling, harsh contention
Slander: speaking evil of another person, name calling, belittling, attacking
Malice: speech designed to injure or make someone suffer
Kindness: gracious, easy, courteous, good, helpful
Tenderheartedness: compassionate, sympathetic
Forgiveness: giving up on revenge or a grudge

*Be careful not to enter into sin even if your spouse is.

Proverbs 6:24-25 "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him.
Answer a fool as his folly deserves, that he not be wise in his own eyes."

PURPOSEFUL—For God's glory (1 Cor. 10:31b) and Other's Good (Eph 4:29)

Christ's purposes were the Father's purposes. It is better to remain quiet and pray about having the right motive before we communicate foolishly. When we have the right motives, we will not act/react according to feelings or pride, attack the problem and not the person, say what will accomplish good, and be solution-oriented.

Ask questions and make sure you have all the information. This is so hard because in conflict, we will want to say and do all sorts of things according to our flesh. Be ready for that. By God's grace we can have speech that is seasoned with salt and can turn away from the desire of our flesh in our communication. (Col. 4:6—speech with grace, seasoned with salt)

CLEAR—Matthew 5:37, Proverbs 10:19, Proverbs 15:28

The way you say things must be straight forward and appropriate.

Principles: Pray about what to say, think carefully about what needs to be said, speak concisely, refrain from withholding information ("oh you don't know what you did?! You know why I am upset!"), say what you mean and don't use manipulative tactics to make others feel guilty to get what you want.

TIMELY—Proverbs 25:11 "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances."

When you say it has to be right. Communicate as soon as is prudent. Don't wait without a good reason and give the devil an opportunity! Make sure you have enough time allotted to say what you need to and also give the other person opportunity to respond (don't bring up a big issue as your wife is walking out the door for work). Be considerate of your spouse and pick the right time for both (making sure one person isn't too tired).

WHAT TO DO WHEN CONFLICT HAPPENS?!

When we talk about conflict, we're not talking about a difference of opinion or someone just disagreeing. Both can happen without conflict. The Latin word for conflict means "to strike". It means to fight against. Conflict happens when there is sin against one another and then there is opposition to one another.

Ephesians 4:1-3 "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace."

Obviously, God doesn't want us to be in conflict and wants us to live in peace.

- A. Most conflict **begins** with some sort of **offense**. When one spouse sins, it doesn't have to lead to both parties sinning. We must control our responses to honor God. We need to be open to someone pointing out sin in our lives and be gracious when we point it out in spouse's life.

We are to live in such a way that we speak the truth in love...we are to avoid offending others (1 Cor. 10:31-32) and to return good when we are sinned against (Rm 12:21). Taking part in sinful communication and conflict doesn't not show that we are children of God (Matthew 5:44-45).

Proverbs 17:27 "He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."

- B. Conflicts are **escalated** out of differences, pride, the flesh, and our lusts.

Proverbs 28:25 "An arrogant man stirs up strife..."

Proverbs 13:10 "By pride comes nothing but strife..." NKJV

James 4:1-3 "What is the source of conflicts among you? Is not the source of your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

In the midst of conflict, ask.. "What is it I am wanting for myself?" We all struggle with fleshly lusts: riches, sex, food, possessions, relaxation/comfort/enjoyment, recognition or approval.

When even good motives, or things not bad or wrong in and of themselves, or even right things are taken out of balance and become more important than anything else---so important that my heart does what it wants because it wants what it wants regardless of pleasing God, pleasing my mate, or anything else, it is sinful.

If I am in conflict because I am "seeking my own," "easily provoked" ...then I am in SIN!

My focus has to be on pleasing God and being obedient to him regardless of my feelings, my situation, or my ultimate desire or preferences. 2 Cor 5:9

A couple that struggles with conflict must first begin by working hard at knowing, appreciating, and trying to understand things from the other's perspective. You don't have to have a lot in

common to get along. OR, you can have a great deal in common and still have conflict if you are both proud and selfish. (EPHESIANS 4:2 above—show tolerance for one another...)

AVOIDING CONFLICT:

Sinfully:

Keeping quiet or avoiding the issue...End result will be bitterness (Ecc 3:7b, Eph 4:29-31, Col. 3:19)

Staying away from each other... End result will be lack of love, lack of respect (John 15:12, 1 Peter 4:8)

Changing the subject...End result will be bitterness, deception or manipulation (Proverbs 12:22, Proverbs 24:28)

Hiding information, sins or bitterness...End result will be lack of unity and oneness (Genesis 20:2)

God-honoring:

Seek to understand, know, and appreciate spouse's perspective (1 Peter 3:7)

Gather info before speaking, ask questions, seek clarification (Proverbs 18:13, 17)

Pray, study, think about issue before speaking (Proverbs 15:28)

Listen more than you speak, but speak (Proverbs 10:19, 25:11)

Demonstrate love/care at time of disagreement (Rom 12:9-10)

In matters of sin, approach your spouse in love (Eph 4:15)

In matters of preference, prefer one another (Rom. 12:10)

IN matters of wisdom and conscience, suggest searching Scriptures or getting counsel (Proverbs 11:14, 2 Tim 2:15)

Refuse to enter into sinful communication (Proverbs 8:6-8)

Be most interested in God's glory and other's good, rather than having your own way Or being right. (Josh 22:5, Rm 15:2).

RESOLVING CONFLICT:

1. Confess any sin you are aware of before God—ask Him to give you wisdom/open mind/open heart about any sin on your part in light of His Word. Think thru your motives, your attitudes, your thoughts and actions. (Psalm 139:23-24)
2. GO...to your spouse
Confess, ask forgiveness (we're going to talk thru this process a little more thoroughly in just a minutes). Ephesians 4:32, James 5:16
3. Set a time to communicate
Express a desire to resolve the conflict fully, and decide together when that might be.
Ask your spouse to be in prayer and consider any way that you might have sinned against them, any way they might have sinned, and think thru the issues of the conflict. (Proverbs 15:28)
4. Come together—in a spirit of unity.

Work thru and discuss the issue as a team, seeking to resolve the problem and be for each other, not against the other. Think of it as something that unites you and not divides you as you seek a resolution that is in the best interests of both. (Psalm 34:14)

5. Pray together
For God's wisdom, self-control, speech, and resolution (Proverbs 16:32, James 1:5)
6. Communicate in a God honoring way
(good listener, speak the truth, speak righteously, speak with right purposes—God's glory, other's good, speak clearly)
7. Confess sin that hasn't been confessed already to God or each other
Ask for the other's input (Eph 4:32, James 5:16, 1 John 1:9)
8. Discuss the issues that caused the conflict
Preference issue—How can we prefer one another in future? Phil 2:3-5
Sin Issue—Discuss repentance plan. Eph 4:22-24
Conscience issue—Study and get counsel. DO NOT ask the other to go against their Conscience until the thing being asked can be done in faith (Rm 14:23)
Wisdom issue—gather info, get facts, seek input from both spouses. The wife should Submit to the husband and he needs to take leadership. She can rest in God's Sovereignty unless he is asking her to sin. Proverbs 2:3-6, Proverbs 12:15, 2 Tim 2:15

*If you seek to resolve an issue biblically, are both humble, self-controlled, and solution-oriented, and are unsuccessful after 3 attempts at striving together for unity, seek the counsel and help of your elders, another couple, pastor, etc. Do this mutually/together. Someone else might be able to help you understand what is keeping you from a resolution.

FORGIVENESS (adapted from Faith Biblical Counseling resources, Rob Green 2008)

Biblical Forgiveness is a requirement for getting problems solved. Two battling people can have joy, a settled relationship, and renewed fellowship. It is not feeling-oriented. It is not a lapse of memory. Biblical forgiveness models God's forgiveness of man. The key to forgiving and unlocking the meaning of forgiveness is to look at how God has forgiven us.

- A. What does God do when He forgives?:
Ephesians 4:32—"And be kind to one another, tender-hearted forgiving each other, just as God, in Christ, has forgiven you."
Jeremiah 31:34—"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
Isaiah 43:25—"I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins."
Hebrews 8:12, 10:17—"For I will be merciful to their iniquities and I will remember their sins no more."

When God forgives, He doesn't have a momentary, divine lapse of memory. He determines not to hold our sin against us.

B. What is Biblical Forgiveness?:

- It is a declaration.
- It is not feeling something, it is saying something
- Feeling is not a pre-requisite. You can still do it without feeling it. Forgiveness is needed because someone has been hurt and sinned against
- It is a promise not to remember
 - There is a difference in “forgetting” and “not remembering”.
 - “Forgetting” is passive, “not remembering” is active
 - It is a decision and a promise not to bring the issue back up as a basis for how I treat you.

C. Content: A 3-fold promise:

- I will not bring it up to that person again (as evidence against them)
- I Will not bring it up to anyone else (gossip about it)
- I will not bring it up to myself (not going to dwell on it)

D. How is forgiveness accomplished?

1 John 1:9—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Biblical forgiveness is a TRANSACTION!

If you confess---sinner acknowledges the sin to the one sinned against
He is faithful to forgive and cleanse—forgiveness is not accomplished apart from confession

- It is not synonymous with “I’m sorry” or an apology—there’s not resolution. It clearly acknowledges the wrong. If not, conflict remains unresolved.
- It doesn’t minimize offense—“It’s ok” or “there’s nothing to forgive”
- It doesn’t overlook it—“I’ve forgiven you already, why say it?”
- It is not easier in the long run to overlook or condone sin rather than forgiving. (root of bitterness, way of transgressor is hard...)
- You do not have to first forgive yourself—the Bible doesn’t teach self-forgiveness
- You can forgive regardless of your feelings. It is a decision (Romans 6:1-11, John 13:17) to obey God and be reconciled and pursue righteousness.

Process:

- Clearly state what you did wrong (confession: “I was wrong when I” Confess sinful attitudes, motives and character as well as actions)
- Request forgiveness (Actually say it!: “Will you forgive me?”)
- Use simple, factual terms (Proverbs 10:19, “when there are many words, transgression is unavoidable”)
- Don’t destroy good words with wrong attitudes (Proverbs 25:11, “Like apples of gold in setting of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances”)
- Don’t confess accusingly (own your sin, don’t lay blame)
- Get your mate to grant you forgiveness
 - *You should strive to have the transaction take place. You may have to ask “will you please forgive me” more than once before they say “yes, I will forgive you.”

NO PAIN/NO GAIN....

The good news about this whole process is that if you persevere in this way...you will begin to enjoy the fruit of your labor. Handling personal differences, differences of opinion, and conflict God's way will cause love and unity to grow in your marriage, and cause both of you to grow in wisdom.

"As in most other areas of life, improvement and success in marriage require effort. Therefore, we must be willing to commit ourselves to perspiration—a willingness to put forth a strenuous effort. Good marriages don't just happen; they exist only when people are willing to roll up their sleeves and put effort into making their marriage what God wants it to be." (*Mack, "Sweethearts for a lifetime"*)

Proverbs 14:23 "In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty."

God's Kind of Husband
"Growth Our Daily Agenda: Pulling Weeds and Planting Seeds"

July 17, 2011

Introduction

- Who enjoys working in the yard or garden?
- There is one thing for certain and that is maintaining a great looking garden takes a lot of work.
- Beautiful gardens don't just **happen**...Someone has to put time and energy into regular botanical maintenance.
- It requires clearing the areas, digging holes, planting seeds, watering and weeding, being aware of their exposure to the elements and pruning the flowers so that they grow healthy.
- Any way you slice it, a beautiful garden takes **diligent**, hard work!
- Well...Here is the reality...Your marriage is a lot like a garden.
- You don't have to have been married long to learn that marriage takes work.
- Why is it that we don't expect our gardens to just grow and maintain themselves, but to a degree we expect that our marriages will blossom and be beautiful without the daily work of pulling up weeds and planting seeds?
- Perhaps one of the most fundamental sins that we all commit in our marriages is the sin of **inattention**.
- Think about how your marriage reflects this garden metaphor for a moment...

Questions:

1. Has your marriage been planted well? Is the foundation or the soil rich? (Planted on the gospel)
 2. Has it been weeded and watered with regularity? (Dealing with sin and conflict by applying the Word)
 3. Have you lacked the motivation to give it the attention that it needs and then wondered why it didn't look prettier?
- Sinners (which we are) always drag their **sin** into their marriages.
 - We bring in weeds of thought, decision, desire, motivation, words and actions
 - So being committed to pulling weeds is a necessary commitment in any God-honoring.
 - Let me say it another way: If our marriages are going to display the grace that God has indented and reflect a small but clear picture of the gospel to those around us, we must be committed to the process of daily pulling out the sin **weeds** that choke our marriages and daily planting the **seeds** of Christ-likeness that will cause our marriages to flourish.

Change always has two sides!

See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Jeremiah 1:10

1. **Destruction** - What needs to be uprooted and torn down?
2. **Construction** – What needs to be planted or built in place of what was torn down?

A. Selfishness

- It is in all of us...
- Selfishness is the **DNA** of all sin. (It is the root that drives all of the rest of our sin.)
- That is what happened in the Garden in Genesis 3 isn't it...
- What went wrong?
- We want our own way and in wanting our own way, we want to be sovereign over our own little worlds, making sure that what we want is **exactly** what we get.
- We were made to live in vertical relationship with God and horizontal relationship with one another.
- Nothing works in life (let alone in marriage) when we act like a bunch of little self-appointed sovereigns seeking to set up our own little **kingdoms**.
- This way of life prohibits relationships and usually guarantees war.

- Maybe for you it is:
 - Pouting when you don't get your way. (Making life miserable for others when you don't get your way.)
 - Being too busy to be bothered.
 - Wanting to get even if you have had your feelings hurt.
 - Refusing to forget what you say you have forgiven.
 - Controlling the flow of conversation.
 - Making everyone watch what you want to watch.
- You were designed to be **others-centered**. (Philippians 2:4)
- We need to look for evidences of the DNA of selfishness in the way we think, act, desire, and respond in our marriages.
- This particular weed has deep roots and can suck the **vitality** out of your marriage garden.

B. Business

- To many of us have too little time for relational **reflection** in our marriages.
- We are busy bodies.
- The sad result is that our relationships suffer because we try and do marriage on the **fly**.
- Marriage is all too often what we do in between all the other things that we are doing that determine the pace and content of our schedules.
- But our marriages don't tend to **thrive** when we leave them alone and ask them to grow on their own.
- Why do you think we are too busy?
- Let me give you one reason that business is particularly true of Western culture... **Materialism**.
- Materialism is the false idea that we will find happiness and fulfillment in things.
- We are given to the never-ending pursuit of that which is **bigger** and **better**.
- Bigger and better takes time and energy.
- So we end up working more to acquire material things that once we have we are enslaved to maintaining.
- And in all of our acquiring, the things that we acquire don't satisfy the deepest longings and desires of our hearts, so we have to go out and get **more**.
- We would be naive to think that all of us to some degree have not bought into this cyclical (selfish) lifestyle.
- All of this takes the time and energy away from the most important human relationship.
- It makes us like that little hamster on the wheel that runs and runs and runs but never gets **anywhere** - but tired.

C. Inattention

- Many marriages that aren't thriving get where they are due to a lack of **attention**.
- Think about your body for a moment.
- What do you do when you have a toothache or you have an unexplained, prolonged abdominal pain?
- What do you do when you have a high fever or cold chills?
- What do you do when you have broken or fractured something?
- You, because you are attentive to the needs of your body, go and get it checked out.
- You go to the doctor.
- Why is it that we are so quick to take care of matter of health, but often sluggish in taking care of matters of sin in our marriages?
- Sadly, many of us are better at responding to a crisis than we are at working to **prevent** them.
- Think for a moment about your relationship with your wife when you were dating or courting.
- Courtship is all about attention!
- Attention is easy to give when there is something in front of you that you **want**.
- You worked hard at learning her. Examples: Like / Dislikes / Expressions / Joys / Upsets / Dreams / Desires
- What happens when she has been "won?"
- We begin to relax and quit working hard. We stop putting forth the effort that a healthy marriage requires.
- We begin to live by **default** instead of living by design. (Ephesians 5:25-29)
- A healthy marriage is a healthy marriage because, by God's grace, the people in that marriage never stop **working** on it!
- We should all desire marriage that are thriving and not just surviving.
- What are some areas of your marriage that don't get the attention necessary to thrive?

D. Self-Righteousness

- Question: How do you respond when your spouse approaches you with a **concern** about a particular area of your life?
- Did you know that your wife is like a God-given **mirror** to you?
- You wake up every morning next to a mirror that reflects the sin in your life so that you can see it.
- Are you thankful that God has placed you in a marriage relationship with a spouse that has the ability to help you see you with greater accuracy?
- How about this...Do you embrace the thought that you could be a **better** husband.
- When your wife points out areas of needed change in your life do you tend to be more grateful or are you more prone to bowing up?
- When you feel a twinge of guilt, you work to relieve your guilt by **pleading** your case?
- How active is your "inner lawyer" at defending you even when you know you are wrong?
- How often do you tend to think that most if not the majority of the **weeds** in your marriage were brought in by your spouse?
- We are all too often falsely convinced of our own self-righteousness and therefore convinced of our **innocence**.
 - It's not my fault.
 - If you hadn't of _____ then I wouldn't have _____.
 - You are the one who always _____.
- Remember Adams response to God when confronted about the fruit?
- Gen 3:12... "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit and I ate it."

E. Laziness

- It may be hard to admit, but laziness is a big issue I our marriages.
- Guess where laziness is rooted... It is rooted in **self-love** (Selfishness).
- It is the willingness to let ourselves off the **hook**.
- It is the willingness to permit ourselves not to do the things that we know we should do.
- It is believing that good things should come our way without us having to **work** for them.
- It is opting for what is comfortable for us instead of what is best for our spouse and marriage.
- Laziness is always self-focused and **self-excusing**.
- It is undisciplined and unmotivated to serve the needs of others.
- It **expects** more from others than we expect from ourselves.
- It permits us to be **passive** when loving action is needs in our marriage.
- Where does laziness lead in our marriages?
- It leads to disappointment, discouragement, discontentment, and many other future problems.
- In a fallen world, very few things are corrected by **inaction**.

I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man lacking sense, and behold, it was all overgrown with thorns; the ground was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down.

Proverbs 24:30-31

The sluggard does not plow in the autumn; he will seek at harvest and have nothing.

Proverbs 20:4

The way of a sluggard is like a hedge of thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway.

Proverbs 15:19

Weeds I need to pull:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Seeds I need to plant:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conclusion:

- No matter how weedy the garden of your marriage may be, God is ready to meet you right where you are with the grace necessary to cultivate a marriage that is both pleasing to him and mutually satisfying for you and your wife.
- Ask him for the wisdom, patience, grace, strength, and forgiveness that you need to plant God-honoring seeds.
- When we live in light of his design for our marriages, we learn that they can be the most fulfilling relationship this side of heaven.
- What weeds do you need to pull this week, this month, this year?
- Don't be overwhelmed, when you identify a weed, ask God for his grace to grow, and start digging!

God's Kind of Husband

"A Husbands Responsibilities"

July 31, 2011

Introduction

- True oneness can only be achieved as a husband both knows and fulfills his biblical roles.
- We talked about Headship several weeks back...
- Can you remember how we defined the husband's role as Head of his wife and children?
- Headship is the divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christlike, *servant leadership* in the home.
- We could also call this shepherd-leadership.
- As a husband, particularly a redeemed believer, you are the shepherd of your family.
- You are the "pastor" of your home.
- Men, this is your church.
- We must be the shepherd-leaders of our wives and families!

What Are the Responsibilities of a Shepherd-Leader:

1. A shepherd knows where he is **going**.

For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

John 6:38

- As the shepherd of your home, you have to know where you are going before you can **lead** your flock.
- You must make informed decisions in order to give your sheep the care that they need.
- This means that you must know two things very well.
 1. The **Word** of God.
 2. The **needs** of your sheep.
- This means much thinking, studying and evaluating.
- If you can remember back two weeks ago we talked about the weed of laziness.
- There is no room for laziness as we seek to lead our families.
- We cannot sit back and let our wives do the evaluating and decision-making.
- Or even worse, leave that responsibility up to our children.
- Our homes need the godly influence of Husbands and fathers who know where they are going and are actively leading their family in a **God-ward** direction.
- We all intellectually know the right answer to this questions, but where does wisdom come from?
- Wisdom comes from the Word.
- And there is no way for you to lead your wife in the ways of God unless you, yourself, are fixed on God's truth.
- Question: Do you have a 1-3-5 year plan for your family?
- This will help you lead by design and not respond to life by default.

2. A shepherd knows how to lead **lovingly**.

Christ's love is:

- A. **Initiated** first by Himself 1 John 4:9-11
- B. **Enduring** Psalm 17:12
- C. **Verbalized** Jeremiah 31:3
- D. **Compassionate** Psalm 112:4
- E. **Demonstrated** by action Romans 5:8
- F. Does what is **best** for us Romans 8:28
- G. **Self-sacrificial** John 10:11
- H. Involves **treasuring** us, even though we are not worthy Luke 15:11-32
- I. Not based on **performance** Psalm 103:10

3. A shepherd leads by **example**.

When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

John 10:4

For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

John 13:15

- Jesus is our model here as in every area of life.
- He always led by example.
- He led his disciples to pray by example. Matthew 6:5-15
- He led his disciples to serve by example. John 13 3-15
- He taught his disciples how to do ministry by his own example before he sent them out on their own. Luke 8:1-9:6
- Are we leading by example?
- The old adage, "Do as I say and not as I do..."
- This doesn't satisfy God and neither will it satisfy your wife as she longs to walk with God.
- How we live speaks more loudly than our words.
- This may mean that we need to do a little less talking at times and a great deal more living!
- Look at what a godly man who leads by example looks like from 1 Timothy 3:1-3...
 - A. Above **reproach** – Blameless, not practicing evil, giving no evidence by which to be accused.
 - B. Husband of **one** wife – One woman kind of man! Faithful and true to his wife.
 - C. Self-**controlled** – Able to bring himself under the authority and subjection of the Word.
 - D. **Respectable** – Proper, modest, orderly, earning the favor of good men.
 - E. **Hospitable** – A friend to strangers, welcoming, inviting, loving, need meeting.
 - F. Not a **drunkard** – Deals with alcohol in a manner that is within the bounds of Scripture, moderate and self-controlled.
 - G. Not violent or **quarrelsome**, but gentle – Not easily angered or provoked.
 - H. Not a lover of **money** – Does not set his affections on material earthly gain.
 - I. Manages his **household** well – leads his family and cares for the affairs of his home in an honorable fashion.
 - J. Keeps his children under **control** with dignity – because he is dignified in how he manages them, be act with dignity.

4. A shepherd knows how to **oversee**.

shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2–3

- Shepherding is not a harsh or controlling type of leadership.
- God has not called us to be the micro-managers of our homes.
- He has not called us to "lord over" our wives.
- He has called us to give them loving, self-sacrificial, exemplified leadership.
- There is most of the time a great deal of freedom in the way a good shepherd leads his sheep.
- We need to be cautious that our leadership is largely **oversight** and not a matter of **control**.
- A husband that lords over his wife cares more about his own **agenda** than he does her needs.
- Here are a few areas that you can serve as an overseer:
 - 1. Oversee her spiritual **welfare**. Ephesians 5:25-27
 - 2. Oversee her **decision**-making. Colossians 1:9-10
 - 3. Oversee her **relationships**. (God, You, Children, Others)
 - 4. Oversee her **ministries**. 1 Peter 4:10
 - 5. Oversee her **physical** well-being. Ephesians 5:28-28 (Eating, Rest, Safety, Exercise)

5. A shepherd is **involved**.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

John 10:14

- Men, we must be aware that we will one day be held **accountable** for our contribution (or lack thereof) to the state of our homes.
- In the same way that church leaders will be held responsible for the care of their flock, so you and I will be responsible for the care of your flock at home.
- Do you know their specific needs.
- Are you feeding (nourishing) them spiritually.
- Are you giving them the time and attention that they need not just to survive, but to thrive?
- Are you helping them interpret the world that they live in from a distinctly biblical lens?
- Are you around enough and actively being the example that they need to see.
- God has called you to a whole lot more than to just bring a **paycheck** home.
- He has called you to be their living **representation** of the gospel... and that brothers, is a weighty responsibility.

6. A shepherd **instructs**.

The LORD is my shepherd...He *leads* me in paths of *righteousness* for his name's sake.

Psalms 23:1-3

- Men we are called to give instruction to our wives... Especially in the things of God.
- A shepherd does not allow his sheep to **wander** without any biblical instruction.
- Now this doesn't mean that you have to setup a classroom in your home where you stand at the chalkboard and she sits at the desk.
- But it does, however, mean that you bear the burden of helping her rightly **interpret** and **live out** the precepts of God's Word.
- Men, you are the **pastor** of your home.
- And this means that you need to be studying and learning so that you have a solid basis for godly instruction.
- Your wife is looking for **you** to provide her with direction and wisdom.
- You are the leader!
- Maybe you listen to a sermon with her.
- Maybe you meet once a week when the kids are asleep for some Bible reading.
- Ex: Jodie /Eric desert and communication time.
- Hey here is a challenge... To be a good instructor, you have to be an even better **listener**!
- Both to **God** and your wife!

7. A shepherd **corrects**.

The LORD is my shepherd...Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 23:4

- Out of love, a shepherd must occasionally correct his sheep.
- He does this because he cares for their well-being.
- Even though correction can be unpleasant, the fruit of correction is often a blessing.
- And correction can even be **comforting**...
- A sheep who knows that its shepherd will not let it stray, also knows that its shepherd really **cares**.
- There are times when our wives need the correction of God's Word.
- There needs to be no **eagerness** to correct, but there definitely has to be a **willingness**.
- The purpose of correction is always **restoration**.
- And it needs to be done humbly, lovingly, graciously, and with the aim of helping your wife better glorify God.
- You need to know whether there is a **weakness** or **unruliness** and respond in a proper manner.
- It can be difficult to correct those who are closest to you because they know your **flaws** well.
- This needs to not deter you from your responsibility to lead your wife in a way that honors Christ.

Conclusion:

- How are we doing men?
- We are not the end product, but are we growing in these areas?
 1. A shepherd knows where he is going.
 2. A shepherd knows how to lead lovingly.
 3. A shepherd leads by example.
 4. A shepherd knows how to oversee.
 5. A shepherd is involved.
 6. A shepherd instructs.
 7. A shepherd corrects.

God's Kind of Husband "Family Worship Pastor"

Introduction:

Last week, Eric taught us that as husbands, our role and responsibility as head of our homes and spiritual leaders is to be the Pastor of our families, the loving shepherd to the flocks God has given us. Unlike a physical church like Faith Bible, these members don't get to choose their Pastor or who they fellowship with in the congregation... When Brent went to preschool, he came adopted a little catch phrase —You Get what you Get and you don't throw a fit!— and that has become a motto and theme in our family. In our homes...in these small churches, our wives and our children get what they get when it comes to our leadership and our shepherding.

Now, in a physical church, we know that God equips the believers with spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and God hasn't called all of us in this room to be literal pastor/shepherds of physical churches and congregations. But, God's Word does tell us in Ephesians 5:23 that the husband is the head of the home in the same way that Christ is the head of the church. We all need to be growing in our ability to lead and shepherd our family in a way that honors and pleases the Lord. 2 Cor. 5:9 tells us that we need to make it our ambition to be pleasing to Christ.

So, as a review from last week, we heard that we as husbands and shepherds need to know where we are going. We need to lead our families lovingly and by example. We need to know how to oversee and be involved in their lives. And we also need to be willing and ready to instruct and correct our flocks.

This morning, we are going to spend time talking about what it means to be the Family Worship Pastor. Jesus said in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WORSHIP?

"Human beings by their very nature are worshipers. Worship is not something we do; it defines who we are. You cannot divide human beings into those who worship and those who don't. Everybody worships; it's just a matter of what, or whom, we serve." Paul Tripp

God created us to worship--For intimate, personal fellowship with himself. Romans 1 tells us that the great exchange of mankind is that while knowing God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but instead, exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped created things rather than the Creator.

Worship is also a reflection of heart. In Luke 6:43-45, we see that our words are a literal reflection and outpouring of what is in our hearts...because out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. Our relationships, our circumstances, our interactions reveal what is in our hearts. Our hearts have only two choices of things to treasure...earthly or heavenly. What we set our hearts on—what we treasure—is an indication of the Worship of our lives.

Our homes, our congregations, are filled with worshipers, and it is our job as Pastors to be guarding, guiding and directing them. We need to be making sure that our families—our wives and our children are

not investing their lives pursuing the wrong treasures. We need to be cultivating Christ worshipers in our homes.

WORSHIP BEGINS WITH UNDERSTANDING

Knowing God, Knowing His Word

In our Homes, before our families will truly worship God as He is rightly deserving of worship, our congregations need to have a right understanding of God and His Word.

Lovers of GOD

The Key to Family Worship is developing a proper perspective in our homes. A right understanding of who God is and what He has done because of His great love for his own, and His desire to reconcile man to Himself.

Psalm 103:8-14 “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to His Children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.”

God is merciful. He is gracious. Slow to anger. He lavishes forgiveness on His people, removes their sin and is in the business of reconciliation. He shows compassion. He is our Creator. He has intimate knowledge of who we are.

Our families need to know the True God in order to worship Him.

Lovers of His Word

Psalm 119:103-104 “How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.”

Psalm 119:1-2, 9-11 “Blessed are those whose way is blameless who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, who also do no wrong but walk in his ways! How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

God’s Word is the light that shines into our lives and gives us direction. It teaches us how to live. How life works best and how to please God. It guards us, it purifies us, it keeps us on path and away from trouble.

Sally Lloyd-Jones, in the *Jesus Storybook Bible*, says, “Now, some people think the Bible is a book of Rules, telling you what you should do and shouldn’t do. The Bible certainly does have some rules in it. They show you how life works best. But the Bible isn’t mainly about you and what you should be doing. It’s about God and what He has done. Other people think the Bible is a book of Heroes, showing you people you should copy. The Bible does have some heroes in it, but most of the people in the Bible aren’t heroes at all. They make some big mistakes. They get afraid and run away. At times they are downright mean. No, the Bible isn’t a book of rules, or a book of heroes. The Bible is most of all, a Story. It’s an

adventure story about a young Hero who comes from a far country to win back his lost treasure. It's a love story about a brave Prince who leaves his palace, his throne—everything—to rescue the one he loves. It's like the most wonderful of fairy tales that has come true in real life! There are lots of stories in the Bible, but all the stories are telling one Big Story. The Story of how God loves His children and comes to rescue them.”

Understanding God and His Word helps us then have a proper perspective of who we are.

Joshua 1:8 tells us that the Book of the Law should not depart from your mouth, but you should meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success.

God's Word—His Law—shows us how we are to live, but it also shows us how impossible it is to keep the Law and please God on our own. “The Law shows us what God commands, but the law does not possess the power to enable us to do what it says. The law shows us what a sanctified life looks like, but it does not have sanctifying power” (Elyse Fitzpatrick).

Because of that...

WORSHIP IS FUELED BY THE GOSPEL

Most of us in this room have lives that have been transformed by the Gospel of Christ...while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That God chose us and redeemed us while we were dead in our sin, not seeking after Him, having done nothing to merit or deserve His forgiveness.

In our families, if we forget the Gospel...if we take out God's amazing, transforming Grace...then our homes and our “congregations” will be filled with Pharisees. White-washed tombs, struggling to keep the Law and please our God, thinking that it is our own goodness that gives us standing before a righteous and holy God.

Our own hearts have to be so rooted and transformed by the Gospel, that when we speak...when we lovingly lead...when we oversee our family members and meet their needs, when we are involved in their lives and instruct and correct them, the outpouring of our hearts...the abundance that Luke 6 talks about is the Gospel and it is God's amazing grace.

Jerry Bridges says, “the gospel is not only the most important message in all of history; it is the only essential message in all of history. Yet we allow thousands of professing Christians to live their entire lives without clearly understanding it and experiencing the joy of living by it.”

If we have unbelieving children in our home that haven't been transformed yet by the grace of God, we need to be careful not to leave the gospel---their need for a Savior and their inability to please God or obey apart from the help of a Savior---out of our discipline, training and instruction. We don't want to be producing well-behaved moralists...we want to see the fruit of passionate love for Jesus Christ and a recognition that apart from Christ—they are helpless to please God on their own.

WORSHIP IS A LIFESTYLE

1 Corinthians 15:1, 3 “I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you. For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins.”

Paul tells them that the motivation of our lives should be rooted in the gospel. Christ died for our sins. That should motivate us in who we are, how we spend our time, how we work, and how we lead our families. And as that truth transforms our lives, then, as he says in that verse, we need to pass along what we received and train and lead our families in a lifestyle of worship.

Children

In Deuteronomy 6:6-7, it says, “These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them upon your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deut. 6:12, Moses told the Israelites not to forget about God when they entered into the land. The way that the Israelites would not forget about who God was or what He had done was to be talking about Him all the time.

Our thoughts and our lives are to be so full of whom God is, that our hearts cannot even contain all the knowledge of Him. It is to dominate our thinking and overflow from our lives, into our children’s lives as we walk along life’s road with them. The text also says that we are to impress truth upon our children. We are to repeat His Words over and over. Our kids should know the interaction we are having with God and with His Word. God wants to use the events of your life to teach your children to know and trust His Son.

We need to have times of formal training with our children, reading God’s Word to them and relating truths to them in an age-appropriate way, but our lives should be filled and flowing with informal training, cultivating a lifestyle of worship...so they see God all around them and think in those terms. They need to learn to see the world God’s ways.

Wives

Ephesians 6:25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

How are you washing your wife with God’s Word? You should have intimate knowledge and insight into how your wife is spending time in God’s Word daily. Is she reading the Word? Is she plugged into opportunities with other women to learn and grow? As men, we need to be encouraging our wives to develop an intimate, personal relationship with her Lord apart from us. We need to be overseeing that she is spending time in the Word. Our wives are juggling a lot of things, but we need to make sure that the one thing that isn’t dropped because of their responsibilities in the home—or outside the home-- is time with God in His Word.

We also need to have times of studying, discussion and Bible reading with our wives, learning together truths together. My wife and I are just beginning to do a study together using Stuart Scott’s *The Faithful Parent*. But we also need to be regularly in the Word with our spouses. Are you leading your spouse to be involved, connected and committed to a small group this year?

As a Family

Proverbs 1:8-9 “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.”

We need to have formal times of family devotions and family worship where as a family, we open God's Word and learn together. This is a time to fuel the flames of love for God and love for the gospel and better understanding and reflection on his grace.

In CJ Mahaney's book, *The Cross Centered Life*, he gives 5 ways that we can be cultivating and fanning the "sparks" of love for God. I think we can use these 5 points in application for a starting place to develop in an atmosphere of family worship in our homes.

1. Memorize the Gospel.

God tells us to hide his word in our hearts so that we will not sin against Him. (Psalm 119:11) As a family, what truths are you memorizing together? What scriptures are you committing to your hearts? If you are not doing this regularly, consider memorizing scriptures that will cultivate worshipers in your home. Choose those that tell of the Son of God who gave His life in our place...since that is the central message of the Bible.

2. Pray the Gospel

"The Gospel should be at the center of your prayer life. The gospel makes it possible for us to approach God. The gospel gives us the confidence to pray boldly." Mahaney says to simply begin thanking God for the blessing of eternal life, purchased through the death of His Son.

Our time of family worship should include prayer that is reflecting only on who God is (attributes) and what He has done. Our children and we ourselves, do not need to grow in the area of asking God—or making supplications---making our requests known. Most of us know how to do that. But true Worship is centered on God alone and who He is.

3. Sing the Gospel

Psalm 100:1 "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth."

In our home, singing is exactly that...a joyful noise. But God wants us to sing and praise him joyfully...using words and music and honor and tell of truth about who He is. Find CDs that center on the cross, or other hymns that you can learn as a family and then sing during your formal family worship time.

4. Review how the Gospel has changed you

Many people want to forget the past, but we need to always remember who we were and how impossible it was for us to come to God based on our own merit. Our children need to have some understanding that like them, we struggle with SIN! We fell into Sin...our lives were dominated by sin and God redeemed us, transformed us, and reconciled us to Him because of His great love, while we were still sinners. Where appropriate, we need to not be afraid when our children or our wives struggle with sin, to use our own transformed lives to help them find freedom, mercy and grace. (if appropriate here, use example of own struggle with choices in HS and parent's sexual sin...how you could have benefited from learning from their mistakes and the scars of sin...way of transgressor is hard.)

5. Read and Study the Gospel

Have a time of formal study in God's Word...reading truth together as a family. If appropriate, study other books or resources as a family that will give you opportunities to talk about the Love of God, His redemption of man, our sinfulness and need for a Savior.

Sharing: How do you as a family prioritize family worship? What do you do to cultivate worship and devotional time within your families?

We were created to worship. God made us to be intimately involved in fellowship with Him. We as men need to be leading the charge, helping our children grow in an understanding of God's magnificent love, his unmerited grace that He lavished on us and our need for his redeeming power of our lives. We need to be active about this and not passive. We need to be shepherd leaders that not only "goad" our families from the wrong path, but also steering them and keeping them on the right path...that leads them to passionate love for God.

How are you going to pursue family worship in your home? Where have you done well? Where do you need to grow? What plan of action are you going to put into place that cultivates and grows worshipers?

God's Kind of Husband and Sex

When Eric and I met to plan the curriculum for this Sunday School class we knew that sex was a topic we were going to have to cover. After we decided on the topics we went down the list and our calendars and listed which week we would teach and the topic. When we finished that list Eric was supposed to teach on sex and truthfully, honestly I inwardly let out a sigh of relief. Not because I don't like the subject or don't know about it. Really this just seems to be a difficult subject to teach because this is something that is done in private. I feel like I should whisper the word and kind of lower head so I don't make eye contact. I know my parents do it, but I sure don't want to think about it! And the world has so distorted this God given act that those distortions can find their way into our homes. Not necessarily in the act, but especially in our minds men. We want instant gratification. We want our wives to act like the women on TV. That breathless, passionate, sweaty interaction...only for couples to pause catch their breath and go at it once again. We desire unreal expectations and a woman that wants it as much and as often as we do. We also tend to think of it at times as dirty or something not to be talked about. God doesn't see it that way. An entire book of the bible is devoted to the subject! God created us to be intimate with our wives. He has built into us the desires we have for the opposite sex and has given us marriage to fulfill those desires within His boundaries.

This is an important subject that needs to be discussed. So in God's perfect timing and provision, I now have the privilege of talking to you all about sex. First of all I just want you to know I was a little nervous about just saying the word sex to a group of 20 or so guys. When I would talk about this lesson, there was always a smile or a snicker or a joke coming my way from whoever I was talking to. Some Godly hazing if you will.

All kidding aside I am looking forward to this talk today. This is a subject that causes a lot of strife in marriages. Well, in our society it causes a lot of strife outside of marriages too. "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Genesis 1:27. And we could say at the end of that: "in marriage He created them to have sex." But I'm interested in talking about this today, because we men who generally have such strong urges for sex. We men who generally are the initiators of sex. We men who in this world have been given this label that we think about sex 90% of the time. Men too often we just don't get it. We think about the act of sexual intercourse as the only thing. We can go from 0-60 in .2 seconds and then roll over go 60-0 in .1 seconds. Newsflash: men and women are created differently. I look forward to our discussion today, because this is an area that I haven't mastered. Now don't get me wrong, I know how to. But honestly I too often approach sex from a selfish perspective. I think about my desires, wants, urges and I don't think about my wife's day, week, health, mindset. I know I'm not alone here. I've had a lot of discussions with the guys in my small group who all are about the same age and have all been married just a few years. It's the same thing, we all have to learn to not be selfish in our interaction with our wives. Sex is a good mirror to us.

So here's how I see we approach this today: First, we'll look at God's design or purpose for sex. Why He created it and what it's for. Then we'll talk about understanding our wives and the differences we have with them. Then lastly we'll get practical and talk about romancing our wives. There won't be any diagrams or presentations, just good practical advice.

I think we know that God is the Creator and Author of everything good and perfect. James 1:17; "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..." God is the Creator and Author of sexual intimacy. Guys let's be honest, we need instruction on sexuality. If marriage is immensely important to God (and it is), and if sex is a marvelous gift from God to married couples (which it is), it's entirely appropriate for God to tell us in Scripture how to understand and enjoy it.

In fact, how could God leave us, His most beloved creatures, on our own when it comes to something as powerful and universal as sexuality? Would He give us such a gift without also giving us guidance? Where is a Christian couple supposed to look for a model of God-glorifying sexuality? If not to Scripture, where? To Hollywood? Pop culture? Where an overwhelming number of men in our society (in and out of the church) are going, Pornography?

We must not, and cannot take our sexual cues from the sinful impulses of ourselves or others. And we don't have to. God hasn't left us in the dark. Scripture illuminates the path of marital intimacy. The Song of Solomon shines brightly, showing us the way to the best sex we can possibly experience.

Guidance on sex from the God who made us and established marriage as an institution and came up with the whole fantastic idea of sex is guidance we ought to receive eagerly.

I think all of us in this room would agree that sex is only intended to take place within a marriage of one man and one woman. Anything different from this is sin and condemned in Scripture. Sex is derived from marriage. It's intended to serve marriage, and never to be separated from marriage. It's this sex - taking place within marriage and informed by a biblical understanding of sex and marriage - that brings maximum joy to the couple and genuine glory to God. The best sex and the deepest human intimacy are only possible when, first, sex takes place within the context of marriage, and, second, that couple is living in the light of God's purpose for marriage. That is simply how God designed it. So since sex is only intended to take place within a marriage; we need to talk about marriage here for a little bit. What is the purpose of marriage?

We've gone to Ephesians 5:22-33 multiple times in this study, but let's go there one more time and read again these truths. Paul reveals to us in this passage the divine intention for marriage. It's to be an echo or reflection of the relationship that exists between Christ and the Church - always a very imperfect reflection, but a reflection nonetheless.

Please don't think of this as merely a helpful illustration or an interesting perspective. It's much more than that. This is the essence of marriage. This is the divine purpose of your marriage.

And don't get it backwards either. We don't look to marriage to understand the relationship between Christ and the Church. That would definitely distort it and give us a wrong impression. Instead, we seek a clear, biblical understanding of the relationship between Christ and the Church so we can better understand the purpose of our marriage.

This means that your marriage is meant to be, by the grace of God, the best echo, the most faithful reflection, of that relationship that you can possibly be. It's not about impressing people or drawing attention to ourselves. It's about being genuinely united in a strong, godly, intimate relationship that echoes the one between Christ and the Church. The biblical purpose for marriage is not man-centered or needs-centered. It's God centered. Your marriage is meant to point to the truth of the crucified and risen Savior who will return for His Bride.

And part of your marriage that is intended to point to Christ is sex. Let's look at reasons God created this gift of sex:

1. God gave the Gift of Sex that You Might create life

Genesis 1:28 "God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it...'"

God's creation of Adam: Dust from the ground. God's creation of Eve: from his rib...yet God didn't choose to use either of these methods to continue populating the earth. Instead, he designed sexual oneness as the best possible plan for man and to create new life. "This may be the only command from God that people have consistently applied."

2. God gave the gift of sex for intimate oneness

Genesis 2:24 "For this reason, a man should leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

The intimacy of sexual union is that God looks at two separate beings: two different minds, spirits, bodies, souls as no longer two, but one.

In Ephesians 5:31-32, (vs 32: "This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.") Paul quotes this passage from Genesis and then goes on to say that this two into one flesh union is a "mystery that is great."

Our physical union with our spouse is a picture of the intimate spiritual union that Christ has with his church. God desires to have that kind of intimate spiritual oneness with us.

3. God gave the gift of sex for knowledge.

Genesis 4:1 "Now Adam knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain."

-The Hebrew word for "sexual intercourse" is "to know"

-Sexual intimacy provides each partner intimate knowledge of the other that no one else can know.

4. God gave the gift of sex for pleasure

Proverbs 5:15, 18-19 "Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe, let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always with her love."

-It doesn't take much for us to imagine, especially in this heat of August, what it means to be thirsty. God's word in this passage is telling us that in the same way water quenches our physical thirst, our spouses should quench a sexual thirst inside us...

-God created us with bodies that can give and receive pleasure.

5. God gave the gift of sex for defense against temptation

Reread Proverbs 5:15 (Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.)

1 Corinthians 7:2, 5 "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. Vs 5: Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self control."

Men we are easily tempted. Men tend to be more visual and all you have to do is look around Evansville to see temptations everywhere. What's also everywhere is pornography that is easily obtainable on the internet. We have to protect our hearts and marriages. 1 Corinthians 10:13 - "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." As married men, your way of escape is your wife. Enjoy the wife of your youth. If there are problems, discuss them with your wife. If that doesn't resolve it seek help together from a counselor, pastor, or Christian friend. Don't let things fester and desire burn until you fall. Take the lead and avoid the hurt and damage sexual sin or at least impure thoughts cause families and marriages.

6. God gave the gift of sex for comfort.

2 Samuel 12:24, "Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon."

-After the death of David and Bathsheba's son, God's word tells us that while they were grieving, they were comforted by lovemaking.

-It says that you are desirable to me. It shows care and compassion in a way nothing else can. When there are no adequate words, this is a way that a husband can care for and comfort his wife.

In order for a man to develop a sexual relationship that truly satisfies his wife and himself and brings God's grace to their union, he must start with humility and an eagerness to learn - a process of discovery that will last years beyond the wedding night.

We cannot build a successful marriage without help from others, starting with our wives. Men, we must not let embarrassment, which is often a euphemism for pride and fear, keep us from the will and purpose of God.

When I got my pilots license the examiner said that this license doesn't mean that you have arrived and you can just stop. This is a license to learn. That is a little bit corny, but there is truth there for us as well. Once you got married you didn't immediately have it all figured out. You just started learning about your wife. We all should be learning more about our wives all the time. Always taking the time to ask them questions and hear from them. Diving deep. We have to admit, which is hard for men, that we don't know everything about our wives and we have to still learn about them. Once you can admit you are still learning, then you have to do the obvious and that's learn! Dr Ed. Wheat writes in his helpful and practical book *Intended for Pleasure* "*Please note that this a learning process, with husband and wife progressively discovering how to provide pleasure for each other. They begin with some explicit information (the more the better); then with growing delight, they find out by experience and application of information just how to make love and impart maximum joy to their mate.*" So men commit yourselves to study, search the Scriptures, read good books (*Love that Lasts*; *Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*; *Intended for Pleasure*) and ask questions of mature and trusted friends. Most importantly, talk to your wife about your sex life. Ask her questions. Share your thoughts, dreams, desires, and any fears.

Our sexual awareness depends not only on communication that takes place in the bedroom but on what and how we have communicated in other ways throughout the day. Lovemaking is infinitely more than a technique: it's a relationship. Once again Dr. Wheat provides wisdom and insight:

Sexual intercourse can be a joyful affirmation of the life two people share, or it can be a revelation of defects in their relationship. It will either draw a couple together or push them apart. Because your sexual relationship will tend to reflect your emotional relationship, it is important to realize that every meaningful, fully enjoyable sex act really begins with a loving, attentive attitude hours or even days before. Husbands, you should be aware that your wife views the sex act as part of her total relationship with you, even though you, like other men, may think of it separately. (Waffles and spaghetti) When both partners assume the responsibility for giving of their total selves - physically, emotionally, and spiritually - sexual interaction becomes a dynamic way of fully expressing love for each other. It is your daily behavior toward each other that will measure the extent and depth of the pleasure you find in making love sexually.

So let's get to the practical: Think about the way that you want your wife to respond when you initiate sexual intimacy with her OR when she initiates it. For us men, that says we are loved, we are desired, we are respected and valued. God made our wives differently. If we truly want to touch the heart of our wives and cultivate desire within

her, the place to begin is in becoming Masters of Romance. If we are to succeed at romancing our wives, we must take systematic, concrete action. Forget about all the junk you see on TV and movies where it is effortless and just happens. Real, sustained romance, although powerfully enabled by the grace of God, is still hard work. I know, I know, not what you wanted to hear. No one wants to hear me say “You can have a wonderful sex life. You are just going to have to work hard for it.” But what good things, besides our salvation, came without hard work? Men this is where we show our wives our desire. This is how our wives know we are interested in them and not just in the act of sexual intimacy. When we are working on romancing our wives we need to be creative. Without creativity, romance can easily turn into just another item on the week’s agenda. We need to be thinking how we can surprise our wives with a fresh “I love you”.

Here are a few ways to romance your wife:

1. Date night. Time away from the routine busyness of life is essential for the cultivation of romance in any marriage. A regular date night provides a couple with a reliable, peaceful oasis in the middle of a busy world. A regular date night will help remind and reinforce in both of you the priority of your relationship. Together you will quickly get in the habit of looking forward to and enjoying this time together.
2. Phone calls. I try to call MaryBeth at least once a day while I’m not at home. I want to let her know that I want to hear her voice and that I love her. If you spend the call asking about her and her day, genuinely interested, then in a matter of a few moments you can touch her heart and mind.
3. Notes, cards, and letters. The written word can be even more powerful than a phone call. We tend to have different kinds of ideas when we use a different medium to convey them. Think how often you write emails in a week and how quickly you could type one up to your wife. You may be surprised that you can communicate your thoughts and feelings for her far more effectively in writing than you can orally.
4. Gifts. Romance can be communicated quite effectively through small gifts. Now granted I think this is where a lot of men go right to when they are thinking of romancing their wife. Definitely nothing wrong with that, but beware that getting your wife a new vacuum or a blender may make her life easier, it doesn’t qualify as romancing her. A single flower, some perfume, clothes, a gift card to the mall, a book can all speak volumes.
5. Music. If you are gifted musically, I’m jealous. I would love to be able write a song for my wife and sing it to her. There’s just a few problems, I’m not really all that creative to write a song, I can’t play an instrument besides the kazoo, and I really can’t sing. In this area you need to exercise sober judgement about where you are gifted and where you aren’t. If you aren’t gifted in this area, your wife may think it sweet you tried, but it will be far from romantic.
6. Getaways. Time is absolutely necessary to the cultivation of romance and God-glorifying sex. Much time. Unhurried time. Undistracted time. While a date night

creates an oasis in the middle of a busy week or month, a getaway creates an oasis in the middle of a year. When was the last time you took your wife away for at least 48 hours? Now for me and probably for you, a brief time of making love can be quite satisfying. But for our wives, the slow-burn eroticism of extended and unhurried sexual enjoyment typically takes her experience to a whole new level. As husbands, we have the glorious, delightful obligation of providing this sort of experience to our wives. So learn to take it slow, gentlemen, and enjoy the process.

7. Surprises. Here's a question to ponder during your week: At this point in our life together, what would my wife define as a welcome surprise? Guys, just to be honest, this is an area that I am working on growing in. C.J. Mahaney talks about how he will hear things in a store or see something or think of something while in the shower or driving that will trigger a thought and he will write it down. He uses this to always be ready to surprise his wife in order to romance her. The issue comes down to, are you romancing your wife in ways that will surprise and delight her? Surprises make a huge and very romantic statement of your care. Don't "surprise" her on Valentine's day or her birthday or an anniversary. Sure, plan something for February 14th. But a true surprise is unexpected.

Husbands, I hope that I've been clear that sexual intimacy plays an important role in our marriages. We need to remember, though, that this intimacy starts long before we are in the bed with our wives and it is so much more than the physical act. I pray that you men will take the time to understand your wives. That you will humble yourselves and talk to her about your sexual relationship. I hope that you have gained some insights into romancing your wife and will take an active step in kindling or rekindling that in your marriage. All this to the glory of God who created sex.

God's Kind of Husband

"Raising Children"

August 21, 2011

Introduction

1. Raising children can either be like a magnet or a wedge to your marriage.

- In other words, raising children can either be one of the greatest **unifying** factors in a marriage, or they can be the point at which **tension** and frustration are brought into a marriage.
- Let me deal with the negative side here first...
- Tension can be caused by:
 - Differing views on *whether* you should have children (If you are married but do not have children).
 - Differing views on *when* to have children (Could be a result of career goals, etc.).
 - Differing views on *how many* children you should have (She had the large family growing up, you didn't or vice versa).
 - Differing views on *how to raise* children.
- Often times raising children can be the point at which frustration enters into a marriage is because you have a particular **view** on how to raise children (Influenced by your childhood and upbringing) and your wife has a particular **view** on how to raise children (Influenced by her childhood and upbringing) and those two views are not identical.
- Let me practically illustrate this:

<i>He may think:</i>	<i>She may think:</i>
Physical discipline should be used frequently and forcefully.	The use of physical discipline is brutal, cruel, and barbaric.
Children should be given very little freedom. <i>"They live under my roof..."</i>	A lack of freedom squelches their creativity and initiative.
They must respect authority, be ordered and structured, and learn to control themselves.	Doesn't want her children to live under a tyranny or dictatorship.
Chores and responsibility must be learned quickly.	Children should be allowed to spend their time playing.
Children need to learn to carry their part of the load.	It is easier to do it myself than to make them do it.

- You (Husband / Father) think through the male lens of the **"leader"** and she thinks through the female lens of the **"nurturer"**.
- And those two philosophies of parenting don't always see eye to eye.
- It is quite possible that most of the tension in child rearing is caused by a lack of common **philosophy** as it pertains to raising your children.
- In other words, there are often times no clearly defined goals or plans or strategy in place to help guide you in your child rearing efforts.
- Here is what happens when that is case...
- You parent by default and not by design.
- You shoot from the hip.
- You do your thing and your wife does her thing (Primarily influenced by what you observed growing up).
- There is little consistency (Sending mixed messages to your children).
- You are uncertain about what you are trying to accomplish (Never really sat down to discuss how "your family" is going to raise children).
- And low and behold there is conflict and tension in your marriage that doesn't have to be there.
- This leads us to our second point.

2. Most of the tension between couples in Child rearing can be eliminated if both parents will be committed to making the Bible their final authority.

- Here is our positive...
- God, who is our creator and the creator of our children, is all-wise.
- He knows the end from the beginning and has given us His Word with clear **directives** concerning our responsibilities as parents.

- In His Word, He has given us a basic philosophy of child rearing.
- He has delineated for us the goals, plans, strategy, and the standards by which we should seek to raise our children.
- There is no need to shoot from the hip or fly by the seat of our pants.
- There is no need to lean on our own understanding or the understanding of other fallible men.
- We have the **infallible** Word of God to help us raise our children in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.
- Remember a few weeks back Paul Tripp said that every passage in the Bible is fundamentally a marriage passage because the whole of the Bible contains wisdom about how we might please God the side of eternity.
- Well, likewise, every verse in the Bible is a parenting passage insofar as all of Scripture contains the wisdom about how we might please God as the stewards (parents) of the children that he has entrusted to us.
- One of the most comprehensive, but yet helpful, verses in the concerning the subject of parenting is Ephesians 6:4.
- Notice who this instruction is delivered to:

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4

- Here God gives us a very comprehensive “philosophy” of child rearing.
- He tells us what not to do...**Provoke** your children.
- He tells us what to do...**Bring them up** in the discipline and instruction of the lord.
- Your goals, plans, and strategy are clearly articulated here.
- Now you will need to apply this command to your family and your individual children, but here is the big picture goal!
- If we (Husbands) will commit with our wives to apply the truths of Scripture such as Ephesians 6:4 to our parenting, not only will we by God’s grace be good parents, but we will be **unified** parents.
- Remember we said that raising children can either be like a magnet or a wedge to your marriage.
- If we will apply the principles of Scripture to our parenting, raising children can be joy filled and unifying for our marriages!
- This doesn’t mean that we will have perfect marriages or perfect children (we are sinners and so are our children), but it does mean that we will experience the joys that parenting that the wisdom of men cannot provide.
- Let me give you a couple of possible reasons that God addresses fathers in Ephesians 6:4.
 1. One possibility is that it is often the father who neglects this responsibility.
 2. A sure reason though is connected back to the father’s role as head of his home.
- Jay Adams, in his book “Christian Living in the Home,” says...

When Paul speaks to the fathers he is speaking to the mothers. The reason that he addresses the fathers is that what the mothers do, the fathers are responsible for. In addressing the fathers, he is addressing the one in whom God has vested His authority for discipline. The father is the head of the home. The father is the one who ultimately must answer to God for what happens in the home.

- Yes, you and your wife are to be unified as a team in your child rearing efforts.
- But in the end, when it comes to the home...the “**buck**” stops with you dad.

3. You are called to “bring them up.”

- The Greek word here for bring them up is *ektrephō*. It literally means to nourish or feed.
- Let’s take a look at this word,,,
- The voice is **active** meaning that children do not automatically grow up to be what God wants them to be.
- Look at Proverbs 22:15 says, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.”
- God never intended children to bring themselves up.
- It takes parents who are unified in adhering to God’s Word to help them grow into what God wants them to be.
- It is also significant that Ephesians 6:4 is in the **imperative** mood.
- This means that it is not just friendly advice, but rather a command to be obeyed.
- This is the only way for us, as believers, to raise our children...In the discipline and instruction of the Lord.
- So the verb *ektrephō* is active, it is in the imperative mood, and it is also in the **present** tense.

- This means that as long as your children are in your home, you must be consistently and persistently bringing

them up!

- It is not a job that ended yesterday!
 - Bringing your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord is a job for which you are never off **duty**.
 - There is no tossing the towel in and forgoing your daily responsibility.
 - Our children need our intentional shepherding every day of their lives until they leave our homes.
 - And even then, they will need your counsel as they navigate their early adult years.
- What is our goal or objective on bringing our children up in the discipline and instruction in the Lord?
1. That by God's grace they come to **know** and trust Christ.

Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Psalms 34:11

2. That they move on to be **mature** disciples of Christ.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Psalms 1:1–3

- Our goal should be to bring our children to the place where they are disciplined in the way of the Lord so that their attitudes and way of life begin to reflect **Christ-likeness**.
- So that they are mature in their walks with Christ, can make intelligent, Biblical decisions, and are ready to one day leave your home and impact their spheres of influence for Christ.
- In other words, we are bringing them up in Christ so that the in turn can **repeat** the process with their children.

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

Psalms 145:4

- Is this your goal? Are you actively aiming at it and working toward it?
- Sure, it is going to require the sovereignty of God, but God uses Parents who are obedient to His way of raising children.

Do Not's: Provoke your children to anger...

1. Criticism

- Fathers who criticize their children often bring them to **discouragement**.
- Fathers, do not provoke your children, *lest they become discouraged*. *Colossians 3:21*
- Criticism can come in the form of never praising your children.
- Often it is not the words, but your **tone** of voice that says it all...

2. Overstrictness

- We need to be careful that we are doing more shepherding than we are just seeking to control.
- Raising children is like holding a bar of soap...too firm a grip and it shoots from your hand, too loose a grip and it slides away.
- A gentle but firm hold keeps you in control.
- We need to make sure that we are not all law and no grace.
- We hold the soap more tightly in the beginning and as our children grow and mature, we loosen that grip.
- Make no mistake, conscientious fathers will have to say "**No**" to many things...
- This is why you should seek to say "Yes" to as much as possible and save our "No's" for what is really **important**.

3. Irritability

- We need to be cautious of bringing our “Hard days” home with us.
- We need to make sure that our children are not in the crosshairs of our frustrations and short fuses.

Some say you treat your fellow man on the same level, but when you are home with your wife and kids, are you means as the devil?

4. Inconsistency

- Pity the horse whose rider gives it mixed signals, digging his heels into its side and pulling the reins at the same time.
- Pity the child even more who's Father changes the rules moment by moment.
- Be consistent in your rules and your discipline.
- And never make a promise to your children that you do not keep.
- It may have to be altered, but keep your word!
- You may forget about what you have said, but rest assured that you children probably won't.

5. Favoritism

- This doesn't mean that you should treat every one of your children alike.
- Cookie cutter parenting doesn't take your children's unique makeup into account.
- Some need more discipline, independence, structure, holding, encouragement.
- It does mean that no child should be favored over another.
- Like favoring father, like rejected son.
- How crushing to know that you are less favored by your father.

Do's:

1. Tenderness

- Remember that “Bring them up” means to nourish or feed.
- Being tender and compassionate is one way to nourish your children.
- Men are never manlier than when they are tender and affectionate towards their wife and children.
- Think about how Jesus treated the children.... They gravitated towards Him.

A child needs to know that his father and mother are lovers apart from their relationship to him. It is the father's responsibility to make the child know that he is deeply in love with his children's mother. There is no good reason why all evidence of affection should be hidden or carried on in secret. A child who grows up with the realization that his parents are lovers has a wonderful basis for stability.

Elton Trueblood

- Tenderness both verbal and physical should come somewhat naturally to the father living under God's Word!
- How are we doing here men?

2. Discipline

- This is the training.
- Discipline certainly does include physical punishment, but it encompasses everything necessary to help
“Train a child in the way he should go. *Proverbs 22:6*”
- Here is the tragedy...So many men have left this responsibility up to mom.
- Not only is this unfair to mom, but it robs your children of the security that comes from being disciplined by their father.

- We cannot breach our responsibility here...
- And, we need to make sure that we are working in **harmony** with our wives... They often spend greater quantities of time with our children.

3. Instruction

- The word instruction means to “place before the mind.”
- Story of Eli in 1 Samuel 3:11-13... Eli refused to instruct or confront his boys.
- Clear and forthright instruction is necessary for a proper upbringing.
- Are we:
 - Involved in the verbal instruction of our children?
 - Regularly leading our children **devotionally**?
 - Monitoring, along with our wives, the input that enters their impressionable minds?
 - Taking responsibility to ensure that **Church** is a meaningful experience?
 - Creating for them the example with our lives that demonstrated the reality of our instruction?
 - Scheduling regular time **alone** with your children?

Application:

- List some of your Heavenly Fathers attributes. Which can you better **emulate** as you seek to bring up your children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?

God's Kind of Husband and the Benjamins

Here we are at the last lesson in this study. This sure has been fun. I hope you've been encouraged and challenged as we've opened God's Word and looked at what it means to be God's Kind of husband. We've covered a lot of ground and hit on a lot of interesting topics. If there's one thing you've gained from this study, I trust it's that you as the husband have a very important God given, God ordained role. You may have already known that before this study, but were you aware of all the areas this touched? When you entered into this covenant of marriage with your wife you crossed the threshold of life-change where you can no longer be the person you were. You not only have yourself to contend with, care for, think for, plan for, and pray for, but your wife, and for most of us children are now part of that equation.

We've looked at our need to follow hard after God, living with our wives in an understanding way, our headship within marriage, our responsibilities as husbands, our role as the spiritual leader, as well as, the worship pastor. We learned how to communicate effectively and how to deal with conflict and asking forgiveness. We covered putting off our sins and putting on God's grace. Lastly we talked about sexual intimacy and one of the end results of that... raising children. We are now at our final talk - the Benjamins. In other words, we are going to talk about glorifying God in/through our finances. As our guide today, I'm using a study Pastor Rob Greene from Faith Baptist Church in Lafayette, Indiana developed on finances.

Before we can even start to talk about how to do a budget, insurance, manage investments, pay for college or cars or homes or computers we must start with our hearts men. We aren't just talking about fiduciary wisdom here, we are talking about Godly stewardship. There is a difference. Warren Buffet has immense knowledge and wisdom when it comes to money. He is one of the top 5 richest people in the world. He is a multibillionaire. He drives himself around in a used Cadillac, he still lives in the house he bought in 1957. Known as the "Oracle of Omaha", when he speaks on money people listen. But from what I know and read about him, he isn't a believer. Buffet is a great philanthropist vowing to give away 99% of his billions! Still he is not being a Godly steward of money. You can fall into that trap. You can be a believer and good with your money, but you may not be a Godly steward of your finances. The root of money issues are in our hearts. This is where we are going to camp today.

So my first point is this: **I. We are to be a good steward before the Lord in Everything - money is included in that!** A fairly simple concept: Glorifying God and Giving Jesus first place in everything. 1 Cor. 4:2, 10:31, 2 Cor. 5:9-10, and Col 1:15-18

Take a look at diagram.

How we handle and use all of these areas are all rooted in biblical stewardship. It's absolutely required that no matter what I'm given I'm to be a good steward of what has

been entrusted to me. Here's some encouragement for you: God wants your heart. He wants you to live for Him with abandon. He wants you to respond to His love with love in return. He wants you to see Him as He truly is, alive, full of grace, abounding in love, our compassionate master.

With all of this in mind let's look at the four pillars of financial stewardship.

Pillar 1 - God owns everything and we own nothing. [Psalm 24:1]

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein

Pillar 2 - God entrusts me with everything I have [Deut. 8:11-18]

Men there is no such thing as a self-made millionaire. Everything he has has been entrusted to him by the Lord. Now how he uses that money is a choice. He may make choices not to glorify God and those choices can be apart from God.

Let me say one other thing here that is specific to this study of being God's kind of husband. Not only has God entrusted us with paychecks and income, but don't forget that He also has entrusted us with our wives and families. We are to be good stewards of them as well. To do that we need to apply the principles we've learned over the last 12 weeks. We've got to hide God's Word in our hearts!

Pillar 3 - I am responsible to increase what God has given me (or at least use it to the "fullest" potential).

We see this in the parable of the talents.

Pillar 4 - God can call me into account at any time. [Luke 12:13-21 esp. v. 20]

The Lord can call us into account whenever He sees fit. You don't want to be caught in the mindset of "This is my money now. When I make more money is when I'll start thinking about how God wants me to spend it." There may not be a later.

II. Biblical Financial Stewards Love Jesus More than Money

We all know people who love money or what it can buy more than they love Jesus. The Gospel of Christ has not influenced their life as it should have. Consider 1 Timothy 6:10. A familiar passage to us, often misquoted, but familiar nonetheless. *"For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* If we think of money as more than a tool to honor and love Christ then we are worshipping money and we are truly saying "Cash is king....of my heart!"

As followers of Christ and leaders, even leaders in our homes, we are called by the Gospel to love Christ above all else, especially money. Look at Hebrews 13:5. I know

I'm not alone here when I say that a number of the disagreements, arguments, and clashes in my home are in some way related to money. Money can be a very powerful thing. It can rule us or we can take the reigns and use it honor God. In the movie *Wallstreet* Gordon Gecko says "Greed is good." I agree with him...Greed is good for getting you into a whole mess of trouble. Matthew 22:37 is helpful here. "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" If we are doing this then there won't be room to love money above our true Lord. We can't serve God and wealth.

III. Biblical Financial Stewards Develop Contentment

Take a practical look at this for a moment. This statement implies two things

1. We won't purchase items that we CAN'T afford...this is pretty obvious that contentment is an issue here. But our second point may not be so obvious.
2. We won't purchase items that we CAN afford if that would not be appropriate stewardship before God.

You see contentment hits on both areas - avoiding spending money we don't have on things we can't afford, as well as, avoiding spending the money we do have on things that we shouldn't.

An essential passage on contentment would be Philippians 4:10-13 where we find 3 key truths to contentment.

Truth #1: Contentment is not only commanded but possible through Christ

Truth #2: Contentment is a state of Christ empowered gladness or joy in the midst of God-ordained circumstances that cannot be changed at the time.

We clearly see this in the text --notice

Paul was happy with or without the gift (v. 10-11a) [State of joy or gladness]

Paul was happy regardless of circumstances (v. 11b-12) [God-ordained circumstances]

Paul did not rely on his own strength, but on Christ's (v. 13) [Christ empowered]
Men, this contentment comes only through being all consumed by the Gospel. Elisabeth Elliot said: "If my life is surrendered to God, all is well. Let me not grab it back, as though it were in peril in His hand but would be safer in mine!"

Truth #3: Contentment is not code for "giving up" (Phil. 1:12-14)

There are times we will be in circumstances we don't like, but contentment means that while we are there we will continue to be good stewards of whatever opportunities the Lord allows.

Let me ask you a few rhetorical questions: Do you or have you borrowed money for things because you didn't have the money for them?

Are you able to say "no" to something you want if it would not be pleasing to the Lord-even if you have the money?

Is your work ethic an accurate reflection of doing your best for the Lord regardless of whether He chooses to give you a pay increase?

III. Biblical Financial Stewards Give Generously

I am by no means trying to guilt you into giving more than you already had planned on today, but did you know that we are taking a special offering for the missionaries we support that are short on support? That made me wonder - are we generously giving? I'm not implying that these missionaries are short because of a lack of generosity, but I am saying they are short on support. Here's an opportunity to be generous. Someone sent me a cartoon recently where a father and son are at a restaurant. The dad is paying the bill and the son says "Why do you give a 15% tip, but only a 10% tithe?" Though I got a little chuckle out of that I really thought to myself, do I give more to a restaurant that satisfies my stomach than I do to my Lord who should satisfy my soul? Do you know how Malachi 3:8-12 describes a lack of generosity in giving? He calls it stealing from God! Look it up. Why would we expect God to bless us financially, if He considers us as thieves? Or why would we expect blessing financially if we plan on spending it on our passions? James 4:3

I want to be clear here, everyone one of the lessons I've taught in this class have had some difficulty for me in teaching because I wasn't only teaching you, but myself as well. The Bible spends an awful lot of time talking about money. That isn't because it was written by a bunch of men who were trying to get people to give all their money to the church to make the pastors rich. No, Scripture talks a lot about money because God knows that this is an extremely slippery slope for us! Temptation abounds in all areas when it comes to finances. It can be hard for us when we talk about managing our money, because that means we are going to have to put restrictions on things. It means we are going to have to say no to things we want and yes to things we don't necessarily want to (insert insurance, fuel bills, utilities, etc. here)

It gets harder for us when we start talking about giving our "hard earned" money away. We aren't predisposed to be generous. We want what we want because of what's in our hearts. That's why we are here today.

We need to see giving as a wonderful privilege and that's an attitude of the heart. But to talk about biblical generosity we need to have a definition. Generosity isn't just merely giving a lot of money away. We aren't going to turn to it, but there are 3 principles in chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians that help us define biblical generosity.

First Generosity is to be sacrificial

- The Macedonians had needs of their own
- The Macedonians gave liberally

- They gave beyond their ability
- The Corinthians, materially speaking, were much better off. Paul tells them to follow the examples of those who are generous (i.e. the Macedonians)

Second Generosity should be considered a privilege

- Abundance of joy
- Begging us with much urging
- They gave themselves to the Lord
- They gave cheerfully

Third Generosity should extend both to the church and to those less fortunate. We can see a good example of this in James 1:26-27 (taking care of widows and orphans.)

So a saying I'm sure you all have heard before when someone asks "How are you?" "Better than I deserve." Who says that? Dave Ramsey. Now the real question is, if you follow his example and you respond that way, are you paying lip service? Or is there a recognition that God has been good to you and it shows all the time in your speech, prayers, and the way you think? Do you rejoice in your ability to give? Are you a cheerful giver? Do you say "It's more blessed to give than to receive" at times other than around the Christmas holiday?

God is first and most concerned about our hearts. Without the right heart you can't give God glory. Living out the gospel in your daily lives applies to the issue of money. Your money is either serving God's kingdom or yours.

That being said, if you want the money you have to be serving God's kingdom then you need to have a biblical understanding of financial stewardship. We'll look at 4 principles from Scripture that help us better understand it. There are a lot of verses to back these statements up, but we won't have the time to unpack them all. So you'll need to trust me on this and study these passages on your own.

Biblical Financial Stewards Plan carefully (Prov. 6:6-10) The parable of the ant.

- **Refusing to plan is irresponsible**
 - This passage is important to help us understand that there are times that God provides more than we need right now for something coming in the future. In the case of the ant, the future was pretty clear. Practically this means, that planners have money in their accounts that is already allocated...they just haven't gotten the bill yet.
- **Planning was never meant to be a nice word for "hoard"**

- We see this in many places throughout Scripture. We can look at Nehemiah's plans which were about rebuilding Jerusalem to facilitate covenant renewal or Jesus' plans which were designed to help us understand if we were willing to follow Christ or the ant's plans which were about using God's provisions in a way that meant continued survival. In other words, the plans were designed to help the person or persons facilitate a closer relationship with the Lord
- **Planning facilitates contentment**
 - When we set money aside and say "no" to some of the things in the present, it opens us up or may allow us to say "yes" to more God-honoring things in the future. This is putting contentment into practice.
- **Planning facilitates generosity**
 - The first and most obvious is that we add a giving line (or increase it) to our budgets.
 - A second and sometimes surprising way is the ability to give other special gifts.
- **Plans are always dependent on the Lord (James 4:13-17)**

Biblical Financial Stewards Actively Fight Against Greed. (Luke 12:13-21) Parable of the rich fool who built the storehouses and God called him into account.

We can take away two gospel truths from this passage.

1. We must make every effort to avoid the seduction of greed. This is a strong warning. Beware! Be on Guard against every form of greed. The idea is not passive.
2. We must understand that riches are not the sum total of life. Your budgets flow out of your heart. What you put in there will show what is your passions and desires.

Biblical Financial Stewards Actively Fight Against Worry (Luke 12:22-34) Passage about worry and how God clothes the lilies and feeds the birds

1. Material possessions cannot dominate your life

This truth is the same one Jesus gave earlier to help us avoid greed, but we also need to see its value with regard to worry. Jesus tells us the truth in three ways.

1. Not what you will eat
2. Not for your body (which could even address health concerns - and we know we have a number of those!)
3. Not for what you will wear (the clothing shelter issue)

2. Sovereign control belongs to God (V 25-26)

Jesus says: does worry add any span to your life or a cubit to your height? If you can't do a little matter like that, then why worry about your food?

3. God knows about your needs and cares for them (V24, 26-30)

Lastly here I need to hit on a topic that is a huge problem in our society. Our economy is still struggling to recover from its effects. **Biblical Financial Stewards Avoid a Casual Approach to Debt**

Many people in Christian circles claim that all debt is wrong or sin. We here at FBC would not agree with that stance. What we do say is that you need to be very careful with debt. A casual approach to debt fails to understand its significance, its consequences, and the full impact of the decision. Let me tell you why:

1. Debt places the debtor at the mercy of the creditor (Prov. 22:7)
2. Debt can encourage a lack of contentment and a selfish heart
3. Debt automatically limits options and presumes on the future
 - a. Taking debt means you will limit your options over time
 - b. Taking debt assumes you will have the money in the future.

Here are 3 little checks to see if you have a cautious attitude toward debt:

Check #1: There is a firm and wholehearted commitment to repay: ASAP! (Rom 13:8, Psalm 37:21, James 5:1-4)

Check #2: The asset gained on the loan could pay off the load if necessary

Check #3: You are not relying on "heroic measures" to pay off the debt

The Bible simply doesn't explain how much we are to spend on the various aspects of our lives. Instead, God's Word commands us to love him and to be a good steward of all He has entrusted to us. It is about living out the Gospel and seeking His kingdom above our own.

We can set out guidelines for how we spend our money or save it. However, we have to remember that the guidelines don't mean much without the right heart. Faith is not eliminated...Even from the issue of money. When we are in one of those moments where we could do one of many things God wants us to go to Him, pray to Him, check our motives, and seek to do all that is written in His Word.