

MBC MEN'S STUDY

INTRODUCTORY CALL TO ALL MEN

CLASS 1: THE MASCULINE MANDATE CHAPTERS 1-2, 4-5

- **August 3rd: Understanding Our Mandate (Chapters 1-2 & 4-5)**
- September 14th: The Masculine Mandate for Husbands (Chapters 6-8)
- October 5th: The Masculine Mandate for Fathers (Chapters 9-10)
- November 2nd: The Masculine Mandate for Work/Friendships (Chapters 3 & 11)
- December 7th: The Masculine Mandate in the Church (Chapters 12-13)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- Our men's training is going to have two tracks in the Spring semester (Jan – May 2026).
- One of the tracks is designed for men to grow in their leadership with the result being someone who is a small group leader, potential elder or deacon, ministry leader, or any other leadership role in the church.
- The other track has a focus on discipleship in the local church. For those men who do not necessarily believe they are called or gifted for leadership, but desire to disciple others in the body.
- Both of these tracks are undergirded with the current semester's men's training for all men in the church.
- Every man has a responsibility in the home life, their work life, their personal life, and in the church where they are members.
- The *Masculine Mandate* will give a large overview, both theologically and practically, of what a man of God looks like in "real life."
- The overall goal of this first semester is to introduce and fine tune biblical concepts and commands about what true biblical manhood looks like today.
- Regardless of your goal or path forward, every man in the church is called to be growing in Christ and being more and more conformed to His image.

- Whether you desire to disciple others in the church or sharpen your ability to disciple your family at home, we all need to know how to not just lead someone to Christ but then how to teach them all that Christ has commanded them.
- Our hope is that while you will ascertain more and more biblical truth on the topics of biblical manhood, biblical leadership, and biblical discipleship, you will then put these principles into practice.
- Most importantly in your own lives and then teach these things to others.
- A 2010 study is as alarming as it is true:
 - Sadly, we can make this bold diagnosis based on the far-reaching and sobering research: There is a discipleship deficiency in most churches resulting in a lack of transformation... The sad reality is that the daily lives, aspirations, and desires of many people in our churches mirror those who do not claim to know Christ.¹
- Men, after much research and talking with 1000's of churches and their members, there is conclusive research that shows discipleship is not just defined from a worldly perspective, it is rarely, if ever, happening in the normal process of the church.
- Discipleship is the lifeblood of the church. Jesus commanded us to make disciples by teaching them to observe all that He commanded (Matt 28:19-20).
- This is not a responsibility "for someone else..." it is intended for all who call upon the name of the Lord.

INTRODUCTION TO MASCULINE MANDATE

- Why this book? Why right now?
- In a 2020 survey, it was found that "Only one-fifth of those attending evangelical Protestant churches (21%) have a biblical worldview."²
- How many different places to men go to try and find the real definition of manhood?
- We think about going fast in cars, hunting, military, sports, fighting, and a whole list of other worldly things which the world says make a man...a man.

¹ Quote and survey findings quoted in *Discipleship Today*, Andrew Burggraff, 12 (study found in footnote 25).

² Ibid., 2.

- The church can lose precious things, too, and this seems to be happening today. One ideal we may be losing is that of strong, biblical, and confident Christian manhood.³
- Christian men should not be afraid to live out their biblical calling and be true men of God.
- The Bible has much to say about what responsibilities God has given a man in all his spheres of influence.
 - How a man is to view his manhood.
 - How a man is to be at his work, with his kids, his wife, his friendships, his job, and his church.
- God has not left anything up for the culture to define for men.
- Men must put in the time and effort seeking what the Bible says so that we may be a blessing to those whom God has put under our care.

INTRODUCTION (FOREWARD)

- What image comes to your mind when you hear the expression "A man's man"?⁴
- Have we confused what it means to be a man's man with what the world says a man's man is?
- What are some common definitions in the world?
 - "a man noted or admired for traditionally masculine interests and activities..."⁵
 - "If you describe a man as **a man's man**, you mean that he has qualities which make him popular with other men rather than with women."⁶
 - [Psychologist] Ronald Levant...has studied traditional (American) masculine roles and has come up with his own eight basic principles that guide male behavior. They are: (1) emotional restriction, (2) avoidance of femininity, (3) focus on toughness and aggression, (4) self-reliance, (5) achievement, (6) rationality, (7) objectification of sex, and (8) homophobia.⁷
- Our society does not know how to define a man because it does not have a source of truth that it is looking to for its definition.
- Without an authoritative source of truth, our culture is going to continue to look to itself for answers.
- Phillips stays in the Bible to learn and show what God expects from men.

³ Richard D. Phillips. The Masculine Mandate: God's Calling to Men (p. xiii). Kindle Edition.

⁴ Phillips, xi.

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/man%27s%20man>

⁶ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/a-man-woman-of-his-her-word>

⁷ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/therapy-matters/201104/the-psychology-men>

- God begins to paint His picture of manhood in Genesis 1, where we read of man's creation in the image of God. He continues to work on His portrait in Genesis 2, which tells us that God planted a garden in Eden and put man there to work it and keep it.⁸
- All the above definitions start with man and then end with him.
- Phillips puts the focus firstly on God (man was created in the image of God) and then gets into what the man is to do because he is an image bearer.
- Isn't it interesting that the first thing God says about the role of man is that he is to work? In fact, the necessity and value of work is assumed throughout the Bible and is stated explicitly in a number of Scripture passages.⁹
- Isn't it interesting that in the few definitions from above, work was not mentioned in any of them?
- It gave descriptions of what a man is and then by implication what he would be doing, but it never said that man was commanded or expected to work.
- This leads Phillips to say "I find this biblical emphasis on work quite encouraging. Very few of us men fit any of the stereotypes of the "man's man." But we all can fulfill God's mandate to work. In that sense, we can see ourselves in God's picture of a real man."¹⁰
- Not only is man to work, but he is also (in the normal course of life) to have a wife that the Lord says is his helper (Gen 2:18, 31-31).
- While a Christian man may never achieve the status "man's man" from the world, in order to be a real man before the Lord he must be a "humble working man, toiling faithfully at his job, nurturing and shepherding herding his wife, and seeking to bring up his children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."¹¹
- The Bible gives a clear definition, vision, and teaching on what it means to be a real man in a very confused world.

What is toxic masculinity?

- In recent years this term "toxic masculinity" has become more and more common in our culture.
- Though the term itself finds its origins in the 1980's, today it is used with much more frequency and emotion than ever before.

⁸ Phillips, p. xi

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., xi-xii

¹¹ Ibid., xii

- What is very interesting is that from the same source (Psychology Today), in the above quote we have 8 principles that guide male behavior.
 - These were not considered toxic, but a grid to who men process information and then make decisions based upon their interpretation of the data (not biblical, but man-centered).
- That was in 2011. Now an article from the same source (different author), says that his definition of toxic masculinity “ identifies a necessary and sufficient condition for a culture of toxic masculinity, and that is simply any context that devalues the positive aspects of femininity. Toxic masculinity and bro cultures exist where people – mostly men, but not exclusively so – dismiss or punish feminine qualities of care, warmth, empathy, diplomacy, sensitivity, mutual respect, etc.”¹²
- Another definition says “Toxic masculinity refers to harmful, stereotypical behaviors and beliefs associated with traditional masculinity that negatively impact both men and society. It emphasizes traits like suppressing emotions, aggression, dominance, and competitiveness, often at the expense of healthy emotional expression and interpersonal relationships. This concept highlights the social construction of masculinity and how certain norms can be detrimental.”
- Biblical manhood is not about being physically tough and demanding others to do the same.
- As men of the Word, we must not be afraid to be what God has called us to be, but we must not swing the pendulum to far either way.
- “The biblical man is expected to be **clearly masculine**, not questionably masculine or clearly feminine. It doesn’t mean you have to chop wood and drink coffee without cream and sugar; **it simply means in whatever you wear and do, see to it that no one doubts your sexuality.** Biblical masculinity addresses more than just clothes: it completely dismantles the toxic masculinity that the world understands today. Rather than being tough, stern and rash, **the biblical man should walk in love (Eph. 5:2). He should be a prime example of gentleness, patience, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).** Jesus Christ is a perfect example of biblical masculinity. He was resilient in the pursuit of God, gentle in spirit and humble in service to others. According to the Bible and by the example of Christ, masculinity is humble leadership. It is sacrificial love and incredible meekness. **Our society needs revitalized masculinity. We need masculinity that will treat women with honor, prize honesty and fight for the sake of the vulnerable.** Rather than removing all boundaries for

¹² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-gender-revolution/202312/what-exactly-is-toxic-masculinity>

masculinity or clinging to a toxic version of it, biblical masculinity is rooted in the dedicated imitation of Christ.”¹³

- Our hope is to think like the Bible says we are to think. To put into practice the things that the Bible says are important to manhood.
- It does not matter what our culture says as we are accountable to God for how we are as men.

CHAPTER 1: MAN IN THE GARDEN (UNDERSTANDING OUR MANDATE)

- When it comes to practically every question about God's intentions for men and women, the answer is almost always the same: go back to the garden. When Jesus was asked about marriage (Matt. 19:4-6), He answered from Genesis 2. Likewise, when Paul was discussing the role of women in relation to men (1 Tim. 2:11-14), he found his answers in Genesis 2. The New Testament sees issues of gender and male-female relationships answered in the opening chapters of the Bible: the basic teaching on creation in Genesis 1 and the record of God's specific dealing with the first man and woman in Genesis 2. It is here that we should search for the Bible's most basic teaching on manhood.¹⁴

Manhood: The Who, Where, What, and How

- Looking at Genesis 2, Phillips points out this is where to start when seeking to define manhood.
- **Genesis 2:7** “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”
- This shows that man is a spiritual being.
- **Who:** There are two unique characteristics to man that are not true of the rest of creation:
 - God created no other creature with the same care that He made man.
 - God created man from the dust of the earth and molded mankind in a very specific way.
 - God breathed His own breath into man and brought him life.
 - This means that God made man to be different...not just one of His many creations.
 - This also means that man bears the image of God.
 - Man can know God and is able to understand what God desires of him.

¹³ <https://www.liberty.edu/champion/2021/10/11/opinion-the-tension-between-biblical-masculinity-and-toxic-masculinity/>

¹⁴ Phillips, 4.

- **Where:** God intentionally placed man where He wanted Him to be.
- Genesis 2:8 “The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.”
- As Phillips says, “The garden is the place where God relates covenantally to his creature man and where God brings the man into covenantal relationships and obligations.”¹⁵
- The garden was to be the place where Adam was to work and bring God glory through that work.
- He was to serve God according to what God desired.
- **Wild at Heart by John Eldredge¹⁶:**
 - Over-reaction to feminization of men
 - Argues on basis of Genesis 2:8 that man was made outside the garden whereas Eve was made in the garden
 - Conclusion: “The core of a man’s heart is undomesticated,” we are “wild at heart,” our souls belong in wilderness
 - Man finds his identity outside the garden in wilderness quests
 - BUT God put man in the garden into the world of covenantal relationships and duties
 - It’s in the garden that he gains and acts out his God-given identity
- If God intends men to be wild at heart, how strange that he placed man in the garden, where his life would be shaped not by self-centered identity quests but by covenantal bonds and blessings.¹⁷
- The whole idea of this book is that man finds his identity in Christ and what the Bible says about him being in Christ.
- Man should never have to go on a quest to find out who he is as a man.
 - Admittedly this is very appealing to men, a sense of adventure and searching for something new.
 - But that would mean that God has put what it means to be a man in our hands and be centered on what we think manhood really is.
- **What:** Adam was put in the garden to be its lord and servant. He was to bring God glory by devoting himself to bearing God’s fruit. This was to start in the garden and move over the whole world.¹⁸

¹⁵ Phillips, 5.

¹⁶ List taken from <https://headhearthand.org/blog/2016/12/07/study-guide-for-the-masculine-mandate/>

¹⁷ Phillips, 7.

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

- While all of mankind (women and men) are called to this task, men have a unique role as they are called and responsible for leading.
 - This is seen in Genesis 2:18-20 “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”
 - Adam had the authority to name all the animals, but within all the animals there was not one that was suitable to be his helper.
- God then made the woman specifically for Adam and to be his helper as he was the lord over the garden and serving his maker.
- Adam was not to devote himself, therefore, to endless quests for his masculine identity, but he was to be lord and keeper of God's created realm, bringing glory to the Creator as he sought to bear the image of God in servant faithfulness.¹⁹
- **How:** After knowing the what, we must focus on the how. How are we to obey God as men?
- Phillips focuses on Genesis 2:15 “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.”
- To work it and keep it: here is the how of biblical masculinity, the mandate date of Scripture for males. It is my mandate in this book, therefore, to seek to specify, clarify, elaborate, and apply these two verbs to the glorious, God-given, given, lifelong project of masculine living²⁰:
 - **Work:** this is the work that is needed to bring life to things. This has implications for the totality of a man's life.
 - **Keep:** once life comes and progress is being made, it must be protected and cared for by the man. The work is not done because there is life. It continues on so that life may endure and also so that it would grow.
- To sum up, man is called to be both a lord who is under God's ultimate authority and a man who serves for the glory of God.

¹⁹ Phillips, 8.

²⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER 2: THE MASCULINE MANDATE

- Men are called to be men, fulfilling our calling before God in this world: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Our calling in life really is this simple (although not therefore easy): We are to devote ourselves to working/building and keeping/protecting **everything** placed into our charge.²¹

Work: To Cultivate as a Gardner

- Adam was called by God to be one who works. In the context of Genesis 2, he was to work the garden by cultivating and tilling the ground.
 - The purpose was for the garden to grow and bear fruit.
- This is only done by working. The one who tends to the garden must be attentive to the needs of his garden. He must prune the branches, pull up weeds, and make sure the seeds are planted on time.
- It is through his labor in the field that the garden grows.
- As the garden is growing, the laborer is able to see the growth. He can see the fruit of his labor as the plants begin to grow and yield fruit before his own eyes.
- While most men will never be farmers, at least not commercial farmers, all men are called to have this same attitude towards their divinely inspired work.
- We are to invest our time, our energies, our ideas, and our passions in bringing good things into being. A faithful man, then, is one who has devoted himself to cultivating, building, and growing.²²
- While men are called to work...
 - **1 Timothy 5:8** "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
 - ...as Phillips points out, they should desire their work to do more than just provide a living wage for them and their family.
 - Their desire should be to bring God glory through their work and be a benefit to their immediate surroundings and those in their broader society.
- Phillips takes this even deeper from what we do in our vocation to how we are working and cultivating those people who are around us and under our care.

²¹ Phillips, 12. (emphasis added)

²² Ibid., 13.

- A man's fingers should be accustomed to working in the soil of the human heart-the hearts of those he serves and loves-that he might accomplish some of the most valuable and important work of this life.²³
- This will be the basis for the upcoming chapters on how a husband and father is to be with his wife and children.
- But as he further says, men are to be nurturers and tend the hearts of those who are under his shepherding care.
- **On a side note:** this is why Paul says regarding pastors, 1 Timothy 3:4-5 “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)...”
 - If a man does not care for the hearts of his family, he is not going to care for the hearts of the flock either.
 - Study the family life of your pastors well...not for perfection but how he cares for their hearts. Is he intentional and nurturing, or is he cold and commanding?

Keep: To Protect as a Sword-Bearer

- Not only are men called to work and cultivate, but they are also called to protect.
- The Hebrew word used means to keep, guard, or watch.
- The example of this is found in how God Himself watches over us.
- Psalm 121:7 “**The LORD will protect you** from all evil; **He will keep** your soul.”
 - There are many other verses, but this show us that the Lord Himself is there to protect and keep us as we walk through this world.
- While we cannot keep the eternal soul of anyone, we are called to be watch over and keep safe the souls that have been entrusted to us as men.
- To be a man is to stand up and be counted when there is danger or other evil. God does not desire for men to stand by idly and allow harm, or permit wickedness to exert itself.²⁴
- We are to protect the fruit that has been borne through our labors in the field.
- In the church, we men protect it making sure false teachings and harmful doctrines stay out.
- In the family, we may physically or spiritually watch over our wife and children.

²³ Ibid., 14.

²⁴ Ibid., 15.

- We make sure the movies and shows our family watches are bringing harm to them. The music and books are not leading them astray.
- As men, we not only have the privilege of joining God in the work of cultivation, but also in the watching over the work to keep it safe...all for His glory.

CHAPTER 4: MAN AS THE IMAGE OF GOD²⁵

- Man was created to be and bear the image of God to the world.
- It may be true that unbelieving men spend their lives trying to "find themselves" and display their own success before the world. But men who have been redeemed from sin through Jesus Christ have been freed from the bondage of self to live for the glory of God in all things. Through the way we live, we want others-our friends, our family members, our co-workers-to see something of the truth and grace of God in Christ, with the aim that they will be encouraged to seek Him for their own salvation.²⁶
- Let's break down this paragraph:
 - Unsaved men seek their "true selves" in the world
 - They desire to display that "true self" to the world so that the world knows who they are.
 - Saved men seek their "true selves" in Christ.
 - They desire to display that "true self" to the world so that God would be glorified.
 - Both unsaved and saved men want to know their true self and they want the world to see that self in them.
 - The question that we must constantly ask ourselves as men is *are we seeking to display our own glory or God's glory in us? Do we want others to see our greatness or the greatness of Christ in our salvation?*

What does it mean to bear God's image?

- There has been no shortage of answers to this question over the years.
- Generally speaking, there are three ways this question has been answered: the substantive view, the functional view, and the relational view.

²⁵ Phillips, 29.

²⁶ Ibid., 32.

- **First**, the substantive view says that the image of God is inherently structural to man. It is a characteristic within the makeup of man. The image is part of man, not just something he does. Some have asserted that the image is the physical body of man or some physical characteristic like walking upright. Some say that the image is a psychological or spiritual quality, such as reason, memory, will, or moral capacity.²⁷
- **Second**, the functional view asserts that the image of God is something humans do. Since Genesis 1:26–28 links the image with ruling and subduing the earth, some believe that the image is man’s dominion over creation. German Protestant theologian Hans Walter Wolff (1911–1993) stated, “It is precisely in his function as ruler that he [man] is God’s image.”²⁸
- **Third**, the relational view claims that relationship is the image of God. Summarizing this view, Millard Erickson writes, “Humans can be said to be in the image or to display the image [of God] when standing in a particular relationship, which indeed is the image.” This perspective was popular with neoorthodox and existential theologians. Support for the relational view is found in the way that the image of God is closely connected with man being created male and female (Gen. 1:27). Since the concept of relationship is central to man’s connection with God and people, the image is viewed as man being in relationship.²⁹
- How should we view the image of God in man?
 - MacArthur offers this perspective, “The best view, however, is that the image of God is substantive or structural to man. Function and relationship are the *consequences* of man being the image of God structurally. This view acknowledges the importance of function and relationship, yet it casts structure as the basis for accomplishing function and relationship. Since man is the image of God, he is able to exercise dominion and experience relationships.”³⁰
- I put these definitions here so that you would be able to distinguish between the **who** and the **what**. What you are doing is going to come from what you are.
- We then, as Phillips goes on to say, know we are different than the rest of creation because we are rational and spiritual.

²⁷ MacArthur and Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 412.

²⁸ Ibid., 412–413.

²⁹ Ibid., 413.

³⁰ Ibid.

- Mankind alone worships God and has reasoning abilities.
- Mankind was also granted dominion over creation, to rule the earth and to be fruitful.
 - Mankind has authority, but not ultimate authority. He has an authority that was given to him by God; who has the ultimate authority over creation.
- Man also displays or reflects God's righteousness.
 - This has been marred, but not lost, because of sin. When born-again, mankind takes on the righteousness of Christ and now have the ability to represent a holy and perfect God to the world.

The Christian's Call to Reveal God

- Paul speaks of our new nature in Christ being "renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col. 3:10). The context for that statement is Paul's exhortation for Christians to put away our sins: "anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth" (Col. 3:8). He adds, "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices" (3:9). In short, the truest way that we bear God's image is by the practical righteousness that enables us to be more and more like God in our attitude and conduct.³¹
- What Phillips is saying is foundational for our identity as men.
- We are not an accumulation of our stuff. We are not who we are from our vocation or any other thing that starts from within us.
- We are in Christ and from that foundational truth we display God's glory in and to the dark world.
- 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?"
- We are the aroma of Christ in this world. We men, our first responsibility is for our own hearts to be right before God.
 - Are we seeking to amass wealth and fame here on earth?

³¹ Ibid., 34.

- Ecclesiastes 5:10 NASB95 - He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is vanity.
 - What about gaining more wealth for retirement and security?
 - Ecclesiastes 7:12 NASB95 - For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.
- The list can go on and on but the point is made...if we seek to find ourselves in anything other than the person and work of Christ, we are going to not only be dissatisfied but constantly seeking.
- How can you be sure not to fall into the world's traps and keep their desires from creeping into your life and focus?
 - It means that you need to get into the game-not a sports game on television, but the true and real contest for souls that is going on all around you. It means you should devote yourself to strengthening your own faith and drawing near to God so you can be used to strengthen others.³²
 - It means you should start noticing not just where people stand in the pecking order, but what is going on with them as individuals, and then minister gospel truth and Christ-like love to them as those in need of grace.³³
- **Can you see the connection in all of this?**
- If you are putting your effort into becoming more and more like Christ, you will be living in the Spirit, and you are going to be displaying that image to all the people around you.
- As you display the image of Christ and live in the Spirit, you are going to be ministering to the people around you.
- You are going to be tending the hearts of your family, you are going to be working for more than a paycheck, you are going to notice and fulfill the needs of those whom God has placed in your care.
- This only happens, as Phillips says, when we are devoted to the means of grace in our own lives.
- He talks about being transformed through the Word, through prayer, and through the sacraments.
- When we do this, our goal is known by the world...to glorify God and to enjoy knowing Him forever.

³² Ibid., 36.

³³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5: MAN AS SHEPHERD-LORD³⁴

- We have been drawing our picture of masculinity from the opening chapters of Genesis, and so far we have noted the following:
 - God made man in His own image.
 - God placed man in the garden, the world of God's covenantal relationships.
 - God placed him in the garden that he might work and be fruitful.
 - Toward that end, God gave man the work-and-keep mandate of cultivating and protecting.
 - The ultimate goal-the chief end of man-is that he might display play God's glory in the world.
- In making these points, we have noted man's call to dominion, that is, the call to exercise authority on God's behalf in the world. This is nothing less than a call to exercise lordship.³⁵
- Just like Adam, man is called to lordship. In our modern vernacular we would say leadership.
- Intrinsic to man and God's calling him to work, is his leadership in the world.
- As Phillips says, "It is of the greatest urgency that men understand and embrace a biblical idea of leadership."³⁶

The Leader as Shepherd

- If there is one image in the Bible that sums up God's model for leadership, it is that of the shepherd watching over, protecting, and leading his flock of sheep.³⁷
- This example is perfectly seen and fulfilled in the life of Christ.
 - **John 10:11-15** "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep."
- How can we, as men, fulfill this shepherd idea of leadership in our families, jobs, and other spheres of influence that the Lord places us?

³⁴ Phillips, 43.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 44.

³⁷ Ibid., 45.

- The true shepherd-leader fulfills his role in a way that evokes feelings of security among those who are led. Such a shepherd lives among the sheep, identifying with them in his heart and sharing their hardships, risks, and dangers.³⁸
- The shepherd-leader wearies himself in sacrificial labor for the sake of his sheep. It is when the sheep have grown strong, when the flock has survived the hazards of its journey, returning to the village transformed from lambs into strong rams, that the shepherd has faithfully discharged his duty.³⁹
- The way for Christian men to leave a lasting legacy is for us to embrace the Bible's model of shepherd-leadership. Our goal must be not just to carve out success for ourselves, but to leave a blessed imprint on the lives of those who are under our care.⁴⁰
- As a Christian leader, much of this is shown in the way others are inspired by your life. If you are living for the glory of God, putting others first, and growing in Christlikeness...others around you are going to be on the same trajectory.
- The shepherd-leader will always look to his flock, those people whom God had placed under his care. His desire is to see them grow and bear fruit. He will desire to protect and watch them, keeping their safety and care always on his mind.
- This was the heart of the Apostle Paul, he said in **2 Corinthians 11:28** “Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.”
 - Paul’s mind was on the churches because he knew the hardships that they were going through and would go through.
 - He was not thinking about his retirement or his upcoming vacation, his mind was fixed on those whom God had placed under his care.
- Phillips ends the chapter by looking at Psalm 23 and how we can care for our people well.
- Work: Shepherding as Guiding
 - Effective leadership always requires the leader to devote himself to acquiring the competence necessary to guide his particular flock. The most necessary competence of any leader is a knowledge edge of God's truth in the Bible.⁴¹
- Keep: Shepherding as Protecting

³⁸ Ibid., 46

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 47.

⁴¹ Ibid., 48.

- This reminds us that true leadership is always personal. It is the presence of an individual-his protective shepherd-that gives David confidence despite the looming presence of danger. The shepherd will not permit any threat or adversity to tear him down or cancel the blessings already received.⁴²
- Work and Keep: Shepherding as Caring
 - We may summarize his concluding praise to the Lord as involving God's ministry of caring leadership bringing together both working and keeping. In these concluding verses, we find David emphasizing provision, acceptance, blessing, and belonging.⁴³

Shepherding as Self-Sacrifice

- Just as God calls Christian men to bear His image before the world, He calls us to imitate Him as His servant-lords in the world. We would do well to pay the closest attention to the ultimate Shepherd-Lord, Christ Himself, in His ultimate act of service to His sheep: His death on the cross.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 49.

⁴³ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 51.