

MBC MEN'S STUDY

INTRODUCTORY CALL TO ALL MEN

CLASS 2: THE MASCULINE MANDATE FOR HUSBANDS

- 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.

THE ATTACK AGAINST THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

- The family is the foundational institution of society ordained by God. It is constituted by marriage and is composed of people related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption.²
- It is not exaggeration to say that the biblical model of family, marriage, and parenting is under attack by the world today.
 - Marriage rates are declining, and people are waiting longer to marry.
 - The divorce rate has slightly decreased, but remains around 40% for first marriages.
 - Cohabitation is on the rise, with many couples living together before marriage.

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

² "God's Design for the Family" Auburn, n.d., <https://www.eng.auburn.edu/~sjreeves/cm/family.html>

- Some statistics³:
 - **Marriage:**
 - In 1970, there were about 8.2 marriages per 1,000 people. By 2020, the rate had dropped to about 6.1 marriages per 1,000 people.
 - Since the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S. in 2015, about 10% of all marriages are same-sex unions.
 - **Divorce/Remarriage:**
 - The actual divorce rate in the U.S. is around 40%.
 - The average duration of a marriage before divorce is 8 years in the U.S.
 - Roughly 40% to 50% of remarriages end in divorce.
 - **Cohabitation:**
 - In 2020, over 18 million unmarried couples were living together in the U.S., becoming increasingly common among younger generations..
 - Nearly 70% of couples cohabit before getting married.
 - Cohabitation before marriage has become the norm. However, studies show that couples who cohabit before marriage are slightly more likely to divorce, attributing it to "sliding" into marriage because of convenience, rather than "deciding" to marry after careful consideration.
- From the beginning, God has laid out His plan for marriage and the family, and from the fall in Genesis 3, Satan has come against, and sin has corrupted, God's design.
- As we look over the next couple of months at marriage and family, we must understand God's design and intention for the family, as well as the mandate to men in the home.
- In fact, as we look ahead to the upcoming studies on discipleship and leadership in our Men's Training, these concepts must first be developed and implemented within the home and the discipleship and shepherding of a man's family.
- **For single men:** While you may not yet be in a place where these principles can be directly applied, these are the values and convictions that you must be solidifying NOW, so that if the Lord would bless you with a family, you will be equipped through the word of God to pursue this mandate in the home for the benefit of your potential wife and, ultimately, for the glory of God.

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2010/11/18/the-decline-of-marriage-and-rise-of-new-families/>

CHAPTER 6: GOD'S ASTONISHING DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

- As we continue throughout our study of “*The Masculine Mandate*”, two terms that we will continually come back to are the concepts of ‘working’ and ‘keeping’.
 - These are principles that have implications and applications for men in every area of life (home, work, relationships, roles in the church, etc.)
 - However, as Richard Phillips states, “more primary than any of these is the Masculine Mandate as it applies to the covenant of marriage, which God has made basic to all human society and which most closely resembles our relationship with Him.”⁴
- God wants us as men to learn to give, serve, and love similar to the way He gives, serves, and loves. We were made to bear His image, after all, and the main classroom in which a Christian man learns to be like his heavenly Father is in the school of marriage.⁵
 - So, we need to know about marriage through a **biblical lens**.
 - Because “if men do not get their guidance about marriage from the Bible, where does it come from?”⁶

Designed Incomplete

- From the beginning, God’s design included the marriage relationship. In fact, in Genesis 1-2, man prior to the creation of woman was the first thing God declared as “not good”.
 - What was wrong? It was not a flaw in God’s creation design, not some mistake or failure on His part, but something that remained incomplete. God looked at the very pinnacle of His creation, the man who bore His image, and declared, “It is *not good* that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18, emphasis added).⁷
 - From the beginning, man was designed for this relationship. In fact, the relational aspect of man is a direct implication of being made in the image of God.
 - As there is relationship within the Trinity, man is designed as a relational being, and man is, as Phillips posits, “*designed incomplete*”.
- In light of this fact, God made for Adam a suitable helper.

⁴ Richard D. Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate: God’s Calling to Men*, 76.

⁵ Ibid, 85.

⁶ Ibid, 76.

⁷ Ibid, 77.

- There is also an important point to be seen in God’s use of the word *helper*. A wife is indeed the best possible companion for a man, but God did not call Eve a “companion” to Adam because that would suggest the primary purpose of mankind on this earth is fellowship and relational fulfillment. In the same way, a wife is clearly and uniquely designed to be a mate to man, but God did not call Eve a “mate” to Adam because that would suggest our primary purpose is procreation and sexual pleasure. **God said Adam needed a “helper” because it places the *primary* emphasis on the shared mandate to work and keep God’s creation under the man’s leadership.**⁸
- A wife, then, is called to come under the leadership of her husband, helping him to fulfill his divinely-appointed role and responsibility.

A Helper Suitable, Yet Different

- Along with examining the implication of the wife as a “helper”, Phillips examines what it means that the wife is a helper that is ‘fit’ or ‘suitable’ to her husband.
- This, again, assumes the idea that man *needs* help! We need someone who is not like us to help us in needed areas.
- The idea is that the woman corresponds to the man, not as a mirror image but as a puzzle piece that clicks.⁹
 - This does not mean that the wife takes on the role of her husband, but comes alongside her husband in his role.
 - A wife should, then, complement her husband and the husband, his wife, meaning that they are to come together as one flesh, completing God’s perfect design in marriage.
- Our society does not place high status on being a helper because of an irrational cultural emphasis on independence and autonomy. Yet being a helper is a noble thing in God’s eyes.¹⁰
 - While this class is not focused on the role of the wife, it’s important to note that both men and women have *equal value* as God’s image bearers (Gen 1:26-27) and, for believers, are one in Christ (Gal 3:28).
 - YET, they have been given *different roles* within God’s sovereign plan.

⁸ Phillips, 79.

⁹ Ibid, 82.

¹⁰ Ibid, 83.

- Phillips includes this portion to help us understand the foundations of the mandate he will lay out in chapter 8. Namely, that we need to have a Christ-like love for our wives, which can be difficult because men and women are designed differently.
 - To be sure, the differences between men and women (which are fundamental and unchangeable because of God’s creation) are such that a man will never really figure out his wife.¹¹
 - While this can seem discouraging at face value, we see that this is God’s design.
- Phillips goes on to examine the different words for “love” (*storge, eros, philos, agape*) noting that *agape* love, Christ-like, sacrificial love, is to characterize our marriages.
- This means that it will require effort on our part and will require dying to self for the sake of holding fast to and bonding with you wife
 - Just as God’s gift of His Son was a costly gift, God intends for a man’s love to his wife to be costly. Simply put, it is not easy for man to love his wife, and God does not intend it to be easy. If it were easy, it wouldn’t be valuable. Instead, God desires us as husbands to love our wives who we don’t fully understand, who think and feel differently than we do, and who require a love that involves sacrifice on our part.¹²
 - Men are called to lead their families upon this foundation of godly love.
- Why? Because this is a reflection of our relationship with the Lord, and it is through and understanding and obedience to God’s design for marriage that brings Him glory!
- As the chief end of a man’s life is to glorify God and enjoy knowing Him forever, the chief end of marriage is that a man and a woman should know and glorify God together through their lives, and most particularly through their godly love for one another.¹³

A Man Should Find a Wife

- Now, one thing that Phillips takes time to address, which we also need to consider, is ‘**what about singleness?**’
 - This can be an area of fear, worry, anxiety, or frustration for believers who may desire to be married, but, in God’s providence, have not found a spouse.

¹¹ Phillips, 84.

¹² Ibid, 86,

¹³ Ibid, 88.

- A believer could be tempted to implicate God, thinking that He is withholding something from them in not bringing a godly woman into their life.
- A couple of things to consider:
 - God has gifted some with singleness
 - **1 Cor 7:7** - *Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.*
 - This is not seen as a punishment or a curse, but rather a gift.
 - **1 Cor 7:32-35** - *One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided[...]* *This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.*
 - Paul emphasizes the benefits of singleness in greater service to the Lord.
 - This is not to imply the gift of singleness is life-long (though it's possible), but to highlight the increased capacity to serve the Lord in that season.
 - The greater concern with singleness is the heart of the believer.
 - Phillips states, "In my opinion, and in keeping with the Bible's teaching, one of the biggest problems in the church today is the failure of young adult men to **value** and **pursue** marriage."¹⁴
 - It is not singleness itself that is sinful, but men's thoughts toward marriage and heart motivations for singleness.
 - Is a man not married, though serving the Lord and prayerfully seeking a wife, OR is he not wanting to be married, desiring to have increased time for himself, his career, his hobbies, or perhaps not seeing the need for this companionship and seeking fulfillment in things outside of marriage (pornography, sexual immorality, etc.).
- Our society tells young adult men to deprive themselves of God's provision for their physical, emotional, and sexual needs so they can remain as immature and self-absorbed as possible, for as long as possible. You know what the Bible says about this: it just is not good.¹⁵

¹⁴ Phillips, 81.

¹⁵ Ibid, 82.

CHAPTER 7: MARRIAGE CURSED AND REDEEMED

- Women *are* cursed. But then, so are men. And it is the curse that fell on men and women because of sin that makes marriage not only challenging but painfully impossible to so many people. Sin's curse on marriage is the best explanation for the sky-high divorce rate in America today.¹⁶
- It is in the fall of Genesis 3 that we see Satan's direct attack on the marriage relationship, how the failure of Adam and Eve to remain obedient to the roles God had given them resulted in sin, and how marriage has been affected by sin.
 - Notice, Satan went to Eve, not Adam. Adam was called to lead, to protect, to care for Eve, and yet, he abdicated that leadership and followed Eve.
 - Phillips speaks of this as desiring to enjoy the gifts of God outside of obedience to God.
- This pattern shapes man's fallen attitude even today: sinful mankind desires the gifts and blessings of God but wants nothing to do with the One who provided them.¹⁷ (i.e. sexual fulfillment outside of marriage)
- Immediately, we see in Genesis 3 an effect of sin in the marriage relationship.
 - It is no longer a marriage centered around the Lord (they hid from God – Gen 3:10)
 - It is no longer a marriage built upon godly love, but criticism and accusation (Gen 3:12)
- After this point, we see more pointedly how sin affects the marriage relationship.

Marriage Cursed by Our Failure

- **God's Curse on Women**
 - **Genesis 3:16** - *To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."*
 - Pain:
 - Women now suffer pain in childbirth.
 - This act of new life which highlighted the woman's role in God's overall mandate for Adam and Eve (be fruitful and multiply – Gen 1:28) would now bear a constant reminder of mankind's sin.

¹⁶ Phillips, 91.

¹⁷ Ibid, 93.

- Conflict:
 - Looking to other passages that use the Hebrew word translated *desire* in this passage, Phillips states that, “God’s curse applies this word to women, with the effect that they have an unhealthy infatuation with men and their relationships with them”¹⁸ [ref. Song 7:10], along with the idea of “mastery and control” [ref. Gen 4:7]
 - In summary, Phillips says, “**we see that God has placed a curse on the woman so that she is gripped by an unwholesome desire to possess and control her man.**”¹⁹
- The curse and sin have now taken the marriage relationship, one of joyful union and a husband and a wife complementing one another, and turned it into a power struggle.
 - **Women:** Bucking up against leadership, seeking to usurp her husband’s role
 - **Men:** Domineering, harsh leadership, rather than godly, sacrificial love
- **God’s Curse on Men**
 - **Genesis 3:17-19** - *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread...”*
 - Because Adam did not lead as God called Him to do, because Adam disobeyed God’s command to Him, it has affected the work God has ordained for him.
 - This not only affects the work itself, but has implications for the marriage relationship:
 - God’s curse on the man draws him unwholesomely *away* from the woman, even as God’s curse on the woman draws her unwholesomely *toward* the man²⁰
- Notice how sin has had the effect of cursing the arrangements God had made in creation. This is what sin does—*it doesn’t make things different, it makes them painful.*²¹
- God has cursed the marriage relationship with a poisonous desire for control by the woman and a self-absorbed focus outside the relationship by the man.²²

¹⁸ Phillips, 97.

¹⁹ Ibid (emphasis added)

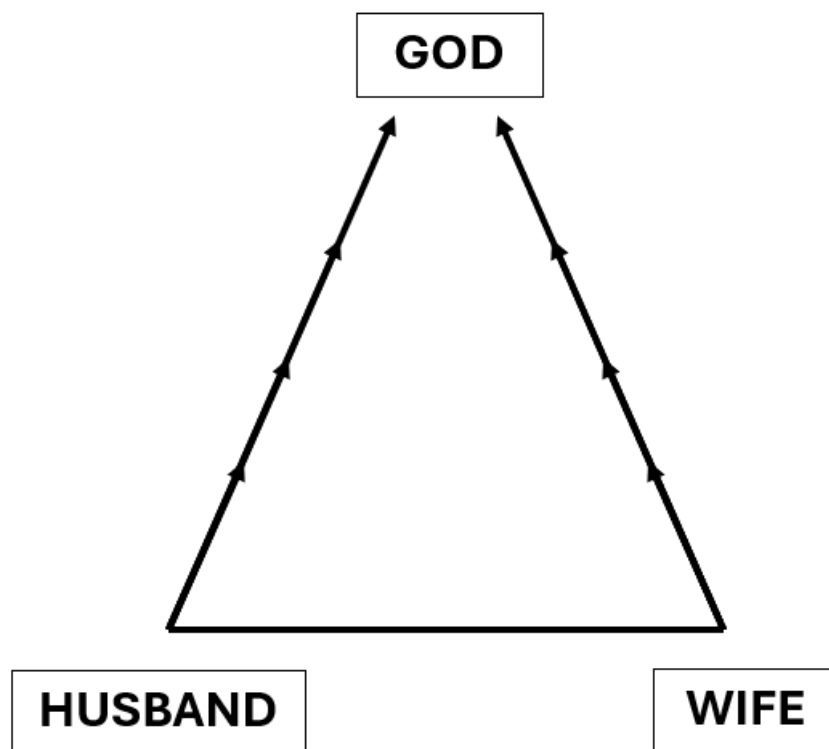
²⁰ Ibid, 99.

²¹ Ibid (emphasis added)

²² Ibid.

Our Hope of Renewal

- Even after all of that, we know that the Lord, in His grace, gives hope, even in the midst of the curse. That there would be a seed of the woman that would reverse this curse.
- And even for us today, as we await the full fulfillment of sin's eradication at Christ's return, we can have true hope in a fruitful marriage in Christ.
 - Because God has forgiven me, I can truly forgive her. Because God has given to me, I can gladly give to her. With God's compassion for me, I have compassion to give; with God's grace I can show grace.²³
- This is why marriage is practically hopeless apart from the grace of Christ, and why divorce is so rampant. The struggles that men and women experience in marriage are intended by God to drive us to our knees and to our Bibles, that we would restore God to the center of our lives.²⁴



²³ Phillips, 104.

²⁴ Ibid, 100.

CHAPTER 8: MARRIAGE AND THE MASCULINE MANDATE

- Because of the grace of our Lord in the gospel, we can now have a God glorifying and mutually edifying relationship with our spouse.
- We can also, now, seek to fulfill the “work” and “keep” mandates given to us by God, through the wisdom of God’s word and the empowering of the Holy Spirit.
 - **Work:** The term work signifies God’s broad mandate for a nurturing and cultivating masculinity, which causes people and things to grow and become strong.
 - **Keep:** The second term, *keep*, refers to man as a watchman and defender, keeping safe those under our care.²⁵
- Phillips, rightfully, examines these mandates, and the overall marriage design, through the lens of Scripture, highlighting to key passages: Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Masculine Headship and Feminine Submission

- The concepts of headship and submission are some of the most hot-buttoned issues in our culture, and it has had massive implications and affects upon the church and marriages
 - Principles such as submission and complementarianism have led many to call God’s word ‘outdated’, ‘archaic’, ‘sexist’, etc., seeing the need to update God’s word to fit our culture.
 - “[T]he verse where it says women have to submit to their husbands definitely worries me. It really sounds like women really lose out in getting married if she’s not even allowed to make decisions for herself. If I’m forced to do whatever my future husband says, then I’d rather be single for the rest of my life, no matter how badly I would want to be with someone.”²⁶
- Rather than understanding the distinction between **value** and **roles**, there is a merging of them, in essence, saying, “My value is assigned to the opportunities I have.” Therefore, a limited role, or a role that may be deemed lesser, culturally, translates to lesser value.
- It’s worth noting that some of this pushback is likely an overcorrection based on men not fulfilling their mandate as God commanded!
- Rather than loving, sacrificial, shepherd leadership, men, in their flesh, are harsh and unloving in their leadership. Again, this is exactly what the curse in Genesis 3:15 said would happen!

²⁵ Phillips, 108.

²⁶ https://www.reddit.com/r/Christianity/comments/ks510e/the_verses_about_women_submission_are_shaking_up/

- Phillips, though, highlights the overall context of the exhortations for marriage in Ephesian 5: “believers are to be ‘imitators of God, as beloved children’ (Eph. 5:1).”²⁷
 - This is the foundation for these commands!
 - It is not submission and leadership defined culturally, but biblically.
- Paul is not saying that wives are like children or slaves, but rather that these are three kinds of relationships in which Christians are called to submit peaceably to divinely ordained authority. In these same passages, Paul addresses those in authority, exhorting them to use their power in ways that build up and protect.²⁸
 - This completely counteracts the cultural issues with submission and leadership.
 - When done in a Christ-like manner, husbands and wives fulfill their roles as imitators of God, and they do this, ultimately, in worship to and reverence for the Christ.
- Before unpacking what husbands are to **do**, Phillips exhorts the **heart** of husbands as we observe these passages, noting that “we can be tempted to adopt a condescending attitude.”²⁹
- With this, Phillips states, “To be clear, male leadership in marriage does not mean the husband does everything or even that he decides everything. Rather, it means he typically initiates and always leads those shared discussions with his wife by which the various aspects of marriage and family life are decided and planned. The wife’s opinion is vitally important, and a godly couple should be a close-knit team. But there should be no area of family life in which the husband does not serve as leader, facilitator, and overseer.”³⁰
- What does that kind of leadership result in?
 - A wife, then, can come under that leadership joyfully, submitting to her husband out of reverence to the Lord, knowing that her husband is leading with Christ-like love for her.
 - A Christian wife should be able to look to her husband with respect, seeing a servant of Christ committed to the Lord’s will being done in the home. A husband who seeks to practice headship in a context of partnership—fully respecting and encouraging his wife’s contributions—is off to a good start on loving his wife.³¹

²⁷ Phillips, 109.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 110.

³⁰ Ibid, 111.

³¹ Ibid, 112.

- The questions, then, that we must be able to answer are:
 - *What* does this kind of leadership look like?
 - *How* can husbands do this?

To Work: A Husband's Ministry of Nurture

- **Ephesians 5:25-27** - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*
- Phillips lays out the “work” aspect of the mandate of husbands to their wives as “his calling to maintain a nurturing ministry of love toward his wife.”³²
 - This is the idea of Christ-like, shepherd leadership, and this is seen in light of the loving relationship between Christ and the church – THAT’S the standard!
 - Because of that, the “work” that we are called to do is to love our wives in such a way that they are sanctified. That they grow in Christlikeness BECAUSE of us, not IN SPITE of us.
 - This tells us that a husband’s first concern for his wife should be her spiritual well-being: her relationship to the Lord and the strength and power of her faith³³
 - In short, a husband is called to build up his wife’s faith and hope in Christ through his ministry of God’s Word in her life.³⁴
- In short, we must love our wives in a way that is **sacrificial** and **sanctifying**.
 - Dying to self, putting her spiritual/physical/emotional needs above our own
 - Leading in the word, through encouragement, loving exhortation, gentle correction, so that she would be holy.
- Remember, your wife is a child of God before she is your wife, and this relationship is a gift from God, a stewardship that you will be accountable for.
 - Don’t be a harsh leader that simply wants things done your way. (*sacrificial*)
 - Don’t be a passive leader that neglects his responsibility to avoid bringing the word to bear in your wife’s life. (*sanctifying*)

³² Phillips, 112.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid

- **1 Peter 3:7** - *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*
- Phillips breaks down this passage to help us understand **how** to fulfill this mandate well, focusing on the areas of communion, attention, and cherishing that God's word exhorts husbands toward.
 - **Live Together**
 - **1 Peter 3:7** - *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives...*
 - "Husbands are to take an interest in the things the wife is interested in (the wife is to do likewise). The couple is to spend time together and to live in one rhythm."³⁵
 - Though this isn't rocket science, husbands need to spend time with their wives!
 - Be together, talk with one another, pray together, be in the word together
 - We can't do this from a distance. We need to commune with our wives!
 - **Pay Attention**
 - **1 Peter 3:7** - *...live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;*
 - The Greek text actually says that husbands must live with their wives "according to knowledge." In other words, a husband must know what is going on with his wife.³⁶
 - If husbands are called to nurture and care for and love their wives, then husbands need to be life-long learners of their wives.
 - It's not enough to just co-exist in the same space, to be a shepherd leader, to know how to minister the word of God to your wife effectively, you need to know her heart.
 - What are the areas she struggles in her faith and needs encouragement?
 - What are the areas of besetting sin in her life that need loving exhortation?
 - Do you take time to ask her, "How has the Lord been growing you?" or "How can I pray for you this week?"
 - The reality is that a husband must know what is going on in the heart and mind of his wife if he is to minister to her faithfully in prayer and with God's Word³⁷

³⁵ Phillips, 114.

³⁶ Ibid, 115.

³⁷ Ibid

- **Show Honor**

- **1 Peter 3:7** - *...and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

- The word for “showing honor” might be better rendered as “cherishing” her (the Greek word here, *time'*, is used for assigning a high price to objects in the market). A husband is to convey to his wife that he values her greatly, that she is precious to him.³⁸
- This is the underlying motivation of a husband's pursuits of communion and understanding: a cherishing of his wife in line with how the Lord views her.
- Remember, if you are believers, your wife is a child of God, and she is to be cherished and honored as such.
- What does this result in?
 - He will get involved and remain involved in her life. He will pay attention to her and share his life with her. Then, out of the far more intimate and comprehensive knowledge he now has of his wife, he will minister God's Word to known areas of burden, fear, or doubt, so as to build up her faith and her identity in Christ.³⁹
 - We shepherd our wives, nourishing them in the word, cherishing them in our hearts, loving them as Christ loves them.
- Phillips wisely highlights an implication for husbands in this work:
 - Many husbands will reply, “I'm not sure I know the Bible well enough to minister to my wife's needs in that way.” That is precisely God's point: in obedience to Him, God wants us to be motivated by our love for our wives and their need of our ministry to become the men of faith and biblical knowledge we are intended to be.⁴⁰
 - This reminds us that we cannot fulfill this command to nourish and cherish our wives in the way that God has called us to, we cannot go about the work of being a sanctifying influence in our wives' lives if WE are not in the word ourselves.

³⁸ Phillips, 116.

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ Ibid, 117.

To Keep: Dying for Her to Live

- Along with a husband's nurturing ministry to his wife is his guardian protection to ensure she is safe. This is the "to keep" mandate by which a husband guards and protects his wife.⁴¹
 - This, again, highlights the comparison in Ephesians 5 of Christ and the church
 - Husbands are to love their wives **AS** Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (Eph 5:25).
- In this charge, there is an element of protection in a husband's mandate to lovingly shepherd his wife. To cherish something means protecting it from dangers.
- As Phillips points out, that danger could be coming from you.
 - But the main threat against which a man must protect his wife is *his own sin*⁴²
 - We can talk a big game, claiming that we would do anything for our spouse, that we would take the proverbial bullet for her, and yet fail to see the ways in which our flesh can harm this cherished gift of God.
 - "I used to think that if a man came into my house to attack my wife, I would certainly stand up to him. But then I came to realize that the man who enters my house and assaults my wife every day is me, through my anger, my harsh words, my complaints, and my indifference. As a Christian, I came to realize that the man I needed to kill in order to protect my wife is myself as a sinner."⁴³
- Going back to 1 Peter 3:7, if this is **not** taking place, if there is a disregard in the working and keeping in the marriage relationship, if we are not cherishing and nourishing our wives as fellow heirs, as daughters of God, it can wreak havoc on our own relationship with the Lord.
 - God is not going to bless a husband, whom He has granted authority to in order that he would sanctify his wife and God's child, if he is not cherishing her or seeking to live with her in an understanding way.
 - This is a serious warning of the Lord's discipline that believing husbands should not ignore.
 - It reminds us that we are not the ultimate authority in our marriage – God is.

⁴¹ Phillips, 118.

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Ibid, 118-119.

- Also, this highlights the fact that both servant leadership from a husband to a wife, and joyful submission from a wife to a husband, is not ultimately for the spouse, but rather, as a means of worship and submission to God's authority.
 - The immediate goal is serving our spouse and loving them well.
 - The ultimate goal is honoring the Lord and worshipping Him through our marriage.
- [T]his verse clearly indicates that our day-to-day relationship with the Lord, and thus our own spiritual well-being, is directly related to our covenant faithfulness in nurturing and protecting our wives—who are, after all, the heavenly Father's little girls.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

- Remember, Satan wants nothing more than for godly marriages to fail.
- This world continually attacks the sanctity of the marriage relationship, seeing it as outdated or hurtful.
- It is critical to remember the mandate that God has placed upon men in the home.
 - We must value marriage as God values it.
 - We must shepherd our wives as Christ shepherds the church.
 - We must lead our families in biblical truth.
- The home is the testing ground for every man.
 - If you desire to disciple, be discipling in the home.
 - If you desire to lead, be leading in the home.
 - If you desire to teach, be teaching in the home.
- Next time, we'll look at the masculine mandate as it pertains to the role of a father.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *The Exemplary Husband* by Stuart Scott
- *The Shepherd Leader at Home* by John MacArthur
- *Divine Design* by John MacArthur
- *Tying the Knot* by Rob Green

⁴⁴ Phillips, 120.