MBC MEN'S TRAINING

THE SHEPHERD LEADER AT HOME

CLASS 3: THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS WIFE

- September 13: Introduction to Shepherd Leadership
- October 11: The Shepherd Knows His Family (Ch 1)
- ***November 8: The Shepherd Knows His Wife (Ch 2)***
- December 6: The Shepherd Knows His Children (Ch 3)

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- Why do we want to talk about the man and his home?
- While it is important for us as men to study areas of theology and doctrine, this is where all that knowledge and information have the chance to be lived out.
- While not everyone is called to the elder role in a church, all men are called to live for the glory of God, all husbands and fathers are called to lead, guide, feed and protect their families, and those men who are not yet in that season, but aspire to it, must understand the call for men in the home.
- If you are desiring the office of elder, Paul says in 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?*"
- While this applies to those who are elders, there are many other exhortations throughout the Bible which speak of having an organized, peaceful, spiritual and well-ordered home.
- The hope is that you are going to grow in several key areas of being a man of God. As you grow in these areas, you are also going to grow in being a husband, a father and a leader of the family. The overall purpose is for your life to bring honor and glory to Christ and to be an example to others.
- This class is going to examine the dynamics of leadership in the home – specifically what it means to be a shepherd.
- God has given a high calling to men – one that we must be faithful to pursue, and it is a stewardship which we will have to give an accounting of one day when we stand before the Lord.

THE SHEPHERD WHO KNOWS HIS WIFE LOVES HIS WIFE

- To know our wife deeply requires love; selfless, humble, love that desires to give ourselves up for her.
- To love your wife is to know your wife
- The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to command husbands to love their wives in the deepest way, as our Lord loves His church. Eph. 5:25, *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,*
    - "*husbands love your wives*": This is a boundless kind of love, a love that is not earned and not dependent on merit or whether our wives deserve it. The husband who gives control of his life to the Spirit (Eph. 5:18) is able to love his wife in the same way Jesus loves His church. Like Jesus' love for the church, a husband's love for his wife is sacrificial, purifying, caring, and permanent (Eph. 5:25-33).
        - **Sacrificial love**
            - *"and gave Himself up for her"* (Eph. 5:25b): Jesus' love for His church was sacrificial and gracious. He gave up His life for the church, He suffered for her, He gave up His privileges as God and came to serve for her (Phil. 2:6-8). Not because of anything we have done; He didn't love us as the world loves; because of some "positive" characteristic, or because we were worthy. He loved because it is His nature and He chose to love us.
                - Because we are given a new nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have the capacity to love like Jesus (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22-23).
                - Therefore, He commands us to "love our wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her". We have the capacity to choose to love our wives in this way and it is a love characterized by gracious, sacrificial, action.
                - A self-sacrificing love
                    - I came across a short writing that John MacArthur shared from an unknown source that beautifully captures the essence of the self-sacrificing love we are to choose to pour out on our Lord first, then our wives, and each other:

When you are forgotten or neglected or purposely set at naught, and you sting and hurt with the insult or the oversight, but your heart is happy, being counted worthy to suffer for Christ—that is dying to self.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed, your advice disregarded, your opinions ridiculed and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart, or even defend yourself, but take it all in patient loving silence—that is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity, or any annoyance, when you can stand face to face with waste, folly, extravagance, spiritual insensibility, and endure it as Jesus endured it—that's dying to self.

When you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate, any society, any attitude, any interruption by the will of God—that is dying to self.

When you never care to refer to yourself in conversation, or to record your own good works, or itch after commendation, when you truly love to be unknown—that is dying to self.

When you see your brother prosper and have his needs met and can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy nor question God, while your own needs are far greater and in desperate circumstances—that is dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself, can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly, finding no rebellion or resentment rising up within your heart—that is dying to self.

- **Purifying Love**
  - "*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.* (Eph. 5;26-27)
    - Husbands are to love our wives as Christ loves His church by loving them with a purifying love. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection not only paid the penalty for our sins, but it permanently cleansed us from all sin.
  - The soteriological truth is this analogy is that saving grace makes believers holy through the cleansing agency of the Word of God, so that they may be presented to Christ as his pure Bride, forever to dwell in His love. It is with that same purpose and in the same love that husbands are to cultivate the purity, righteousness, and sanctity of their wives[1].

[1]The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Ephesians, Moody Publishers, n.d.

- A husband's love for his wife wants only the best for her, he protects her from anything corrupting, evil, or harmful. As our Lord does for us through the Holy Spirits leading, through the reading and study of the Word.
- He will continually help to protect her holiness and purity.
- He will help protect her from conforming to the world.
- He will study the Word and meditate on it, desiring to mortify the sin in his life and to put on the new man
- He will be a Col. 3:16-17 husband to her ("*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with gratefulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*)

- **Caring Love**
  - *"So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body."* (Eph. 5:28-30)
    - A husband who loves his wife will not do anything that would harm her just as he won't do anything to harm himself.
    - His desire is to nourish and cherish her just as Christ does His church
    - He desires to provide all that she needs, if she needs encouragement he gives encouragement, if she needs rest, he gives her rest, if she needs held he holds her…
    - He gives her tender love, physical affection, comfort, protection, security…
    - His greatest desire for her is her growth in Christ

- **Permanent Love**
  - *"FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."* (Eph. 5:31)
    - For a husband to love his wife as Christ loves His church, he must love her with a permanent love.
    - God's design for marriage is that it is permanent.
    - The love that binds a husband to his wife is permanent and exclusive to her. The word translated "joined or cleave" means to be glued together.
    - Their relationship is the start of a new family and the old family ties are severed in that of responsibilities and authority. Parents are to be loved and cared for, but their authority over their children and the responsibilities that are part of that authority are severed at the time of marriage.
    - Our wives must know that we love them regardless of their faults and sins, that our love for them is permanent
    - They should always feel secure in our love for them.
    - A husband should be considerate, chivalrous, and honoring to his wife (1 Pet. 3:7)

- The love husbands are commanded to pour out on our wives should be the foundation and motivation as we shepherd them through knowing them.
- What are some of the things that if allowed, can hinder a deep, intimate, love for our wives that is sacrificial, purifying, caring, and permanent?

A SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS WIFE

Knowing Your Wife and the Principle of Presence

- To truly shepherd our wives in love through knowing them is to know them in a similar way as is found in John 17:3, "*And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*
    - The word "know" isn't just an intellectual knowledge of God and Jesus, but a deep, intimate love that comes through experience, through walking with them.
    - In a similar way, to know our wives isn't satisfied with only knowing about her, or relying on what we already know, but to know her deeply, intimately, through living with her, experiencing her and paying close attention to her.
    - With that in mind, we must desire to know her through loving her as commanded in Ephesians 5:25-31.
    - We can't possibly love her in this way apart from careful, purposeful, loving, presence.
        - We must be purposeful – we must set aside time for talking with our wives
        - She needs and deserves our full attention, without distractions
        - She needs our heart
        - She needs us, as shepherd leaders, to take the lead in making this a priority and in making plans.
        - What kinds of things can hinder our presence with our wives?
        - What thoughts do you have as to how to improve our presence with our wives?
        - How do our priorities impact our presence?
        - In light of Eph. 5:25-31, how should we approach the principle of presence?

Knowing Your Wife and the Principle of Partnership

- God made our wives to be help mates because we need them to be (Gen. 2:18), *"Then Yahweh God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."*
- "God's design for marriage is that you leverage your mutual and complementary gifts and strengths in His service"
    - Do you know the gifts and strengths your wife has?
        - If not, how do we identify them?
    - Do you know your weaknesses and hers?
        - If not, how do we identify them?
- Consider Phil. 2:3-4, *"doing nothing from selfish ambition or vain glory, but with humility of mind regarding one another as more important than yourselves, not merely looking out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."* At first blush, this scripture might not seem in context to the principle of partnership with our wives. But how often do you approach problems, trials, projects, purchases… without considering the help from your wife? How often do we resist her help when offered? How often do we ask for and consider our wife's perspective on things?
- Another way to partner with your wife is through shared "free time", hobbies, and other activities.
- The marriage relationship should be sanctifying, as we put into practice Col. 3:16 partnering together.
- As shepherd leaders, we need to look for ways to partner with our wives.
- What are some roadblocks that keep us from partnering with our wives?
- What thoughts do you have on how to better partner?
- How does loving our wives as we are commanded impact our partnering with her?

Knowing Your Wife and the Practice of Quality Communication

- The author The Shepherd Leader At Home stated that "communicating *well* is not always easy, but it's crucial."
- He also shared a quote from Wayne Mack, a long time Biblical Counselor who has found that, "Wherever you find marital failure, you will find a breakdown in real communication". As shepherd leaders at home, called to love our wives as Christ loved the church, communication with our wives must be, as state earlier, "crucial".
- Quality communication has a direct impact on how we love our wives.
- Factors involved in quality communication
    - Understand the relationship between truth and trust
        - "Trust is the foundation of intimacy and the communion we have with one another"
        - There is no room for deceit or lying, "if what you know about each other is not true knowledge, then what is designed to be the most intimate relationship has been compromised."
        - Truthfulness should always be spoken in love "*speaking the truth in love*" (Eph. 4:15)
        - What does speaking the truth in love look like day to day?
        - Think about truth and trust through the lens of Eph. 5:25-31, how might a failure here impact the command to love our wives as Christ love the church? How will "speaking the truth in love" build up our wives and be an expression of the love we are commanded to give them?
    - Keep in mind that people come to marriage with different communication styles
        - It is important for the Shepherd leader at home to know his wife's communication style as well as his.
        - What are some of the styles and how might they impact communication?
        - Putting communication styles under the lens of loving our wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25-31), how might they impact the love we are commanded to give to our wives?

- Commit yourself to building up your wife with your words.
  - *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for building up what is needed, so that it will give grace to those who hear.* (Eph. 4:29)
    - According to the Spirit through Paul what should we avoid?
      - What examples did the author give for "corrupting/unwholesome" words?
      - When do these kinds of words come out? What might they be a symptom of?
    - In what ways can we build up our wives?
    - If or when we fail to meet this command, what should our response be?
- Remember that quality communication means being a good listener
  - What are the characteristics of a good listener
    - Focus – listen with all your mind AND your eyes
    - Think – think about what she is saying
    - Love – desire to listen to what your wife is saying, she is your wife, and she is sharing herself with you.
  - Symptoms of a poor listener
    - Responding before she is finished with what she is saying
      - *He who responds with a word before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.* (Prov. 18:13)
    - Failing to give your attention
    - Putting listening under the filter of loving our wives as Christ love the church (Eph. 5:25-31) how might listening impact love for our wives?
    - What are the ways we can improve our listening skills?
  - Speak to the heart
    - Husbands should know their wives' deepest thoughts and feelings
    - What roadblocks get in the way of our knowing our wives' hearts?
    - Does your wife know your heart?
    - What probing questions can we ask ourselves to assess the dept of our knowledge of our wives?
    - How can "speaking to the heart" help us love our wives as Christ loved the church?

Praying Together: A Holy Convergence of "Knowing" Factors

- Perhaps the most significant way of growing in mutual knowledge as husband and wife is to develop a regular time of prayer together.
    - Praying together combines all three of the knowing factors
        - Requires that you be present with one another
        - Praying together brings your two hearts together in partnership to accomplish God's will in every aspect of your lives
        - It requires communication at a deep level as you share concerns for one another, your family, and other matters.
        - Most significantly, prayer connects you with the presence and power of the One whose loving purpose you are seeking to fulfill as a couple.
    - As a shepherd, called to love your wife as Christ loved the church, how will prayer impact your Christlike love for your wife?

What about Reading and/or Studying the Word Together?

- What are your thoughts? How might it help us know our wives?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS…AND HOMEWORK

- Prayerfully answer the following questions:
    - How well do you know your wife?
    - Are you growing in Christlike love for your wife?
    - What changes do you need to make, through the Holy Spirits sanctification in your life?
- In summary, selfless Christlike love will motivate us to know our wives and to be the shepherd leader at home our Lord has commanded us to be. It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit working through the Word and persistent prayer that we will grow in Christlike love and deep, intimate knowledge of our wives. My prayer for each of us, is that the Lord will work in each of our hearts, moving us to be the men he has called us to be.