

Session 2—God’s Design for Humanity: Manhood

Well, good morning. It's a delight to see you back this morning. We're going to pick up in Genesis 2. So we're moving ahead. We were in Genesis 1 last night in our first session and considered the *imago Dei* in the Latin, the image of God. And this morning we're going to think first about biblical manhood. Our second session coming up will be biblical womanhood, and we'll conclude the morning with a look at paganism before lunch. When we come back in the afternoon, we'll look at four different types of men, deficient manhood. I'm particularly going to focus on manhood in the afternoon. That session that you see there, the final one that I'm speaking in, it was going to be on marriage and family and singleness, but I'm going to make it instead about strong manhood. So in one session, I'm going to be talking about four visions of weak manhood from Scripture, and then I'm going to focus in on King David and look at the warrior-king and the courage that he showed. And then we'll have a Q&A and be done for the day.

So we have much to cover and we need to pick up in Genesis 2:15.

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

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22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Gen. 2:15–25 ESV)

Let's pray as we begin. Father, thank You so much for the privilege of opening Your holy Word this morning. I ask that You would bless us as we turn to it, as we study it. I pray that there would be conviction from it. We all simply are coming to You as needy sinners. None of us has this all figured out. None of us as a man is living out biblical manhood perfectly or even close. None of us as a woman is living out biblical womanhood perfectly or even close. We need Your grace to do this. So we pray that You would help us to evaluate our lives in light of Your Word, and we ask Your blessing upon our time. We pray that You would strengthen and bless and grow us through it. You are such a kind and good God. You were the God of the fourteen thousand trees before us that we may eat from and rejoice in, and we thank You for that and pray that that would characterize our faith today. In Jesus's name, amen.

What we're going to do in this session is we're going to walk through nine truths about biblical manhood from this passage, and then we might cover a few others. We'll probably dip into Genesis chapter 3 as well. So nine truths that we learn from the early chapters of Genesis about manhood. The first of these truths is this: the man with the woman is made to rule the earth. The man with the woman is made to rule the earth. In Genesis 1:26 and 28 we saw that. We saw that the man and the woman are called to rule the creatures that crawl on the earth. And here in Genesis 2, the verses I just read, we get more of a picture of what initial creation looked like just after the man was made by God. In verse 7, “The Lord God formed the man [Adam] of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”

And so we learn that the man and the woman weren't initially together. We learn that the man was created first, and Paul will tell us in 1 Timothy 2:9–15 that creation order isn't just incidental. Like when your kids were born, if you have kids, there wasn't something moral, you know, about the firstborn coming before the fourth born, or

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whatever it may be. They just happened to come in the order they came. That is actually not true with regard to the man. The man is not better than the woman. The man is not smarter than the woman. The man does not have more gifts than the woman from the outset, but the man is made before the woman and so has leadership, responsibility, headship, even what we call authority in the home, in the marriage.

Now, that has to be stewarded and understood carefully because, sadly, there are many out there who would pervert and misapply the concept of the authority of the man in the home. And it can be not altogether difficult for sinful men to misuse authority and to become a kind of paper tyrant in a home, thinking that he is living according to God's design when in reality he sometimes is living in harshness and anger. That is a journey that we will talk about as we go this morning. That, though, from the outset is not what we're talking about. We're not talking about the man being the only one who speaks, the man being the only one who would teach the kids anything from the Bible, the man, when there's a decision to be made, just making it, like making it—there's a decision, and six seconds later the man has made the perfect decision every time. He's got an unbeaten streak of 11,187 decisions in his marriage. He's not trying to have that. That's not his goal, to have a ticker behind him in his home like the days without an accident in your workplace, right? It's not like “days without wife being consulted in a decision” or “days the guy has made the decision without anyone else even saying a solitary syllable about it.” The man has the authority, so we're not here to soften that. I'm not a soft complementarian or an egalitarian or something like that. The man has authority in his home. The buck stops with him. But a godly man, as we're going to talk more about, is the kind of man, as the Spirit works in him and matures him and grows him, and we're all just a work in progress here—every man is a work in progress here. And we tend to be either too soft or too strong, many of us in one direction. There's not only one direction to err in. But fundamentally, as God grows us, in particular we want our wife's input, and we want to lead, but we want sound counsel from a godly wife. We didn't marry her because she was ungodly, at least in a lot of cases. Now if we were converted, you know, after we got married, we know that this woman is given to us for our good, and so we want the wisdom of a wife in a marriage. We want her to speak into things. We want to talk through a lot of stuff. And then yes, God is going to hold us to account.

So, it's not that the man as the head, to use the Ephesians 5 term, *kephale* in the Greek, it's not that the man gets all the good stuff because he's the head and the woman has to do all the underling stuff and just sort of mutely follow him. It's that actually the man is the one in the hard position. The man is the one who is held to account for the good of

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the home. The man is the one who is called to try and create an environment where his wife flourishes, where she's doing well, and where his children flourish, and where they're doing well. And there's a lot to say, of course, about how that kind of culture is created. It doesn't happen in two and a half hours. It doesn't happen by reading a single book, and you got it. It doesn't happen by going to Bible college and it's just all downloaded and now you got the perfect home. These things take the gospel. These things take the Spirit. These things take a lot of sanctifying work. There's ups and downs and fits and starts through this process.

With all that said, we still stubbornly, from the Word of God, affirm that the man is the one who is made first and he has headship. And so what this means is this. As go men, so go the home. As go men, so go the church. As go men, so go a society. It's not because men are better, but it is because men have leadership responsibility as made by God. It's not that men get to do all the cool stuff and mom and wife is stuck doing the grunt stuff. It's actually the opposite. It's that men put themselves in the hard spot. Men are going to be called in Ephesians 5:22–33 to honor and own the role of Christ. That's what the husband is ultimately supposed to look like. He's supposed to look like Christ. And men want, we naturally want in our flesh—this is a weird thing to say about a spiritual reality—we want to be the Christ on the throne post-ascension. But the Christ that we are supposed to emulate in a small way by the power of the Spirit is the dying Christ, the atoning Christ. Not that we atone for our wife's sin, but we lay our lives down for our bride and by extension for the good of our family. That is the form of Jesus we emulate. Not the Jesus who returns with His eyes a flame of fire and wreaks havoc on the earth, but the Jesus who humbly, graciously, willingly, lovingly lays down His life for His bride. Those are the kind of men we are called to be.

Second truth, the man is called to protect. We see that in Genesis 2:15: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” I'll talk about work in just a minute. Focus on the second part of that—keep it. When a lot of us read in our Bibles and our devotions that word pair, *work* and *keep*, it probably kind of can bounce off us at 6:30 in the morning or whatever time it is. But that shouldn't bounce off us. This verse is one of the most important verses in the Bible. And it's a verse that helps us understand the nature and calling of men. Men are made to work and men are made to keep.

And the word *keep* can also be translated “guard.” It can be translated “protect.” And so men are made as protectors. That's why men have a protective instinct in them. It's not

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a toxic instinct as we hear today. It's not in any way toxic for a man to try to protect a woman or men to protect innocence or when there's a crowd for a man to step up and put his life on the line. It's not at all a bad thing for men to want to be policemen or firemen or warriors or soldiers or in the military. Some of these institutions, sadly, tragically, have been corrupted in our time by wokeness and other ideologies, and a lot of people now are saying we give up on the military or a lot of sadly good policemen are leaving the police force because they've been targeted, and those are complex matters to talk about. How much you get involved in corrupted American institutions today, to whatever degree they are, versus withdrawing from them—hard call, hard situation. But let me just affirm this for you: the Bible doesn't say you need to serve in the military or the police or the firefighters—my brother-in-law is a fireman in South Carolina—but it does mean that you and I in some form are protectors as men, and we want to affirm that in our boys.

Not all of our boys are going to win a weightlifting competition, don't misunderstand me. I've never won one myself, just to clear that up, but what we do—I know you thought maybe I had—but what we do want is we want to train our sons in these realities. We're not just talking together. Let's have a talk together at 9:20 on a Saturday morning. No, these are the things we have to train our boys in. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, these are the things you have to pull a boy aside and teach him. And you don't have to harangue him. You don't have to yell at him. You don't have to go, “Protect your sisters! Just do it!” You need to actually do the harder thing as a father, don't you? We have a voice for when things are off the rails, as a father, but most of the time the voice we need as a father is a teaching voice, yes? It's a calm, steady, patient, persevering voice. “Hey son, listen. Daddy's going on a trip. I'm going on a trip out to the northwest to where your grandfather is from.” My father-in-law's from Spokane; Bruce Ware's from Spokane, so I'm out in family territory here. “And what I need you to do”—I said this yesterday, two days ago, because I got up really early yesterday, so I had to say it the night before—“what I need you to do is I need you to make sure the doors are locked at night, and I need you to make sure that if you're out in the driveway with your sisters and you're doing scooters and all this sort of thing in the neighborhood that you're keeping an eye out for your sisters, and I need you to be strong for your mom. If there's packages she needs brought in or something like that, I need you to step up and do those kinds of things. All right, son, can you do that for me? I know you can. You're a good young man, Gavin. You can get this done.” “Yes, sir,” he says. He looks me in the eye. He's like ready to go, right? He's all of, you know, thirteen years old, but he's taking

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this on. He's actually just started mowing lawns in the neighborhood. I'll save that for the next point. But anyway, it's a beautiful thing to see a young man respond to these kinds of realities.

And a bunch of you in this room are way ahead of me, and you've done these kinds of things. And we all have our own style. There's not one perfect way to do what we're talking about, but the key is that, as fathers, we bring our boys before us, and we lovingly engage them. And there's a thing that we have to correct today because I grew up in the eighties and nineties, and I have a lot of basketball analogies because I love basketball. And in terms of coaching, who here remembers Bobby Knight, the coach Bobby Knight? Yes? Bobby Knight was an example—I think he won three NCAA championships, coached Olympic gold, you know, coached MJ, Jordan, back in the eighties, just a kind of iconic coach, right? But the style of Bobby Knight fit kind of the general spirit of the age with men because he was basically kind of an iron ruler of his team. You did not say anything to him. There weren't conversations even that you had with him as a player. He screamed at you. He told you what to do. You made a turnover, he dressed you down in front of twenty-five thousand people in Assembly Hall in Bloomington, Indiana, on national TV. I mean, he just went after you. He was the unquestioned iron authority of his team, and he had a lot of results. He won a ton of games. What an incredible coach. What an incredible basketball mind. He also broke a lot of his players. He broke them. He pushed them very hard.

Some guys need to be pushed. Not every guy does. And I think there was a sense, even in pastoral ministry in the last twenty to thirty years, that that's what pastoral ministry to men looks like. You break men. And there's a place for challenging a man and going after him. There's a place for challenging a boy, a young man, and, you know, firing him up. We need that. Trust me, we need that today. We need some of that fatherly voice. But I'll just repeat myself, and then I'll move on. We so need men who actually, I would argue, aren't like Bobby Knight, men who have authority, men who are unquestionably the coach of their team, but they work with players. They try to help players. They do this really weird thing called encouragement. You can actually encourage a young man. You know you could do that. You have permission to do that. And they try to strengthen the team. And of course, there's going to be games where they're upset and they try to rally the team and all that sort of thing. Yes, I love all of that in sports. But in general, the normative voice isn't, you know, break this kid down. The normative voice of a father, a godly father, is patient, steady, loving, kind.

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The man is given the charge in Eden to keep the garden, which signals to us, by the way, that Eden is not perfect. People talk about Eden as if it is perfect in our theology. It is not perfect. It's unspoiled. It's unfallen. There's no sin. Adam and Eve have no sin nature in them in Genesis 2. But there are threats that can enter Eden and ruin it, and they're going to do so in just one chapter. So men are called to protection. The first form of protection men are called to is physical protection. Men on average—you'll never hear this in our gender-neutral age—have 60 percent more upper body strength than women. Men and women aren't even remotely the same in general terms. Men on average are way stronger than women. And we could just state that straightforwardly. Men are made by God for the role God has called them to. That's what we're saying here. And that's a good thing. That's not a bad thing. That strength is not made to be used against your wife. That strength is not to be used in an abusive way against your children. That strength is to be used *for* your wife and *for* the good of your family.

And if there are men, if there is a man who's experienced the bad form of what I'm talking about, if there are people in here who grew up in a home that was too strong and wasn't loving enough, or if there's somebody who has sin in their past along these lines of being too strong, let me just say a quick gospel word. There is forgiveness for that. You understand that there's no category of sin where the gospel does not secure forgiveness. In all categories of sin, all types of sinners, there's total forgiveness of sin. Doesn't excuse sin. Men should be held to account if they fail in these ways, just as women should be held to account if they fail in their own ways. But fundamentally, there is grace that will grow a man and take him from a harsh man and make him over time a steady, godly, kind man. And that is real, needed growth for many men.

Third, the man is called to work. It's our third truth about biblical manhood from these opening chapters of Genesis. “Put him in the garden of Eden to work it” (Gen. 2:15). To work the garden, pre-fall, so work is not an effect of the fall. We don't work now in our lives because sin happened. We need to work. We were made to work. And the man is the one—the man and the woman alike are made to work. We're made for a purposeful existence, as we said at the end last night. We're called to take dominion together of the earth, so we're not called to sit around, right? But men are fundamentally called to lead in working. And we call this, of course, in the church, provision, providing. Men are therefore made, we can say, to be a provider of their family. A man is only going to flourish then, at least as he is able-bodied in physical terms—of course, there's different types of work. There's mental work, so you don't even have to have a body that can get outside and work and that sort of thing. We're all made as men to work. We're made to

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be a provider. Men will only thrive then when they are trained to be a provider and a worker, and then when they are given opportunity to enter that.

And that is part of why we are in such dire straits today, because lots of men—one reason—lots of men are not working. Now, you might think I'm about to attack men for that. Stupid idiots, why aren't you working? That sort of thing. Well, there are definitely lazy men out there who aren't working, and that is not good. There are definitely many young men who are on video games and have not been trained to get out there and work and are frittering their life away on devices and screens, and that is a bad situation. But there also is a climate that does not value men working and does not help men find good work and when men do hard work, doesn't think much good about it. Do you understand how dependent we are on men doing hard, dirty jobs in all corners of our society? People today seem to think that you can just magically be on devices and lead a very nice life and get your DoorDash and have all your food and take all your fun vacations and the world will just magically stay stable and good and roads will work and telephone lines will be up and if a fire happens, there will be somebody who comes for that, and there will be a police force protecting you, and overseas, there are men who are, ostensibly at least, helping to keep us safe, and these sorts of realities, people—what I'm trying to say is this. People take men for granted. We take honest, hard-working men so much for granted today, and we even dare as a society to teach our kids that such men who have assertiveness and aggressiveness embedded in them, those kind of men we hear, to repeat this term, are toxic men. Those are toxic men. Those instincts are not at all toxic. The instinct to provide, the instinct to do hard work, the instinct to do dirty jobs, to use Mike Rowe's term, those are good and God-glorifying instincts.

We need our boys to know what it is to work and work hard, not, again, in shouting, “You stupid young man, get out there and work!” What we need to do, again, is, with an arm around the shoulder, with a young man, with a grandson, with a nephew, with a boy at church, we need to say, “Hey, have you ever tried this?” I don't know what the forms of lower-level work are for teenage boys in this area, but I can tell you in Maine it started with lawn mowing. I mowed lawns when I was twelve and thirteen, and then in Maine—I think we can connect northeast and northwest here. We're a little bit apart from each other. We respect each other. We have a little bit of a rivalry as to which region is best. Is New England best? Is the Pacific Northwest best? Frankly, we're both in beautiful country. We know this. But we're a little standoffish with each other. I'm not going to try to reconcile all that. You have beautiful country. You have natural resources.

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So do we in New England. This is all a joke. My wife and I are from opposite coasts, and we have a rivalry in our marriage. It's never been completely reconciled, but that's OK. That's OK. That's what the gospel's for.

Being from Maine, you rake blueberries. You rake blueberries. It's very hard work. People laugh when I say this because it sounds very simple. Just pluck the blueberries and put them in a cup. Any of you out here who harvest fruit though, right, know. I guess now it's more mechanized, but especially growing up, you would get a rake with a handle and a bunch of tines like this, and you would get low to the ground like this. These are blueberry bushes, lowbush blueberry bushes, and you would sweep your rake like this, and you would sweep over and over and over and over again in the sun, typically in July and August. And if you think I'm making it sound harder than it was, no. It was very hard work. And some of you know that in all seriousness from farms and agricultural work and fruit harvesting work and those kinds of realities. It's not easy work.

And that is so good for boys. So helpful for young men to go do something hard they don't want to do. But it shapes them and it builds character in them and boys need that way more than they need six more hours on screens. Men are made to work. If you have a young man in the home, it takes time, you know. You've got to be able to trust him in those sorts of things. But try to find an outlet for him to start working so that he can have that which is wired into him as part of his nature develop and grow. It takes time, but you want him to be working more and more and more, and eventually you want him to be earning some money ideally, right, so that he can have the satisfaction of being a provider in a small form. And you're training him to take on more responsibility, and eventually he's ready to launch, and so you're not looking at an eighteen-, nineteen-, or twenty-year-old really frustrated because he's not working because he doesn't like work and because he never developed a taste for work and because he has no work ethic. Sadly, if a lot of parents are in that situation you have to start asking was he trained or did anyone train him to do this? Because he's got to be trained to work.

But the good news is if boys are trained to work, a lot of them at least, will get a growing capacity for that and will have a real satisfaction and happiness, even joy, in hard work well done. Whether that is in a field, whether that is in a service industry, whether that is in a trade, or whether that is in front of a computer doing digital design, or whether that is being a chef, or whether that is being a musician, there's all kinds of ways to work. That's one of the most amazing realities of this created world is that work isn't

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only raking the blueberries or mowing the lawns, right? Because we are such multidimensional human beings, there's so much that we can do to the glory of God that helps others and that improves our surroundings. And so a father and a mother working together want to—we want to push our boys into different experiences that will shape them and develop them. We also, though, want to be learning who they are and trying to figure out how they can grow and what will bless them and help them.

OK, number four. I'm going to have to hasten on. Adam is subject to God's command. The fourth reality of manhood, Adam is subject to God's command. Genesis 2:16—this is what we were talking about last night. “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden,” the Lord says, “but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” So we've talked about this principle already, but here's the point for us. Men do not flourish when they think that they are free. So the kind of bumper sticker manhood where you have no rules and you just do whatever you want, that's actually not what men are made for. Men are made to live under the rule of God. Men are not made to be free agents doing whatever we want, living it up with no accountability to anyone. Men are made to be soldiers under orders. That's what we're made for, and specifically the orders of God. And so we will flourish and we'll find joy and peace in life not when we live it up according to our own desires, but when we follow God's plan.

That is what God was signaling to Adam—“Adam, I am generous. Adam, I have this whole forest for you to walk, this garden paradise that you're in. I have tons of fruit for you to eat. It's delicious. I want you to eat it because I'm a good and generous God in My core, but there's one tree you must not eat from, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That is Mine. Don't touch it.” And so boys need moral training. They need spiritual training to know right from wrong, and they need to be pointed of course ultimately to the reality that they need a Savior. No man is his own lord. No man is his own master. We all need a Lord and a Master and a King over us as men. This is what we're learning in this text.

Fifth, the man is called to lead in the home. The man is called to lead in the home. Just moving quickly through these last realities, we saw in verse 24 that it is the man who leaves father and mother and holds fast to his wife, and then they become one flesh. It's not the woman who holds fast to the man, which goes against the emotional trajectory of a good number of homes even in the church where the man's kind of checked out and thinks he's not really emotional and the woman is the one trying to hold the family

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together furiously, and that's not the design of God for our homes. The design of God for our homes is that the father, the man, the husband, the head is the one who is, not ruling like a king, as if every edict he wants, you know, immediately gets performed, but he is the one who is planning the family's life with the woman's input and wisdom very much in the mix.

He's the one who is held responsible by God for shepherding his wife and shepherding his children. He protects them physically, yes, but he also offers spiritual protection. He's the one who knows what his kids, at least in conversation with his wife, that is, what they're watching, what they're reading, what's on their devices. He's the one who is making sure that friends and friend situations aren't getting compromised. He doesn't know everything. He's not omniscient; don't misunderstand me. But he is the head of his home. He is the one who is holding fast to his wife. He is the one, 1 Peter 3 is going to say in the New Testament, who lives with her in an understanding way. So he's marked by tenderness, listening, kindness, gentleness. That's not being unmanly. Jesus is the true Man, and Jesus is the kindest Man who ever lived. That doesn't mean Jesus was only kindness. We know that Jesus made a whip of cords and scourged the temple and drove out the money changers. So, a godly man is a blend of toughness, yes, real toughness, but also tenderness. He's a blend of the two. A godly man is gentle, but a godly man is also strong.

And these aren't realities that are easy to arrive at in our flesh. This is what you need Jesus for. You need Jesus to save you, and you need Jesus to give you His Spirit, and you need Jesus and the Spirit to change you over time and remake you and grow you and kill your sin. You're not who you should be. None of us are, man or woman alike. None of us has this figured out. We have to grow in all these realities. The good news is that that is what God is here to do. So, God will do this work. God will help us men who don't lead in the right way.

Some men are passive and checked out. They don't provide any real leadership in the home. They don't disciple the kids. They don't ever gather the family to pray, sing songs to God, read Scripture. They don't teach anything. They've never even thought of trying to read a book with their kids or something like this about Christianity. In a lot of cases, I think men haven't been disciplined themselves, and they don't know how to disciple others. And so, I don't come at them and, you know, punch them in the jaw. I come at them in compassion. Nobody trained them. How would they know how to train others? But then, as I'm at pains to say, some men are way too much on the other side, and

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they're cranked up, and they're overseeing every single click of the mouse or something like this that their wife makes, and they're too strong. We need to be balanced men. We need to be men of grace and truth. We need to be tough and tender men who lead in our homes. And we need to be the ones who hold fast to our wife, all of this by the grace of our God. We need to be men who look our wife in the eye in love and say, "I'm never leaving you. I'm never walking out on you. We are together to the day we die, to the day God calls us home."

We need to be men then who in much prayer and dependence on God, ask God to make us faithful men. There's a lot of temptations out there, aren't there, men? There's a lot of ways to blow ourselves up. There's a lot of ways to lose our wife. There's a lot of ways that we could walk away from our precious kids or our grandkids or whatever it may be. Don't think this is only a temptation of young men. You can blow up a marriage all through your life. Sadly, you see marriages increasingly ending, you know, even in the sort of golden years of life. What we need are men who cultivate their marriages, who love their wife, not just say that, not just buy a Hallmark card, right, but who strive to show love to their wife. I think some men are afraid of being seen as effeminate for being loving, gentle, kind, understanding, a good listener, all those kinds of things. You're not effeminate if you do those things You're being a godly man. You're being like Jesus. So let's pray. This isn't a harangue. Let's pray that God will make us more and more these kinds of men.

Sixth, godly men honor marriage. Not every man is called to marriage. Some men are called to be single, and that's an honorable calling from the Lord (1 Cor. 7). Many men are called to marriage, and so that's a major work of a man's life, to cultivate and strengthen his marriage by the grace of God. And that is the only context given in the Bible for sexual activity. There's nothing outside of marriage that God has said to us, "Oh, yeah, dating? You're good to go, whatever you want to do up to this line, you know, all the way almost down the line. That's great. You know, just sort of coming together, you know, one-night stuff, all that sort of thing, long-term relationships." No, the vision God gives us for sex that honors Him is marriage, so we want to honor marriage. I don't think we want to push our kids to marriage too young, as if, you know, on the stroke of midnight when they turn eighteen they need to be married. I personally would say it's good to get either life experience, work experience, college, those kinds of things. I don't think you have to, but I think there can be a lot of good in those years, in getting more skills and developing and getting education and getting training, those

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kinds of things. But whatever the case, we know that God has given marriage to us for our good and His glory.

Seventh, the Lord holds Adam responsible for the fall. Adam and Eve sin against the Lord in Genesis 3. The serpent tempts them to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They do eat it, and the Lord doesn't hold Eve responsible for the fall. She gets indicted. She bears an effect of the curse herself, a powerful one. She gets pain in childbearing and she's going to be under the unkind, ungracious rule of a man. Those are her effects of the curse specifically that she deals with. But the man is the one the Lord God comes to in Eden in Genesis 3 and initially says, "Where are you?" The man is held responsible for what has happened. That's the concept we're talking about in action. That's headship. That's responsibility. It shows us that God holds the man responsible for what has happened. So we want to take that very seriously as Christian men. We want to know that God will hold us responsible for the good of our marriage and the good of our kids. It's not that we can single-handedly sanctify our wife, it's not that we can save our kids. We can't do that. But God does expect that by His power, we will strive to cultivate a joyful, godly Christian home.

And then I will—I'm just going to condense two into one here. I said nine, but I'm going to leave you with eight. The final thing we see about manhood is that men cannot be their own savior. And we see that in Genesis 3:15. We need One who will come and do this. In Genesis 3:15, the Lord God to the serpent says, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." This is that principle that I already have alluded to a number of times in several different ways, but it's very simply this: Now Adam has become a sinner. Now Eve has become a sinner, equally sinful. Men aren't more sinful than women—equally a sinner. Equally an image bearer, equally a sinner. And now mankind needs a savior. And that is exactly what the Lord God is gracious to provide.

You and I can't triumph over the devil. You and I can't make atonement for our sins. But the One who will come in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 can and does. Jesus comes to crush the head of the devil, which means, if you play it out biblically, Jesus comes to die in our place, drinking the wrath of God for us so that we don't have to be judged in Hell eternally for our sins, and even more than that, we can know the love of God that pours into our life from the moment of our conversion into all eternity beyond all time. That is the good news. The point of this whole thing, the point of everything God has made is not simply that we would be holy. Holiness is paramount; without holiness no one will

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see the Lord. Holiness is what the Lord Jesus provides in His righteous life, His active righteousness, and His atoning death, His passive righteousness. Holiness is what God gives to us as a gift by His grace so that in the moment of saving faith in Jesus, when we trust in Jesus as our Savior and we turn from our sin, the holiness of Christ is credited to our account. It is like going from fifty billion down, fifty billion against your name that you can never pay—you'll never pay it. It is like going from that to fifty billion in the black. And now you have more than you could ever ask, imagine, or dream of in terms of the righteousness and holiness and goodness of God. That is what Jesus does for us as the one who comes and crushes the serpent head and makes atonement for our sin.

But the point of all of that work is not simply that we would be holy. The point is that God would be able to love us because God wants to love a people for Himself. That makes some people feel scratchy and itchy like, “That preacher’s up there talking about all this love. I understand holiness. I like holiness. Holiness is something—you work on holiness. Let's get to work. Let's do some work, practical stuff here. Don't get all squishy with love and grace.” That's the whole point of everything, that you would go to be with God when this forsaken world is over for you, when your shift is up, and you would be translated to glory, and you'll live forever with God in a world of love, and all your existence will be—whatever Heaven and the new heavens and new earth is like exactly, all your existence will be is going to be love. No pain, no tears, no sadness, no sin. God loving you and you loving God back by His grace. That is what has already begun now. The life of love has already begun.

And so in conclusion, whatever has happened in your past, whatever your relationships are like or were like with your father and mother, whether those were happy or unhappy, whether there is unresolved pain for you, right now in your life you can know this: We have a good Father. We are not the men we need to be in our flesh. None of us is, but we follow a great, loving, kind God whose purpose in all of this is quite simply to love sinners for Himself.

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