

social networks

Members Guide

SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Last week, we learned that husbands and wives are fully equal in God's sight, and He has designed them to function in unique roles to reflect the relationship between Christ and his church. Wives are instructed to respect and support the leadership of their husbands, as Jesus himself willingly yields to His Father in everything. In the same way, the church also willingly submits to Christ in everything.

This week, we learned that husbands have been charged with loving their wives by sacrificing their own needs and desires for those of their wives. We care for our wives by leading spiritually, leading in purity, leading gently, and leading in unity. As Jesus gave up his life on earth for His bride, we will display Christ to the world by following Him in this.

What a privilege!

WARM UP

Describe the perfect date with your spouse? If you're single, what would be your ideal date?

THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

In order to help apply what we learned from the sermon this week, we're going to dive into two key concepts that we need to know better:

1. Responsibility
2. Power

Men: Let's face it. You have been given an incredible amount of responsibility. Whether in your marriage, with your kids, or at your workplace, you feel a tremendous burden of pressure to perform and to perform well. This weight of responsibility that every man feels, regardless of faith, is rooted in the way God created men. It's not some concept that society came up with or that we "evolved" into, responsibility was God's idea from the very beginning. Let's look back to Genesis to see where this all began:

Read Genesis 2:15 as a group.

- What are the two tasks that God gave the man as his mission?

"Work" is also translated as "cultivate." "Watch over it" can be translated as "to guard." In this context, men were given a mission from God from the very beginning: to be cultivators and guardians of all that he has entrusted to them.

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- Notice that this mission was given to the man *before* his wife was created as his helper. In light of this, what is the man's responsibility towards his wife?

"God gives men enormous responsibility. And the weightiest responsibility he gives to a man is a woman—a wife. In this union, a man's ability to cultivate and guard is put to the greatest test. Will the man lay down his life in order that his wife may flourish? That is the question that measures a marriage. In order for the garden of marriage to be properly cultivated and guarded, a man must give more than he's ever given."¹

- How does this view of responsibility differ from what society advocates?

We all know that there are problems with men in our time. Society has been beating down men for years. Most television shows depict men as incompetent fools. They say that if men would only act more responsible, things would be better. Deep down, we all know that we have failed to live up to the mission God has called us to.

The real problem is not responsibility, it is power. As men, we think we have the power carry out this responsibility on our own. So we tell ourselves "Try Harder!" or "Do Better!" Ultimately this does not empower a man, it crushes him.

The only way that husbands will ever love and pursue their wives well is by knowing deeply the God that pursues you.

Re-read Ephesians 5:31-32 as a group.

- What is the profound mystery that Paul is talking about?

Now read Romans 5:8-10 and then read the following quotes:

"The staggering part is that God doesn't just permit us to know Him, He sacrificed deeply to make it happen! God doesn't simply leave an invitation on the table—He paid the highest possible price to make it a reality. There is no greater love story. The Judge of the universe chased after those who rebelled against Him. People made themselves God's enemies by rejecting His rule and following their own desires. Yet God so loves His "enemies" that He sent His Son to pay the penalty for their crimes. God's wrath was satisfied as Jesus hung on the cross. Through His death, believers are cleared of their sin and reconciled to the God they once rejected. This makes God both fair and forgiving, just and justifier (see Rom. 3:21–26). He is just because His judgment against our sin was carried out. We are justified because His innocent Son suffered on our behalf."²

Jesus makes men new. Jesus did more than carry out his responsibility. He carried out our responsibility. Jesus took responsibility for your mess, your failures, your rebellion.

As a result, Men have a new definition for responsibility³:

Responsibility= My response to His ability. Jesus offers men a new *life* driven by a new *power*: the Gospel.

- Men, how does this redeemed view of responsibility change your power for pursuing your wife?

¹ Buzzard, Justin. *Date Your Wife*. (Good News Publishers), 2012, p.62.

² Chan, Francis and Lisa. *You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity*. (Claire House Publishers, 2014), p. 42,

³ Buzzard, Justin. *Date Your Wife*. (Good News Publishers), 2012, p.65.

DIGGING DEEPER

Divide your group by gender (men and women) and have each work through the following tasks:

1. Make a list of what Jesus has done for you. What did He do? What are the implications of this? How is your life changed through what He has done? This shouldn't be a short list!
2. Make a list of ways the gospel should transform your marriage. How should Jesus' sacrificial example affect the way you relate to your spouse? How should the gift of the Holy Spirit revitalize your marriage? Include both big picture realities (like "this gives me strength when I don't feel like serving") and specific action steps (like "this will enable me to speak kindly to my spouse when _____"). Pick one of these ideas to act on this week.
3. If there is time remaining, huddle again as an entire group and ask for volunteers to share some of their lists.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"The most important daily habit we can possess is to remind ourselves of the Gospel" –C.H. Spurgeon

Choose one of the following books on the list below and commit to read through it together with your wife over the next 9 weeks.

- The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God (Tim and Kathy Keller)
- You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity (Francis and Lisa Chan)
- Date Your Wife (Justin Buzzard). Note: Primarily written for Men