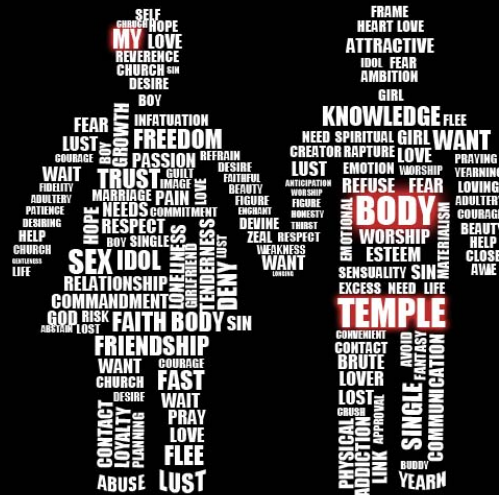


Theology for Life

Volume 5 | Issue 2 | Summer 2018

Biblical Gender and Sexuality

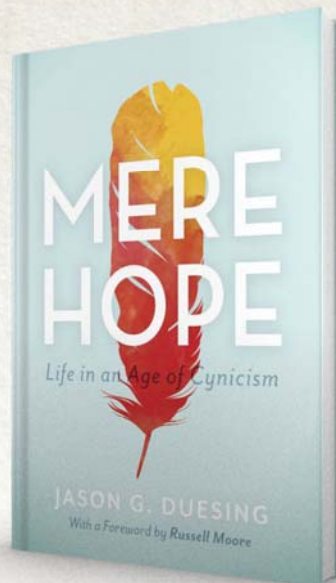


An Exposé on Manhood and Womanhood

Inside this Issue...

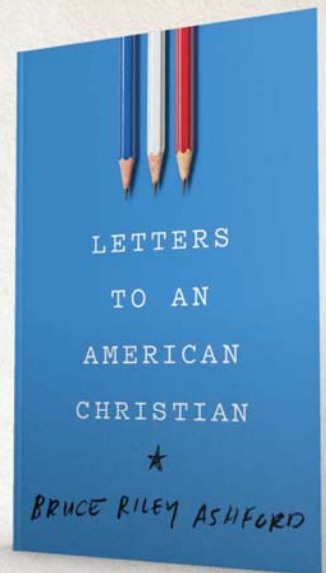
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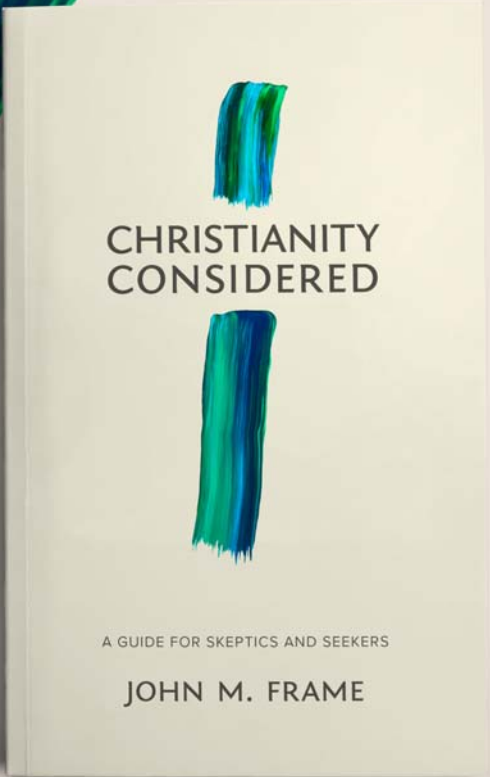
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Editor's Corner

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One of the central questions and also one of the fundamental issues of our day all center on one significant question, “Is the Bible’s teaching on gender roles, and sexuality in particular, *true?*” And if it’s true (and I believe it is), we need to ask the question, “Does that mean that homosexuality, transgenderism, pornography, masturbation, and/or sex outside of marriage is wrong?” The answers to those questions are yes. Biblical sexuality and biblical gender roles begin in the heartbeat of a Creator God. First, He took them from the dust and breathed life into them. Then He saw that it was not good for man to be alone and He took a rib from Adam and made Eve. He made man first and then He made Eve to be a helpmate.

Now that at first may not seem controversial at all; after all, I merely summarized the first two chapters of Genesis 1-2. And yet, there are few things more controversial than the above paragraph in our culture. In fact, Tim Challies said that one of the most significant issues in 2018 was complementarian theology, the idea that men and women are equal in dignity, value, and worth, but distinct in function and role.

The question we must ask is this: “Does the authority of Scripture matter on issues related to biblical sexuality and biblical gender roles?” You are going to get a dozen different answers to that question in various areas of contemporary evangelicalism. And to be honest, what it boils down to is this: what we believe about the authority of the Bible matters. Either the Bible’s teaching is clear—for example in Genesis 1-2, Ephesians 5, and other references about the place of a man in the home and the role of a wife in the home—or it’s not. And if it’s not, then we have a significant problem—that the culture is right. And yet, to the degree the church stands on the Word, it will continue proclaiming the biblical truth about morality, gender roles, and sexuality—all from the Word of God.

I frame this issue this manner—as one of authority—precisely because people chafe at the idea of God having authority over their pants and their particular sexual organs. They want a “god” who will come only so near and then stop, but the God of the Bible is no such god. The God of the Bible not only says He will come near, He knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts, along with the very hairs on our heads.

We have all sorts of people saying that biblical gender

roles are obsolete, that the distinction between men and women is antiquated and we, as Christians, should stop talking about it if we want to stay relevant. To remain relevant, we don't need to retreat. We also do not need to abandon ship and toss out the baby with the bath water. No, men and women of God, we must stand. We must proclaim the whole counsel of God. We are, after all, soldiers; and as soldiers, we stand at the ready with the sword of the Word of God, unsheathed to declare (in love) the glory of the One who made all people and who alone, through Christ, can save all people.

Sometimes what people hear when Bible-believing Christians talk about biblical gender roles and biblical sexuality is that we are against them. Specifically, the LGBTQ community hears that *you are for a man being a man and a woman being a woman in marriage*. And that's true, but we as Christians are not against people; for people are made in the image and likeness of God. And it's not we who are against people's viewpoints, which makes it personal and this isn't personal. This is a matter of the authority of God's Word. God declares that He created one man to be with one woman—not a man with a man, or a woman with a woman, or a man changing his gender so that now he's a woman (and vice versa) because he (or she) doesn't feel like being that gender anymore. God says in His Word that He created men and women for a specific purpose, and gave them a specifically assigned gender to function and live according to His sovereign design.

In this issue of *Theology for Life Magazine*, we are saying this: God created men to be men, and women to be women. We are also saying that marriage is between one man and one woman, that we are against abuse of any kind and shape. Additionally, we are teaching that the Church should stand fast for the authority of the Word of God—both implicitly and explicitly—and declare to a watching world the whole truth of Scripture (including that men and women are equal in dignity, value, and worth, but distinct in function, and role).

The best apologetic is not only sound biblical doctrine, which is essential, but also right practice. A watching culture sees our marriages, between one man and one woman. It also studies how we are fighting against pornography, how we are ministering to the sexually broken, and more with the gospel that we say is the power of God unto the salvation of men.

Wherever you are at on the issues related to morality, sexuality, and gender roles, my prayer is that you will be helped by the solid biblical teaching of each article, book review, and interview in this issue, which are aimed at assisting in developing biblical thinking, so you will learn to love the God of the Bible.

In Christ Alone,

Dave Jenkins
Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine*

Reference:

- i. <https://www.challies.com/articles/themes-or-challenges-for-reformed-christians-in-2018/>

What About Those Who Reject the Christian Sexual Ethic?

By Grant Castleberry



One of my friends once asked me if it was morally permissible to sleep with his girlfriend. She was pressuring him to sleep with her, and he was contemplating giving in to her requests. By the time he approached me, he had almost talked himself into it. When we sat down over coffee, I turned

to 1st Corinthians 6:9-11 where Paul says, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”

I explained to him that Paul’s point regarding the sexual ethics of a Christian is that sex could only take place in the God-given boundaries of a covenant marriage between a man and a woman. This is why the New American Standard rightly trans-

lates the Greek word *pornoi* in 1st Corinthians 6:11 as “fornicators”. Fornication is defined as any sexual act outside the marriage covenant between a man and a woman. As if this is not clear enough, when Paul refers to the “sexual immoral” he is clearly referring to what he had just expounded in 1st Corinthians 5, where a man was sleeping with his father’s wife. Paul not only condemned this as fornication and sexual immorality, but he commanded the Corinthian church to dissociate (excommunicate) from the individual because he no longer evidenced being a Christian. He writes, “But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. *“Purge the evil person from among you”* (1st Corinthians 5:11-13).

“Those who claim the title of Christian, yet reject Christ’s sexual ethic cannot claim to have submitted to the Lordship of Christ.”

Judging Those Inside the Church

Paul’s command could not be any clearer. We should not be surprised when unbelievers in our sexualized culture engage in fornication or homosexuality, but we must take great measures to judge and even “purge” those within the Church who do engage in sexual immorality. In other words, the witness of Scripture is so clear on this point that Paul says that when God’s Word is not obeyed in the realm of sexuality, that the person is to be separated from the body of Christ (1st Corinthians 5:13). The reason for this is that this type of disobedience Paul says is evidence that that type of individual is not a true Christian and will “not inherit the kingdom of God” (1st Corinthians 6:9).

Those who claim the title of Christian, yet reject Christ’s sexual ethic cannot claim to have submitted to the Lordship of Christ. Also included in this list, Paul says, are (as the ESV puts it), “men who practice homosexuality” (1st Corinthians 6:9). In the Greek text Paul is really describing two classes of *homosexual* partners. The first word he uses describes the more effeminate partner or passive partner (*malakoi*). The second word he uses is *arsenokoitai* and it is used for any kind of homosexual behavior, but also the active or less effeminate partner. It is literally a combination of the Greek words of man “*arsen*” and bed “*koite*” and means literally “bedders of men” or “those who take men to bed”. In the Greek Septuagint, a combination of these words

are used in Moses' prohibition against homosexuality in Leviticus 20:13. Most likely this is what Paul is referencing by using the word *arsenokoitai*.

When linked together, Paul's point is that homosexuality is also to be viewed on the same level as fornication and drunkenness when it comes to church discipline. That is why Paul includes it in the same list in 1st Corinthians 6:9. And he prefaces it all with the imperative, "Do not be deceived." Satan would love nothing more to deceive the Church on this issue. He would love for the Church to move with the prevailing secular culture and broader opinion. But such an act would be to compromise the gospel itself and to deny Christ's Lordship.

Disagreeing with Paul

It might be asked, "What about those who are not practicing homosexuality, but call homosexuality good and also claim the name of Christ? What about those who disagree with Paul on this point? What about those who do not engage in the practice of homosexuality themselves, but "give approval to those who practice them" (Romans 1:32)? What about the Christian, for example, who heartily and knowingly extends the hand of Christian fellowship to a practicing homosexual despite Paul's prohibition?"

First, Paul says that this is evidence of the "wrath of God" being revealed in our current generation (Romans 1:18). We often think about God's wrath in a future judgment, but Paul says God's wrath is presently revealed in the practice of homosexuality and its hearty "approval". So we need to be mindful that even the presence of this situation is God's judgment and wrath upon an individuals and possibly a church. Second, such an explicit denial of Christ's Lordship certainly means that the individual is walking outside the will of Christ, and might also mean that the individual was not a regenerate believer to begin with.

So what action should a church take with an individual who knowingly denies Paul's sexual ethic? A church should take the same action as it would with those who teach that drunkenness or pornography or fornication or stealing is permissible. The church should begin the process of discipline, and if there is not repentance, the church should remove the individual from its midst (Matthew 18:15-17). This may seem harsh, but this is the method that Jesus lovingly brings sheep back to the fold (Matthew 18:10-14). This is also the method that Christ uses to purify His Church.

Implications for the Road Ahead

By holding fast to Christ's sexual ethic we are actually serving as loving wit-

nesses to the truth in a depraved world. Paul ends his list of prohibitions in 1st Corinthians 6 by saying, “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1st Corinthians 6:11). What strikes me about Paul’s statement is that obviously the witness of the Corinthian church had won both sexually immoral individuals and homosexuals over to the gospel. They did not do this by calling these sins ‘good’, but by calling them what they are: sins that must be repented of.

It is our duty as Christians in a secular age to follow the example of Paul and the Corinthian church. We are not saved by our sexual ethic, but we are saved through the gospel. And the gospel demands that we repent of our sins and trust Christ. In trusting Christ, we are submitting to His Lordship, which demands that we submit our sexuality to Him. This is what He demands: that we honor Him with our bodies (1st Corinthians 6:20). For this reason, we should not extend the hand of Christian fellowship to those who cord off the bedroom from Christ’s reign, either in word or practice. This is the “deception” Paul warned us about. This is the work of Satan in our midst. So like Paul, I plead with my brothers, “Do not be deceived.” Do not compromise the faith that “was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Equipping for Life

An Interview with Andreas Köstenberger

By Dave Jenkins



Dr. Andreas Köstenberger is founder of Biblical Foundations and has recently accepted a position as Research Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Director of the Center for Biblical Studies.

T4L: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *Theology for Life* Magazine, Dr. Köstenberger. Can you tell us a bit about yourself, including the current ministries you are involved in?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: I am a committed follower of Jesus Christ and love the Lord and His Word. I count it a great privilege to be married to my wife Margaret, and to partner with her in raising our four children. I am a teacher, scholar, and writer, and several years ago started an organization called Biblical

Foundations to help lead a revival of the biblical teaching on marriage and family in the church and society, and ultimately toward the greater mission of God in this world.

I believe that only a genuine return to what the Bible teaches about marriage and the family can help our culture be reconciled to God and be restored to His plan for of our lives. Our new parenting book, *Equipping for Life*, is the culmination of 25 years of work in this area. I previously wrote *God, Marriage & Family* (with David Jones) and co-edited *Women in the Church*, and my wife and I have co-authored *God's Design for Man & Woman*. These books lay the theological foundation on which we build in our book on parenting.

T4L: How did you come to care so deeply and personally about helping parents learn biblical truth relating to parenting?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: Both through the study of Scripture and our own experience, my wife and I have developed some deep convictions about the centrality of marriage and the family in the lives of Christians, and how living this out impacts our overall mission from God. The creation narrative in Genesis makes clear that God created humanity male and female and called us to be fruitful and multiply in the form of children. This is the primary arena in which we are called to make disciples and live out our Christian convictions, in which we can grow in Christ-like character, and in which we can witness to the world.

T4L: Can you please tell us some of most significant issues you see for Christian parents today, so they can raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: By and large, our culture no longer affirms biblical values. Feminism has strongly challenged the mother's role as centered in the home and attacked the institutions of marriage and the family as instruments of patriarchal domination and oppression. The father's leadership and masculinity have been significantly undermined as well. There is widespread confusion even regarding a basic understanding of gender identity. As those committed to the Bible's authority in all of life, what we see on all these fronts is large-scale resistance and compromise, even rebellion against God's created order. Confusion, disunity, and brokenness are the results, and ultimately the destruction of our witness to God in and through families and churches. What is more, no longer is the world "out there" threatening the biblical teaching and practice in the Church; the world has invaded the Church with unbiblical teaching, and often the Church and the world are virtually indistinguishable.

T4L: Too true, unfortunately. What advice would you give to parents who come to you and want to help their children learn to navigate social media, avoid the many temptations that are on the internet, and be good stewards of technology?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: Technology, of course, has many advantages, but can also be potentially harmful or even destructive. In order to guide our children in their use of computers, other technological devices, and social media, it is vital to stay informed and to learn to handle these gadgets well ourselves. Even if we put passwords and other protections on these devices, our children may still come across or figure out other ways of access.

Ultimately, what is at stake is the development of character and the genuine pursuit of God in the child's own life, though there will be certain ages or stages of greater vulnerability, which has caused us to delay our children's unmonitored access to social media, and even carrying their own cell phone, until they have sufficient self-control and accountability to use these tools to their disadvantage, rather than being pulled in a direction they shouldn't go and hopefully wouldn't even want to go themselves.

The average age for a young person to get a cell phone is 10 years old; in our opinion, that's *way too early*. School shootings and other dangers in school settings may prompt parents of these children to get them involved in technology earlier than they should. Since we've primarily schooled our children at or from home, we've had a certain measure of control over when, where, and how to use technology; it may not be as easy for parents of children who go to school. Each family has to navigate their own terrain in this regard and handle their own unique circumstances under God's guidance. We recommend that families seriously consider schooling their children at or from home, but are aware that this may not be feasible or the best option for everyone. We explain many advantages in the chapter on education in our book, primarily that it is one vital way in which you can have the greatest and most consistent impact on your child.

T4L: It certainly is a tough area of life to navigate through! You write in your book, *Equipping for Life*, about parenting and conflict. How should parents traverse these challenging situations with their children to help them learn how to not only take responsibility for the stuff in their lives, but also to learn how to deal biblically and maturely with conflict, stressful situations, and challenging people?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: We devote one entire chapter, "The Peacemaking Parent", to dealing with adversity, conflict, and even spiritual warfare. In our experience, conflict is ubiquitous, and parents often don't know how to re-

solve it, or at least aren't very good at it. Our own struggles in this area inform this instruction. Specifically, we propose four ideas that we develop in more detail in the book, which might help in working through conflict: (1) analyzing the situation, (2) accepting responsibility for your actions, (3) apologizing as needed, and (4) affirming love and affection for one another. Helping our children deal with all kinds of adversity, and so developing character and self-control, is helpful for the complexities of life. We also discuss some of the common sources of conflict we've dealt with in our experience, such as dealing with social media, relational issues, sibling rivalry, disobedience, insensitivity toward others, and miscommunication and the lack of communication.

T4L: So, how do you think can pastors, ministry leaders, and those who seek to put out faithful, biblical, and practical content that aims to serve and equip God's people, help parents in their task of training their children in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus?

Dr. Andreas Köstenberger: This is exactly why we wrote our book—to equip ministry leaders to guide young parents in the church in parenting. We recommend you read *Equipping for Life* with your congregation, perhaps in small groups, considering especially the new, aspiring, and struggling parents. Every chapter starts with a "What's Up?" section to help readers prepare their hearts with relevant portions of Scripture. At the end of each chapter is a section called "What's Next?", which poses discussion questions for couples or small groups to consider after digesting the content. We strongly recommend using the material in premarital counseling as young couples look toward parenting in the future.

In addition to reading the book, there is a *FREE* TGC parenting course built around the book *Equipping for Life*, available at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/parenting-equipping-life/#course-introduction>. This accessible course could be gone through in a weekly or biweekly format in the church, or in mentor homes. Perhaps it would be helpful to actually prepare a core of mentors in the church, who are able to embrace these truths—hopefully, experienced parents—who can facilitate these discussions for younger parents. It's so important!

There are few books on this topic that cover the overall *framework, perspective, and purpose* of parenting. This is preventative medicine for parents and families that has the potential to change the face of church family dynamics and the mission of God in the world. Where many books on the topic offer remedies for the "sicknesses" and dysfunctionalities that occur from misguided parenting, we suggest that young parents in your church be equipped in the three major ways that our book covers—realism, relationship, and responsibility (the 3 "Rs" of parenting).

First, help parent develop *realistic* expectations of what parenting entails. Second, guide them to grasp the *relational* component of parenting, especially acknowledging that parental presence in the life of the child is key. Finally, third, encourage parents to embrace a *responsible* approach to parenting that includes arranging or rearranging their lives in such a way that they can be there for their children when they need them, and not delegating vital parenting task to others—whether teachers, youth leaders, or even their peers.

T4L: Excellent! I know we at *Theology for Life Magazine* enjoyed your book immensely, and I'm sure our readers will as well. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to do this interview, Dr. Köstenberger.

A Better Future

By Andrew Walker

A 2016 issue of *Time Magazine* featured an essay by Jessi Hempel telling the heart-wrenching story of her brother, Evan, giving birth to a

son. That sentence might catch you off guard. (If it didn't, maybe read it again, a little slower!) The photo the story features shows what looks like a man breastfeeding an infant son. Titled "*My Brother's Pregnancy and the Making of a New American Family*", Hempel recounts how her sister underwent a female-to-male transition at 19, but still desired to give birth—and did so at 35.

She describes the long-ago transition that included testosterone injections, producing thick hair over her sister's knuckles. At that time, Evan elected not to have breast-removal surgery, thus making possible what is called "chest-feeding". The story is not without several painful admissions. Recounting how much they once looked alike, Hempel laments the loss of her sister's feminine appearance. And at one point, Hempel observes that Evan, while pregnant, experienced a "traumatizing disconnect between



his masculinity and the female attributes of his body”.

She asks a question that helpfully frames how Christians should begin thinking about the transgender revolution: “What if you are born into a female body, know you are a man, and still want to participate in the traditionally exclusive rite of womanhood? What kind of man are you then?” That question touches on a quest we all know: the search for resolution and satisfaction, for a life of equilibrium, without heartache or alienation or disconnect.

It’s understandable that Evan would assume that it’s only by following our feelings that we can find this. Understandable, but incorrect, as Evan—according to Jessi’s article—discovered through personal experience. Evan found in life what we find in Scripture: you don’t break free from the effects of the fall by following the course of the fall in your own life and decisions. Is there hope for individuals like Evan? Can those who face the same kind of struggles find wholeness, and experience psychological relief, bodily relief, and emotional relief? Given the reality of the fall, is there good news for us, regardless of what brokenness each person experiences, regardless of what identities we embrace? *Yes!*

The Bible’s message to the person struggling with gender-identity issues is the same for the person struggling with envy or depression or anything else:

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2nd Corinthians 5:17).

Here is the offer God holds out to every single one of us: *you can be a new creation*. To become a new creation in Christ does not mean the world we live in or the bodies we inhabit, or the minds we think with will be totally freed and completely healed. The Spirit does work to renew our minds and change our hearts. But to be a new creation in Christ is to experience the promise of what fully awaits those who

place their trust in Him—to be able to anticipate the certainty of a coming day when the disorder of creation is put back together, and when dysphoria of any kind is replaced by euphoria of every kind. To be a new creation is to know why the world is the way it is, why our bodies are the way they are, and why our minds think as they do. It is to be equipped with the power of God’s Holy Spirit to live in relationship with God. A new creation in Christ recognizes that even in broken minds living in broken bodies, living in a broken world, there is a definitive and clear “very good” blueprint of creation.

In the new creation, there will no longer be sadness or death. Brokenness will be no more. The cancer and the tsunamis that plow over humanity—GONE:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city,

new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:1-4).

This promise is what Evan is searching for. What Evan and everyone who is transgender are looking for—and what everyone who thinks they may be transgender and everyone who knows they are not are looking for—is a way to make their mind's perception, their heart's desires, and their body's construction "match"—to feel wholeness, rather than dysphoria. And that's exactly what the gospel promises—not by us seeking to transition from one sex to another (which is impossible), but by waiting; not by us tearing up the blueprint rebelliously, but by living faithfully and patiently, even though it's painful, until one day there will be transformation. Unlike the partial, frustrating, and ultimately unfulfilling and conflicting transformations that the world offers, this is real, joyful, complete and fulfilling transformation. This is what the Christian is waiting for:

"We live in a Genesis 3 world, with a Genesis 1 blueprint, on the trajectory to a Revelation 21 future."

We await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself (Philippians 3:20-21).

How brilliant it is to think of God one day saying to the person with gender dysphoria who waited faithfully, "Well done. I know it's been so hard. It's over now. I love you so much that I have brought you to a place where who you feel you are, and who you truly are, are completely enmeshed. There will be no more pain or crying for you anymore. What you longed for—to feel like, look like, and be the same person—is reality. I know it's been painful. It won't be now. Well done, faithful follower."

We live in a Genesis 3 world, with a Genesis 1 blueprint, on the trajectory to a Revelation 21 future. The question that Evan's sister wondered aloud about—the question of contentment, joy, and self-acceptance in place of the disconnect—is a question that plagues every human heart. The culture around us answers those questions with a million different and conflicting responses. Christians have only one answer to give, but it is all the answer anyone needs, and it is an answer that we must continue to believe in and hold out: *Jesus came and died and rose in order to offer you his Spirit*

today, and to offer you the life you are searching for in the future.

The Lord Jesus, and the future He offers, make sense of the suffering in and around us now; and His Spirit strengthens anyone, no matter how hard their life is, to struggle on with joy now, knowing that what is to come for Jesus' family is what they most want to experience—the glory and peace of perfection:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).

Jesus is where we find what we are looking for. The Christian answer is not a restrictive command, but a better story: a story that actually works.

*This article was adapted from the book, *God and the Transgender Debate*, by Andrew Walker (The Good Book Company, 2017).

Dear Young Mother

By Christy Britton



Dear Young Mother,

You may feel invisible during this season of life. You aren't. We serve *El Roi*, the God who sees us (Genesis 16:13). You are seen. You are known. Your selfless

love and service, though imperfect, matter for the Kingdom. You, dear momma, are changing the world as you raise up the next generation.

Your life did not begin when you began raising children, nor will it end when they become adults. Your life is for God's glory. And for this season, you get to glorify Him by caring for His children.

Over the span of six years, the Lord gave me four sons. When they were all littles and I forgot something, people would laugh it off and assure me I was suffering from "mom brain". Well, I'm seventeen years in, and I'm hoping the excuse of "mom brain" still applies!

The truth is, moms easily forget things. In the chaos of caring for our families, our minds are never truly focused on any one thing completely. We are a distracted bunch. Mothers are notorious multi-taskers, which sounds impressive, in theory, but practically means that something always gets missed. Ladies, we don't want to miss the truth. I'd like to remind you of a few truths of your role as mother. Let's step out of the day-to-day view and span our vision a bit wider to see the bigger picture.

"Contentment doesn't exist in Netflix, romance novels, relationships, likes, or shares."

Remember whose daughter you are. You, dear sister, are a beloved daughter of the King. You are loved and delighted in (Psalm 149:4). You are pursued and watched over (Psalm 121:5). You never need to surrender to feelings of insignificance. You never need to feel alone. Your heavenly Father is always with you (Matthew 28:20). He is for you (Psalm 56:9). You never need to feel left out. You belong. Your identity was settled on the cross. You are His and everything else about you flows from this truth (Psalm 43:1).

Remember you are an image bearer. We look like our Father (Genesis 1:27). We inherit His qualities. Reflect your Father's image to your children. Don't just tell them about God. Show them. Show them grace. Show them forgiveness. Show them compassion. Show them mercy. Show them the steadfast love of the Father.

Remember: eyes up, momma! Look to God. Keep your eyes on Him. We focus on the eternal, not the temporal (Colossians 3:2). When we look at Him, we are radiant (Psalm 34:5). Don't get distracted by all the world's trinkets. They are not your treasure, He is. Gaze at His beauty. Find satisfaction in Him alone. Contentment doesn't exist in Netflix, romance novels, relationships, likes, or

shares.

Remember you are entrusted with stewardship, not ownership.

Steward your children. Care for them while you can. Love them fiercely knowing that they don't belong to you, they belong to Him. They exist for His purposes, not yours. Love them by preparing them for when you send them out into the world.

Remember whose approval you already have. You don't need the approval of other moms. Conversely, they don't need yours either. We need each other to help us look more like Christ, not each other. We are not the standard. He is. We are not the competition. Lift up your sisters. Champion them. Show them grace, not judgment. Help one another.

Remember your children are like arrows in your hand.

Prepare them to be sent out into the world. Train them. Teach them to obey you so they learn how to obey God. Prepare them to be disciple makers. Prepare them for spiritual warfare. Prepare them to use their voices for the voiceless. You want to change the world? Send out gospel-equipped arrows (Psalm 127:4). Aim well.

Remember you are welcome at the throne. You're not perfect. You will make mistakes. You will fail your children often. Seek repentance. Run to the throne with confidence. There you will find mercy and grace (Ephesians 4:16). Daughter, you are never outside the scope of your Father's mercy. Richard Sibbes said, "There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us."

Remember your home is a mission field. Make disciples in your home. Your job is not to make star athletes and academically superior children. Your job is to teach your kids to follow Christ (Luke 14:27). Your job is to pray for God to turn their hearts towards Him. Godly mothers create a curiosity for Christ inside their families. Fuel their capacity for wonder with the gospel. You want your child to want to imitate Christ, not a Disney princess or an Avengers superhero. Make Christ the main attraction in your family.

Remember the world that exists outside your home.

Motherhood is exhausting and isolating. Be intentional in sharing your life beyond your walls. You are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14). Show your children how to love their neighbors across the street and around the world.

Remember your rich, biblical lineage. Remember Hannah, Esther, Ruth, Mary, Priscilla, Deborah, Elisabeth, Lois, Eunice, and many others. Consider the influence each of these women had on the people in their sphere of influ-

ence. They taught God's Word, they led, they served, they obeyed, they risked, they sacrificed, and they followed. You are part of this lineage. Contribute to it.

Remember God defines success, not us. It's easy to look at the Instagram feeds of our friends and feel like we're not excelling in motherhood. Our idea of success is not necessarily God's, but it's His standard that matters. He sees what we cannot. He values what we do not. When my son shows the fruit of repentance, I celebrate. I'm witnessing the divine work of him being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Character development isn't always attractive under an Instagram filter, but it is what pleases and glorifies God.

Dear young mother, the old saying is true, the days are long, but the years are short. Twenty years ago, I took my husband's hand before our friends and family and said, "I do." I blinked, and my first son was born. I blinked again, and he was walking. Blink. More sons. Blink. I'm teaching them to read and write. Blink. Baptism. Blink. My home has been hijacked by a group of their friends and I'm running back to the store for more food! Blink. I'm at the DMV with my oldest getting his driver's permit. Blink. We're looking at colleges.

In the moment, the days seem to drag on. I remember what it was like to try to make it to 7:30 bedtimes so I could have one minute to myself. But trust me when I tell you that one day, you'll go to bed and they will stay up later than you. One day you'll give anything for them to want to spend every second of their day with you. One day you'll offer your help, but they won't need it anymore.

And one day, you'll stand before your heavenly Father and hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).

Until That Day,

A Fellow Momma

Challenges and Opportunities for Biblical Gender Roles

An Interview with Gavin Peacock

By Dave Jenkins



Gavin Peacock is husband to Amanda, father of Jake and Ava, and a pastor at Calvary Grace Church in Calgary, Alberta. He is also the Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood's (CBMW) Director of International Outreach. He was a professional soccer ("football") player and was saved early in his career at age 18. He then played for 18 years for teams such as

Chelsea, Queens Park Rangers, and Newcastle United. After retiring from the game in 2002 he worked for the BBC as a soccer commentator on TV and radio, before moving to Canada in 2008 to study for full time ministry.

T4L: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *Theology for Life Magazine*, Pastor Gavin. Can you tell us a bit about yourself, including the current ministries you are involved in?

Gavin Peacock: I am a husband to Amanda first and foremost, and we have been married for 28 years now. We have two children: Jake (25) who is married to Christa, and Ava (22) who is married to Austin.

I was saved at the age of 18 after achieving what most people would say is the schoolboy dream of becoming a professional soccer player. But it didn't satisfy as I thought it would. The world says that fame, fortune, and the great career will make you happy. But because soccer was my "god", if I played well I was up, if I played badly I was down. It was then that I was introduced to Christ, after attending a local youth Bible study. I saw that my biggest need was not the approval of the crowd or scoring goals each week, it was to be in a right relationship with the Lord. After a few weeks of going to this Bible study, the Lord granted me repentance and faith.

As a Christian athlete I had many opportunities to share the gospel evangelistically at church events, and publicly in the media through soccer, but I never had any sense of a call to full-time ministry until around 2006. The Church confirmed this calling and I began to do Old Testament and New Testament studies while working for the BBC. It was then that I decided to give up a second dream career in order to prepare for pastoral ministry. We left the UK in 2008 and headed for new horizons in Canada. I was anonymous here and people just heard what I had to say from the Bible without the confusion of the soccer/broadcaster persona.

As a pastor, my first love is the local Church. But the Lord has opened up a door for wider ministry and I travel as invited to different places within Canada and internationally to evangelize and preach and teach. I am also Director of International Outreach for Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), which incorporates speaking engagements around the globe.

T4L: That's quite the amazing series of events! So, how did you come to care so deeply and personally about biblical manhood and womanhood?

Gavin Peacock: When I first heard John Piper back in the early 2000s

he was speaking on Biblical manhood. My first thought was that I had never heard such electric preaching before. My second thought was that the subject matter was so good and relevant. I was living in the UK and seeing these issues rearing their heads in the Anglican Church with the ordination of women and affirmation of homosexual relationships. I could also see the moral declension gathering momentum in the culture. I saw that issues of manhood, womanhood, and sexuality were the key issues where the authority of the Word of God was challenging the culture and the Church.

The complementarian vision of manhood and womanhood is biblical, compelling, and beautiful. To ignore it brings dishonor to God and hinders human flourishing.

T4L: Can you please tell us some of the most significant issues you see regarding biblical manhood and womanhood in your role as the Director of International Outreach for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW)?

Gavin Peacock: Denny Burk has taken over as President of CBMW from Owen Strachan and built on Owen's excellent work in the few years previously. The Nashville Statement was a massive achievement for Denny in his first year. Nashville underpins Danvers Statement by laying out a general vision of biblical sexuality. Danvers fleshes out role differences in the home and church. The Nashville Statement was necessary because what was assumed when writing the Danvers Statement 30 years ago cannot be assumed today.

Therefore, if I'm teaching abroad in my role for CBMW, I set forth a vision of complementarity from Danvers and Nashville. Application questions vary from culture to culture, even though the biblical truth still applies.

Going forward, I think it is important to teach that biblical manhood and womanhood are for all spheres of life, not just the home and church. There is a way you can be masculine or feminine as a single or married man or woman in the workplace. Parents need to train boys to be men, husbands, and fathers, and girls to be women, wives, and mothers. This comes from a robust understanding that manhood and womanhood are creational pre-fall realities from Genesis 1–2. The New Testament authors make their arguments from creation when they speak of these things.

Manhood and womanhood runs deep to who we are, made in the image of God, and is not just about physical differences. But physical anatomy tells about the creational realities of maleness and femaleness, which do not change. If you don't have this view, it doesn't take long before you say that gender and sex can be divorced and your biological sex can be different from the gender you choose. The fact is that gender and sex *are the same*. John Piper has a helpful definition of manhood and womanhood in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*. Owen Strachan and I un-

pack these things in our primer on complementarity, “The Grand Design” (Christian Focus). In the book we present God’s design for the sexes as not only necessary but gloriously good.

T4L: Excellent points. Taking the God-ordained view of such concepts out of the equation has definitely caused so much chaos, confusion, and strife in our world. Gavin, what specific challenges and opportunities do you see for biblical manhood in our culture today?

Gavin Peacock: Manhood is under attack for sure. Through bad examples and abuses of manhood there has been a backlash from the **#metoo** movement. There has been some good achieved through **#metoo**, but a left wing feminist agenda is leading to the emasculation of men in many quarters. What we are now seeing is that many men are afraid to take initiative because of the fear of accusation. Men are retreating instead of coming forward. Abuse gets the headlines, but passivity is the silent killer of manhood. It was that way in the Garden at the Fall of man (Genesis 3:6).

But, as with any challenge, there is the opportunity to set forth true manhood as the answer. Biblical manhood protects and provides for women. It takes responsibility to take initiative and get things done in the home, church, and workplace. If it doesn’t, it is *less than* biblical manhood. And we must be careful of redefining complementarity and marching to the beat of a gender-neutralizing culture, rather than God’s Word. The biggest need in the Church is men of God and preachers of God’s Word. When the men of the Church stand up, the Church stands firm.

T4L: Alright, so what specific challenges and opportunities do you see for biblical womanhood in our culture today?

Gavin Peacock: We need to recover a vision of biblical femininity. There is a big push for women leaders nowadays and raising women to lead in the Church. Titus 2 ministry is certainly for women and women have many roles to play in church life. But we must be careful not to overreach so that we have women functioning as elders without the official title. Women teaching or preaching to mixed groups in church or para-church settings would be an example of this.

Not many acknowledge that the very notion of “para-church” was non-existent in the New Testament. So, our contemporary questions of what a woman can do in para-church settings are often dealt with this way:

“1st Timothy and 1st Corinthians 11 relate to what happens in church, not para-church, so they don’t apply to us.”

Yet, Paul could not have addressed para-church since it didn’t exist. So, a better

conclusion to draw is this:

“The prohibitions need to be honored also in para-church settings, since there should be no fundamental contradiction between male-female relations/functions in those two different settings. Because Paul makes his argument from creation (1st Timothy 2: 12-15 and 1st Corinthians 11: 7-10) which stands for all time.”

But as with manhood, where there are challenges to womanhood, true womanhood will shine all the more.

T4L: In your opinion, how can Pastors, ministry leaders, and those who seek to put out faithful, biblical, and orthodox content (that aims to serve and equip God’s people) help in the work of biblical manhood and womanhood?

Gavin Peacock: Preach it from the pulpit. Even though you will mainly be teaching through books of the Bible on a Sunday, take a season to teach it topically. Also, teach it in gender specific midweek groups and give people help in applying it. Many people affirm complementarity, but don’t know how to work it out in the ground and so are functionally egalitarian.

T4L: One of the most significant issues in the Church today is the question of sexual identity. It’s a challenge that we are going to continue to face for the foreseeable future. Gavin, how does the Church continue to prepare itself to face this challenge, and to steady its resolve in the face of a culture that opposes biblical gender roles and biblical sexuality?

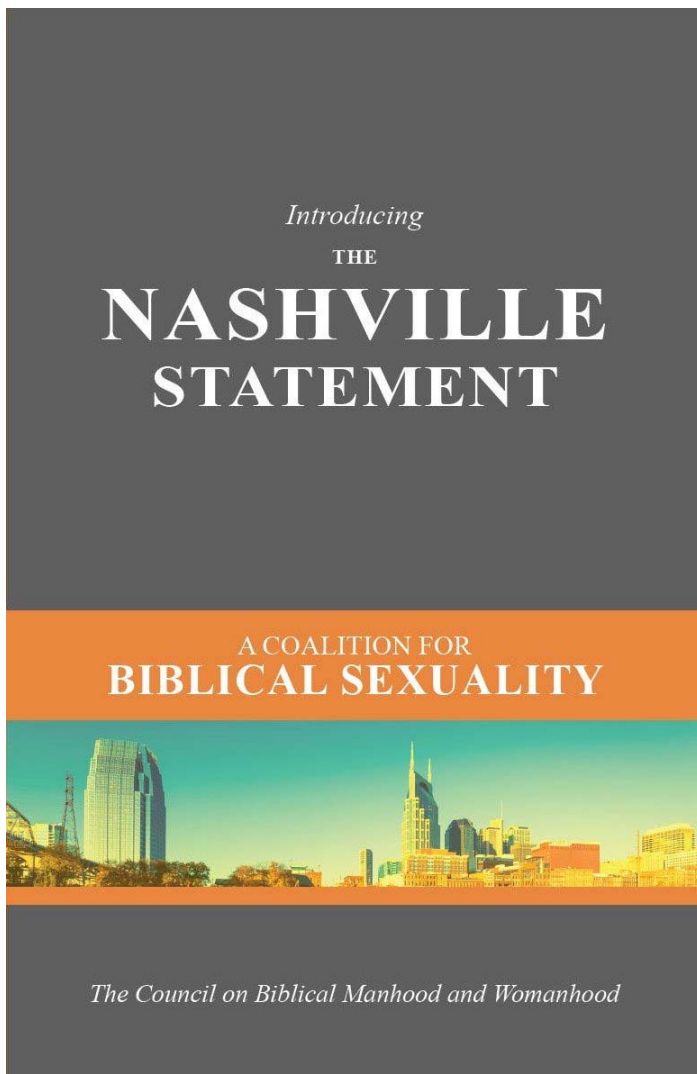
Gavin Peacock: Read the Bible and Church history. In the darkest times God is working for His glory. Christ will build His Church—that’s guaranteed. Our job is to be faithful by teaching sound doctrine and being obedient to it.

In any age, the authority of the Word is under attack. The wisdom is to see in what area this is happening in our day. The Early Church fought for truth over Christology. The Reformers fought for truth over soteriology. Today we fight for truth over anthropology—what it is to be human: male or female, created in the image of God. Our identity is first found in Jesus Christ. Everything flows from that. But just as we need a good theology of redemption, we must have a good theology of creation. Jesus did and He rooted His understanding of manhood womanhood and marriage in the Creator’s Word in Genesis 1-2 (Matthew 19: 4-6). And on this truth we must stand.

T4L: So true! Thank you for taking time out of your very busy schedule to do this interview, Gavin.

The Nashville Statement

By the Council of Biblical
Manhood and Womanhood



“Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves...” –Psalm 100:3

Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being. By and large the spirit of our age no longer discerns or delights in the beauty of God’s design for human life. Many deny that God created human beings for his glory, and that his good purposes for us include our personal and physical design as male and female. It is common to think that human identity as male and female is not part of God’s beautiful plan, but is, rather, an expression of an individual’s autonomous preferences. The pathway to full and lasting joy through God’s good design for his creatures is thus replaced by the path of shortsighted alternatives that, sooner or later, ruin human life and dishonor God.

This secular spirit of our age presents a great challenge to the Christian church. Will the church of the Lord Jesus Christ lose her biblical conviction, clarity, and courage, and blend into the spirit of the age? Or will she hold fast to the word of life, draw courage from Jesus, and unashamedly proclaim his way as the way of life? Will she maintain her clear, counter-cultural witness to a world that seems bent on ruin?

We are persuaded that faithfulness in our generation means declaring once again the true story of the world and of our place in it—particularly as male and female. Christian Scripture teaches that there is but one God who alone is Creator and Lord of all. To him alone, every person owes glad-hearted thanksgiving, heart-felt praise, and total allegiance. This is the path not only of glorifying God, but of knowing ourselves. To forget our Creator is to forget who we are, for he made us for himself. And we cannot know ourselves truly without truly knowing him who made us. We did not make ourselves. We are not our own. Our true identity, as male and female persons, is given by God. It is not only foolish, but hopeless, to try to make ourselves what God did not create us to be.

We believe that God's design for his creation and his way of salvation serve to bring him the greatest glory and bring us the greatest good. God's good plan provides us with the greatest freedom. Jesus said he came that we might have life and have it in overflowing measure. He is for us and not against us. Therefore, in the hope of serving Christ's church and witnessing publicly to the good purposes of God for human sexuality revealed in Christian Scripture, we offer the following affirmations and denials.

Article 1

WE AFFIRM that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, pro-creative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride the church. **WE DENY** that God has designed marriage to be a homosexual, polygamous, or poly-amorous relationship. We also deny that marriage is a mere human contract rather than a covenant made before God.

Article 2

WE AFFIRM that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage. **WE DENY** that any affections, desires, or commitments ever justify sexual intercourse before or outside marriage; nor do they justify any form of sexual immorality.

Article 3

WE AFFIRM that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his

own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female. **WE DENY** that the divinely ordained differences between male and female render them unequal in dignity or worth.

Article 4

WE AFFIRM that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing. **WE DENY** that such differences are a result of the Fall or are a tragedy to be overcome.

Article 5

WE AFFIRM that the differences between male and female reproductive structures are integral to God's design for self-conception as male or female. **WE DENY** that physical anomalies or psychological conditions nullify the God-appointed link between biological sex and self-conception as male or female.

Article 6

WE AFFIRM that those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and have dignity and worth equal to all other image-bearers. They are acknowledged by our Lord Jesus in his words about "eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb." With all others they are welcome as faithful followers of Jesus Christ and should embrace their biological sex insofar as it may be known. **WE DENY** that ambiguities related to a person's biological sex render one incapable of living a fruitful life in joyful obedience to Christ.

Article 7

WE AFFIRM that self-conception as male or female should be defined by God's holy purposes in creation and redemption as revealed in Scripture. **WE DENY** that adopting a homosexual or transgender self-conception is consistent with God's holy purposes in creation and redemption.

Article 8

WE AFFIRM that people who experience sexual attraction for the same sex may live a rich and fruitful life pleasing to God through faith in Jesus Christ, as they, like all Christians, walk in purity of life. **WE DENY** that sexual attraction for the same sex is part of the natural goodness of God's original creation, or that it puts a person outside the hope of the gospel.

Article 9

WE AFFIRM that sin distorts sexual desires by directing them away from the marriage covenant and toward sexual immorality— a distortion that includes both heterosexual and homosexual immorality. **WE DENY** that an enduring pattern of de-

sire for sexual immorality justifies sexually immoral behavior.

Article 10

WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness. **WE DENY** that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree.

Article 11

WE AFFIRM our duty to speak the truth in love at all times, including when we speak to or about one another as male or female. **WE DENY** any obligation to speak in such ways that dishonor God's design of his image-bearers as male and female.

Article 12

WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ gives both merciful pardon and transforming power, and that this pardon and power enable a follower of Jesus to put to death sinful desires and to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. **WE DENY** that the grace of God in Christ is insufficient to forgive all sexual sins and to give power for holiness to every believer who feels drawn into sexual sin.

Article 13

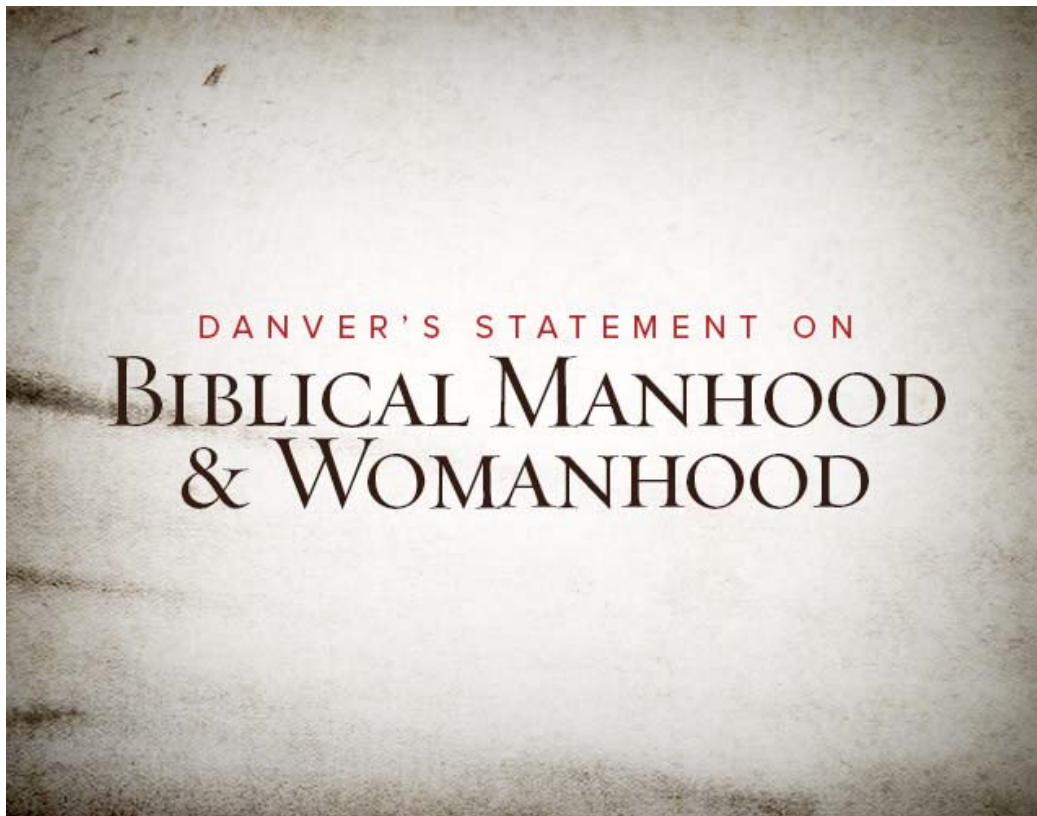
WE AFFIRM that the grace of God in Christ enables sinners to forsake transgender self-conceptions and by divine forbearance to accept the God-ordained link between one's biological sex and one's self-conception as male or female. **WE DENY** that the grace of God in Christ sanctions self-conceptions that are at odds with God's revealed will.

Article 14

WE AFFIRM that Christ Jesus has come into the world to save sinners and that through Christ's death and resurrection forgiveness of sins and eternal life are available to every person who repents of sin and trusts in Christ alone as Savior, Lord, and supreme treasure. **WE DENY** that the Lord's arm is too short to save or that any sinner is beyond his reach.

The Danver's Statement

**By the Council of Biblical
Manhood and Womanhood**



The Danver's Statement summarizes the need for the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) and serves as an overview of our core beliefs.

This statement was prepared by several evangelical leaders at a CBMW meeting in

Danvers, Massachusetts, in December of 1987. It was first published in final form by the CBMW in Wheaton, Illinois in November of 1988.

Rationale

We have been moved in our purpose by the following contemporary develop-

ments which we observe with deep concern:

1. The widespread uncertainty and confusion in our culture regarding the complementary differences between masculinity and femininity.
2. The tragic effects of this confusion in unraveling the fabric of marriage woven by God out of the beautiful and diverse strands of manhood and womanhood.
3. The increasing promotion given to feminist egalitarianism with accompanying distortions or neglect of the glad harmony portrayed in Scripture between the loving, humble leadership of redeemed husbands and the intelligent, willing support of that leadership by redeemed wives.
4. The widespread ambivalence regarding the values of motherhood, vocational homemaking, and the many ministries historically performed by women.
5. The growing claims of legitimacy for sexual relationships which have Biblically and historically been considered illicit or perverse, and the increase in pornographic portrayal of human sexuality.
6. The upsurge of physical and emotional abuse in the family.
7. The emergence of roles for men and women in church leadership that do not conform to Biblical teaching but backfire in the crippling of Biblically faithful witness.
8. The increasing prevalence and acceptance of hermeneutical oddities devised to reinterpret apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts.
9. The consequent threat to Biblical authority as the clarity of Scripture is jeopardized and the accessibility of its meaning to ordinary people is withdrawn into the restricted realm of technical ingenuity.
10. And behind all this the apparent accommodation of some within the church to the spirit of the age at the expense of winsome, radical Biblical authenticity which in the power of the Holy Spirit may reform rather than reflect our ailing culture.

Affirmations

Based on our understanding of Biblical teachings, we affirm the following:

1. Both Adam and Eve were created in God's image, equal before God as persons and distinct in their manhood and womanhood (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18).
2. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order, and should find an echo in every human heart (Genesis 2:18, 21-24; 1st Corinthians 11:7-9; 1st Timothy 2:12-14).
3. Adam's headship in marriage was established by God before the Fall, and

was not a result of sin (Genesis 2:16-18, 21-24, 3:1-13; 1st Corinthians 11:7-9).

4. The Fall introduced distortions into the relationships between men and women (Genesis 3:1-7, 12, 16):
 - a. In the home, the husband's loving, humble headship tends to be replaced by domination or passivity; the wife's intelligent, willing submission tends to be replaced by usurpation or servility.
 - b. In the Church, sin inclines men toward a worldly love of power or an abdication of spiritual responsibility, and inclines women to resist limitations on their roles or to neglect the use of their gifts in appropriate ministries.
5. The Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, manifests the equally high value and dignity which God attached to the roles of both men and women (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:18; Galatians 3:28). Both Old and New Testaments also affirm the principle of male headship in the family and in the covenant community (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1st Timothy 2:11-15).
6. Redemption in Christ aims at removing the distortions introduced by the curse:
 - a. In the family, husbands should forsake harsh or selfish leadership and grow in love and care for their wives; wives should forsake resistance to their husbands' authority and grow in willing, joyful submission to their husbands' leadership (Ephesians 5:21-33; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5; 1st Peter 3:1-7).
 - b. In the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men (Galatians 3:28; 1st Corinthians 11:2-16; 1st Timothy 2:11-15).
7. In all of life Christ is the supreme authority and guide for men and women, so that no earthly submission-domestic, religious, or civil-ever implies a mandate to follow a human authority into sin (Daniel 3:10-18; Acts 4:19-20, 5:27-29; 1st Peter 3:1-2).
8. In both men and women a heartfelt sense of call to ministry should never be used to set aside Biblical criteria for particular ministries (1st Timothy 2:11-15, 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Rather, Biblical teaching should remain the authority for testing our subjective discernment of God's will.
9. With half the world's population outside the reach of indigenous evange-

lism; with countless other lost people in those societies that have heard the gospel; with the stresses and miseries of sickness, malnutrition, homelessness, illiteracy, ignorance, aging, addiction, crime, incarceration, neuroses, and loneliness, no man or woman who feels a passion from God to make His grace known in word and deed need ever live without a fulfilling ministry for the glory of Christ and the good of this fallen world (1st Corinthians 12:7-21).

10. We are convinced that a denial or neglect of these principles will lead to increasingly destructive consequences in our families, our churches, and the culture at large.

Advice for Young Dads in Ministry

By Joey Tomlinson

Before I continue, it is important you know that I *write better than I live*. Everything seems neat and tidy in print. There is nothing neat and tidy about parenting. Parenting is the most difficult job in the world and no one can convince me otherwise. More specifically, being a stay-at-home mom is the most difficult job in the world. But, this isn't an article written for or toward moms. This article is written for dads in ministry.

I am a dad in my early thirties, with a young kid at home, and I am not in the position to give any sort of seasoned advice. What I *can* do is give you my targets/goals as a dad in ministry. What follows is a list that is by no means mastered (or exhaustive), but one that—by God's grace—I am more mindful of with each passing day, and I pray that it encourages you.

I want to be a *dependent* dad.

This is to say that I am needy for



the presence of Jesus in my life. I am so prone toward having a hard, cold, and distant heart toward God and my family. If my communion with Jesus isn't the priority of my life, I am a wreck. I am not exaggerating. You can ask my wife. As recent as two weeks ago, my wife told me that I needed to spend time in the Scripture so that the Lord would make me kinder.

Dads, we need constant communion with God. Even dads who are pastors need to be regularly reminded of this. We are completely and utterly bankrupt apart from the Lord. I need the Holy Spirit to soften me daily through the reading of the Word and prayer. So, my aim is to have a regular meeting time with the Lord. For me, it must start early in the morning before anyone else in the house wakes up. I don't do well late at night. I like to go to bed when my wife does. Therefore, early meeting times with the Lord are the best.

Early in the a.m. I sneak out of bed and head downstairs and brew a fresh pot of coffee. As the coffee brews I gather all my materials for my devotional time with the Lord; Scripture, my chronological Bible reading plan, my prayer journal, my favorite pen, and a book I am reading to nourish my soul (currently Augustine's *Confessions*). After I grab my coffee, I read for 35-40 minutes and pray for 20-25 minutes (sometimes I pray, then read). This is my favorite part of my day. If this time of my day is out of sorts, it really does impact the rest of my day. Sometimes things come up and interrupt that time (like kids waking up earlier than normal). If that time gets interrupted, I try to carve out some other time in the day and get away to spend time with the Lord.

In addition to this, my family seeks to do family worship. We do this regularly (although we miss days for various reasons sometimes). We do this before I head off to work. We read a portion of the Scripture, pray, and then sing the Doxology. This is a way for me to model the priority of daily worship for my family.

My wife and I also read before bed. It is nice to start your day with the Lord and end your day with the Lord (certainly I seek to be mindful of the Lord and my dependence on Him throughout the day, some days though I am terrible at this).

I want to be a *present* dad.

Ministry is busy. Responsibilities are vast. As husbands and fathers, we are called by God to provide for our home. 1st Timothy 5:8 goes as far as to say that if we don't provide for our home, we deny the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. As Pastors we are called to care for and nurture the people the Lord has entrusted to us and we must work diligently in this important task as well. However, in the midst of

our God-assigned vocation, we must not become absent in the home.

Dads, we must be present physically, emotionally, and mentally. As I write this I have been absent from my home the last 5 nights in a row (as a rule I try not to be out more than 2 nights a week) for ministry purposes. First, I must remember that my primary ministry is my home. If I neglect my home at the expense of “vocational ministry” I am disqualified to be an elder (1st Timothy 3).

I am growing to be more present in my home and my wife knows that she has the freedom to speak into my life when I lose sight of what’s important. Here are some things I aim to do to be more present (again, these aren’t mastered).

- Turn my phone off when I’m home.
- Get on the floor and build tents, play hide and seek, have tickle fights, and dance.
- Schedule large blocks of time in the day to be home when out for several nights in a row.

I want the gospel to be in focus.

I have already mentioned how my family does daily family worship. In addition to this, we sing our prayers over meals sometimes (yes even when we are at restaurants sometimes). I also pray out loud and in front of my son that he would come to know and love Jesus the way his mother and I do. I pray that the Lord would sovereignly save him. I confess my inability to save him to God and trust the Lord’s plan for his life.

I remember a recent incident where I lost my temper with my son. I immediately felt like a failure, and I knew that incident would set the tone for the rest of my day. I was going to be discouraged and depressed. *Lord, I messed up again.* Instead of brooding on my failure, I did something different. I came back to my son, grabbed him by the hands and asked him to look at me. When he looked up, tears still streaming down his cheeks, I told him that Daddy was wrong and that I hope he could forgive me. I even told him how much Daddy needs Jesus.

Now, I am not sure how much he grasped, but I want to establish that rhythm in my home. That wasn’t the first time I sinned against my son and it won’t be the last. I want my son to see how much his dad needs the gospel and by God’s grace, how much he also needs the gospel.

I want to love my wife more than my kids.

Growing up, I knew my dad loved my mom more than he loved me. As my brothers and I look back on our childhood we all can see that. My dad made it abundantly clear that his love for my mother was greater than his love for me. My dad was affectionate toward my mom in front of us. I saw them kiss. I saw them hold hands. I saw my dad cradle my mom during a movie. I found and read the little love notes he would leave her (and still does!). I saw him serve her. And my mom adores my dad.

This brought me (and still brings me as an adult) immense security. As a child I knew that my parents' love and marriage was stable, and therefore my home was stable. Loving my wife more than my kids is the most loving thing I can do for my kids. I already tell my son that I love his mother more than I love him.

"If sin remains in the dark, it destroys the soul."

Bedtime is at 7:30 p.m. each night in the Tomlinson household. Honestly, that is the favorite part of my day, because it means I finally get one-on-one time with my wife. Also, we aren't scared of babysitters. If I can't find a free babysitter in our local church, I will pay a responsible teenager in our local church. I am not timid to ask my mother-in-law (who lives close by) to let my son spend the night so that my wife and I can have a weekend to ourselves. This is good. This is godly. This is what's best for your children.

I want my home to be a safe place for my kids to struggle and repent of sin.

I know of churches and homes where people must pretend to have their stuff together. I have felt the pressure to struggle with sin silently and alone. I do not want that culture in my home. *Ever*. I want my home to be a place where sin is taken seriously, and confession of sin flows freely. Sin feels safe in the dark. If sin remains in the dark, it destroys the soul. I want sin to be brought into the light so that it may be mortified. Mortifying sin is a team sport. I want to be on my kids' team. This means I need to be approachable. This means that I need to set the tone of confession in my house. This means that I shouldn't expect my kids to be saints. This means that I do not discipline for confession, but for hiding and lying.

I want to loosen up.

I'm uptight. There—I said it. I never considered myself uptight until my wife and I started having kids. Kids are messy. Laundry is everywhere. Crumbs are everywhere. Poop is everywhere. All my clothes have stains. All my eyeglasses have fingerprints. Playgrounds are disgusting. High chairs at restaurants are disgusting. Shopping carts at grocery stores are disgusting. Other people's kids in our Children's Ministry Program are disgusting and are infecting my kid with germs. Do you see what my wife puts up with?

My wife is teaching me. She is teaching me that a neat and tidy life is an illusion. She is teaching me that neat and tidy lives aren't worth living. I praise God for her, because she takes messes in strides and I am seeking to emulate her. So, I am growing to be OK with the mess. The beauty is, the more I let go of neat and tidy, the more effectively I can love and enjoy my son. God is teaching me.

I want my children to love God's Church.

I am a pastor at a local church, so my family is integrated deeply into the life of this local body. I want my kids to cherish the Church because it is Christ's bride. Therefore, I want to flee grumbling about issues or people that are a part of my local church. I want my kids to love and serve people at my church without my cynical perspective.

Also, my church is pretty large (1,500 folks) and I preach regularly there. I try really hard not to make illustrations out of my kid in my sermons. Some pastors do, and I think that's totally fine—it's not a sin to use your kids to illustrate spiritual points—but I don't want to do that. One of the pastors I serve with at my local church pays his children money every time he uses them in an illustration, and I think that's a great idea and they seem to be OK with it. The reason why I don't use my son as a sermon illustration is because it may embarrass him and embitter him toward ministry and the church. He may not understand or hear the sermons since he is so young right now, but this is a digital age, where many things are recorded. I want him to know that the home is not the place dad gets material for his sermon. He is safe in the home.

"I want the church to be a place that builds my son up in Christ."

As a pastor of a church of 1,500 people, there is no way for me to know every-

one. I don't want people my son does not know knowing intimate/embarrassing details of his life. I try to treat social media the same way. My wife and I post pictures of my son on social media, but not often. We never post embarrassing stories about him on there (again, some do, we just decided not to).

I want the church to be a place that builds my son up in Christ. I don't want to hinder that in any way. Some people may think I am being overly uptight here, and that's ok. I already admitted to being uptight in the previous section.

These are my goals as a young dad in ministry. By God's grace I am growing in them each day. May we be the fathers and ministers the Lord has called us to be as we steward the gospel in our home and our church. If you have certain goals as a dad, I would love to hear from you!

I Need My Fellow Moms

By Lara d'Entremont

I like to be independent. I like to make my own decisions. I don't want to be seen as following the crowd. I also don't like to ask for help. I like to be self-sufficient; running on my own power, my own skills, my own abilities. Can you relate? We don't like to admit our needs. This comes from our ever-fighting pride.

But entering motherhood, my pride has taken a smack to the head. I'm a first-time mom and, to be honest, I have no idea what I'm doing. I didn't babysit growing up, and I didn't have any younger siblings. I worked at summer camps, but that was no comparison to being a mom. When I saw that pregnancy test light up, recognized my growing bump, felt those tiny kicks in my belly, and watched that wiggling baby on the ultrasound screen, I knew I had a lot to learn.

It has been said that each believer needs a Timothy, Barnabas, and Paul in their life. That is, someone to mentor, someone to be a close



companion, and someone who is older and mature in the faith. I am realizing that motherhood is no different. To grow and flourish as a mom, to learn to be a Christ-centered mother, I need fellow moms of various stages and ages. I need younger women to mentor, mom friends who are striving through the same season as me, and older mothers who can lead me. This is Christ's beautiful design for his church. He lays it out in Titus 2:3-5:

"Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."

Younger Women

To even the newest mom, there is someone younger than you who has not yet walked the same pathways. There's a woman who has yet to have children but is considering it; there's a mother in the early stages of pregnancy; there's a mom who has no children in her arms but has carried them in her womb for a short time; there's a mother who is in the toddler stages; there's a 16-year-old mom-to-be abandoned by her boyfriend who is terrified of what life is going to look like now.

Wherever you are, at whatever age or stage, there's another mom who is either younger or less mature in the faith than you. There is someone you can come alongside and disciple. There's a fellow mom who is struggling and feels lost with many questions and little direction. There's a mom who could use an older woman like you in her life.

And don't forget—you need her too. This younger woman will keep you with your nose in the Word of God as she asks you tough questions about how various issues of motherhood works out in the Christian walk. She will keep you studying diligently as you strive to accurately teach Scripture to her. She will also keep you humble, reminding you that you don't have all the answers yet, and there are unresolved questions in your mind too. In both these ways, she will keep directing your wayward gaze back to Christ.

Companion Moms

Every mom also needs a friend to walk with through this sinful world, with all its thorns and thistles, as she navigates how to be a God-glorifying mother. Even Paul often brought companions with him on his mission trips or asked people to visit him in prison. God used those people in Paul's life to encourage and support him.

They met his physical needs (Philippians 2:30; 4:18), his spiritual needs (Colossians 4:10-11), and served alongside of him (Acts 13:1-5; 2nd Timothy 4:11).

In the same way, you need fellow moms in your life who are there right alongside of you. These women can be the shoulder to cry on when you've had a hard day. You can work together to apply the gospel to your current situation that you are both facing. You understand each other well because you are both facing similar circumstances. You can go to each for advice. You can have those deep chats while your children play together in the room. We need these fellow moms to walk hand-in-hand with as we grow in motherhood.

Our sinful nature will see these moms as competition rather than companions. We will compare and hold ourselves up against them, either to their detriment or our own. We lose sight of our union in Christ and instead start competing and judging one another wrongly. Friend, resist that temptation. Refuse to be a part of the "Mommy Wars" and instead strive to live in harmony with these women and be an encourager to them. Seek to learn from them. Learn to set aside your desires to serve them. Put off your pride and admit your need for their companionship.

Older Mothers

Looking back to the passage in Titus, we see that we also need older mothers. These are the women who have gone before us in raising children, tending their homes, and loving their husbands. These are the women who have spent many years studying their Bibles and living out its message in their daily lives. They have learned what the gospel says about their mundane work and how to honour Christ with the menial chores. They have gone through the baby years, the toddler times, and seasons of teenagers and adulthood.

These are the older women of Titus 2 who will teach and guide you. She will set an example by her humble behavior, her honourable speech, and discipline. She will teach you what is good, and how to love your husband and children like Christ. Because of her teaching and your obedience, the Word of God will not be reviled. The older women in your life have much wisdom to share from their years and experiences. Respect them, and desire to learn from them.

Your tendency might not be to be a respectful learner. In our sin, we often look down on the older women in our churches as irrelevant, boring, stubborn, and unlearned to the "new" and "better" ways of motherhood. Maybe in some cases they are, but I believe there is at least one elderly lady in your church worth listening to. Watch

for these women. Examine their lives by Scripture. And then approach them with humility to learn—ask them to come over for a cup of coffee, or go out for a walk. Ask them a question. And pray that God will help you cultivate a Titus 2 relationship.

A Practical Example

I haven't learned this structure from Scripture alone. I've had the privilege of watching it worked out in the daily life of my beautiful pastor's wife. I've watched her respectfully and humbly come to the older women in our church with questions and a learner's heart. Much of what she knows about being a housewife and cooking was gleaned from older women in her life, such as her grandmother or the older ladies in our church.

I've watched her laugh and fellowship with the women her age in our church. She shares life with these women, having them over for meals and planning playdates with their children. I've watched as she's both been supported and supported them.

Finally, I've had the honour of being her friend and learning from her. As I observe her chaste, her Christ-like parenting, her faithful endurance, her warm hospitality, her committed housekeeping, and her love for God's Word, I've grown. She patiently answers my many questions, and strives to set a godly example for me. God has truly blessed me with a church full of mothers who love and serve the Lord. I hope to live the same Titus 2 life as a mother that she has so exemplified for me.

God's Grand Plan for Motherhood: Nurturing Life for the Glory of Christ

By Gloria Furman



God's grand plan for motherhood is the same plan that He has for everything He has created. He created all things for his glory. So to put it bluntly, motherhood is about nurturing life. God has created and equipped women to nurture the life He creates—both biological *and* spir-

itual.

So we nurture children, our friends, ladies in our local church, neighbors, and whomever God leads us to serve. It is vitally important for us to remember as Christian women that the word “mother” is also a verb. We mother others to the glory of God. So motherhood fits into God’s grand plan to glorify Himself, when nurturing women rejoice that the thousands of deaths to self that we die each day are actually our servants. It’s not a loss. Those deaths to self are servants, midwives who are bringing us gain in an eternal weight of glory.

Another way that we see that motherhood is part of God’s plan is when we realize that Jesus redeemed our motherhood from the futility of our sin. We follow in Christ’s pattern by laying down our lives, we serve with the power that He provides, and we look forward to the fruition of God’s promises by faith. So we get to live out His big story, the story that says, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2nd Corinthians 5:17).

Our motherhood that is done for Christ is part and parcel of the new creation, an invisible kingdom that is growing like a mustard seed in a garden, and spreading throughout dough like leaven. We go about the good work that God has prepared for us knowing that our salvation, and the salvation of those for whom we care, is a gift of God by grace through faith. So we make our boast in Jesus Christ and we point to Him. That’s our story, and we live out of it.

Regular Pastors and Discipleship

By Landon Coleman



I am a regular pastor, and I have a heart for regular pastors and the churches they lead. When I think about a

regular pastor, I think about a guy pastoring a small to medium sized church. Despite the attention given to celebrity pastors and their massive churches, most churches in the United States aren't mega-churches. That means most pastors in the United States aren't celebrity pastors. They're regular. Just like me, and probably just like you.

There are a number of challenges that come with the position of "regular pastor". You wear an incredible number of hats, and you never seem to have enough week left at the end of your work. Additionally, there are some things your church simply can't do because you just don't have the money or resources. However, every regular pastor can do the one thing Jesus sent us to do: make disciples. Church size doesn't matter. Church budget is irrelevant. Church location is no excuse. Every regular pastor can be involved in making disciples.

The Biblical Mandate for Making Disciples

The Biblical mandate for making disciples begins with the ministry of Jesus. Early on Jesus called men to follow him (John 1:35-51). Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael were all early followers of Jesus. They listened. They watched. They spent time with Jesus. Later, Jesus formally called twelve men to be "apostles". Mark describes this development with these words, "And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles), so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons." (Mark 3:13-15). These men eventually went out as representatives of the Messiah, but first they were called to simply be with Jesus. The Master made disciples before he sent apostles. Every regular pastor can find someone or some group to simply "be with" for the purpose of making disciples.

Eventually, Jesus did send these men on permanent mission. Matthew records the Great Commission Jesus gave to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20). As many scholars have pointed out, the sole command in this passage is "make disciples". Everything else explains how sent ones go about the process of making disciples. Every pastor can find ways to be intentional about making disciples.

This call to make disciples was echoed by the apostle Paul when he wrote to his disciple, Timothy. Paul wrote these words to Timothy, "You then, my child, be

strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2nd Timothy 2:1-2). These words were the last Paul wrote to his protégé. 2nd Timothy contains the final instructions Paul would ever give to a young pastor. Included in those instructions was a call to make disciples, to pass down the faith once for all delivered to the saints from one generation to the next. Additionally, Paul expected pastors to entrust the gospel to faithful men in such a way that those men would be equipped to teach others also. Every pastor can find his place in this process.

This emphasis on disciple making is also found in Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus. This is important. Not only did Paul want pastors like Timothy to embrace their role as disciple makers, Paul also wanted churches to embrace their role as disciples. In the first part of Ephesians 4, Paul lays out the various people God has given to the church. These include apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Then Paul explains the end game. He explains these people have been given to the church, “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12-13). Paul wanted to see local churches making fully formed, mature disciples, not simply recording decisions. Every pastor can fix his eyes on the same goal.

Practical Advice for Making Disciples

Over a dozen years of regular pastoral ministry, I’ve made numerous attempts at intentional discipleship. Some of those attempts have focused on relationship, and others have centered on a curriculum. Some of those attempts have been one-on-one discipleship, and others have taken place in a small group. Through all my efforts, here are a few principles that should guide any particular attempt to make disciples.

First, recognize the power of your position. As the “pastor” you have incredible influence over the people in your church. Many people in your congregation will respond to a personal invitation from you simply because you are the pastor. These folks may have no interest in focused discipleship, but if the “pastor” invites them to participate they will accept. As a pastor, you must recognize the power of your position. Specifically invite individual men to participate in focused discipleship knowing that many will participate because of who asked them.

Second, think strategically about *what* you want to accomplish in your disci-

pleship relationship or discipleship group. Do you want to equip husbands to lead their wives? Do you want to equip fathers to teach their children? Do you want to equip believers to share their faith? Do you want to equip men in your church to teach Sunday school? Each of these goals will require a different approach to discipleship. Rather than just implementing the latest program or curriculum, take time to think strategically about what you actually want to accomplish.

“It’s the living active Word of God that cuts to the core and changes us into the kinds of people that God wants us to be.”

Third, think strategically about *how* you will accomplish your discipleship goals. Yes, you need a clear purpose, but you also need an approach that fits with your purpose. On this question of “how” you’re going to have to think through discipling an individual as opposed to a group? If you start a discipleship group, will that group be open or closed? When and where will you meet for discipleship, and what will be the length of

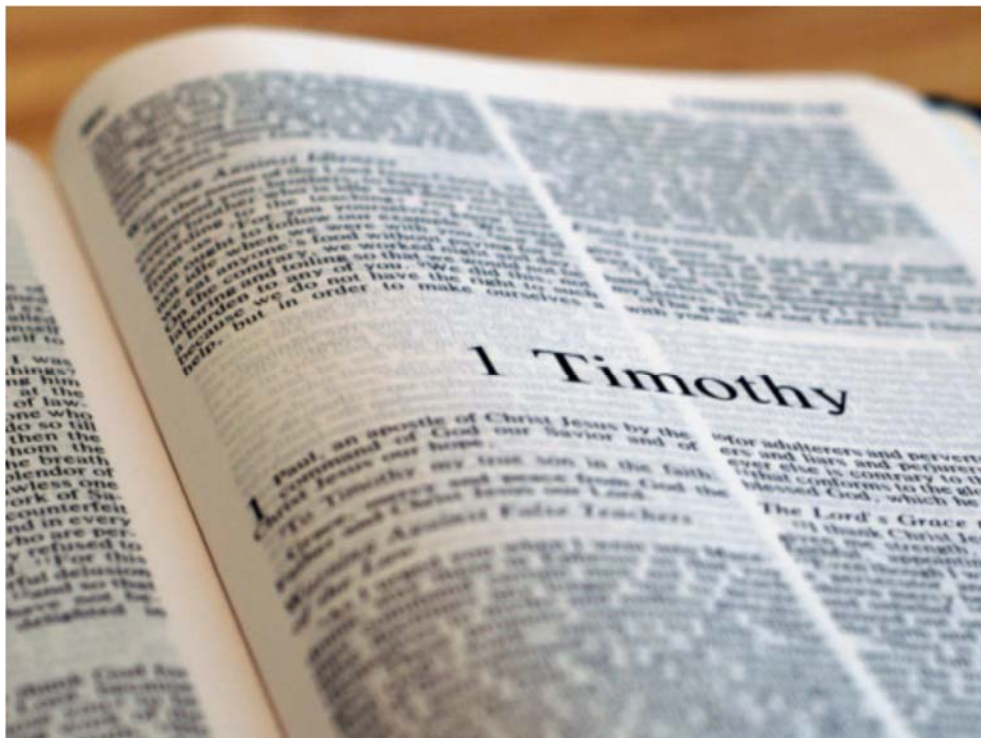
the program? All of these “how” questions need to be answered up front and the answers shared with the men you plan to disciple.

Fourth, center on the Word of God. I’m not saying you should never use books or curriculum or non-biblical material, I’m just saying the Word of God has to be at the center of all discipleship. Ultimately it’s the Spirit of God using the Word of God that will bring change to the men you’re discipling. Not your program or your teaching. Not the bestselling book from Lifeway or Mardel. It’s the living and active Word of God that cuts to the core and changes us into the kinds of people that God wants us to be. Center on the Word of God.

Last, make sure to share your expectations up front when you begin a new discipleship relationship or group. If you expect participants to be prepared before you meet, make that clear and hold people accountable. If you expect participants to be active in your church, establish your expectations up front. If you expect participants to take what they learn from you and share it at home or at work, say so on the front end. Be honest with people about what you expect from them and what you want to see God do through them. Help them count the cost of discipleship up front.

Adoring Sound Doctrine: A Case for Doctrine and a Biblical Sexual Ethic

By Dave Jenkins



When we begin to think about the question, “What is a ‘biblical sexual ethic’?” we must first take a look at Genesis 1 with God creating Adam. There we see that man is not an accident; God made Adam from the dust, fashioned him in His likeness and breathed life into his lungs. Man is an intentional and purposeful creation of the

Creator God. And not only that, when we turn to the next page to Genesis 2, we see that God saw that it was *not good for man to be alone*. And that’s significant, because Adam was the leader in the Garden. He was doing hard work and needed companionship and someone to “do life” with. And so, God created for Adam his

wife, Eve, using one of his ribs, to be his helpmate.

What I just walked you through is one of the most controversial passages in the Scriptures in our culture today. It shouldn't be, but it is. And we begin here with God creating, because it is here that He establishes the rules for a biblical sexual ethic. A biblical sexual ethic starts between one man and one woman, *for life*.

Many people in our culture say, "No, that is wrong." A biblical sexual ethic teaches that a man is to be a man, and a woman is to be a woman. And by doing so, they reflect the Creator in their specific gender. A man isn't to become a woman. A woman isn't to become a man. Doing so is an affront against the Creator. And so, we need to make clear to people that there is a difference between a man and a woman if we are going to help them understand the framework of a biblical sexual ethic.

Sadly, though, we live in a culture that Paul describes in many places, but specifically in Romans 1; a culture that worships the creature rather than the Creator. All you have to do is go through the grocery line at your store, and you can see this statement proved by a glance at the cover of certain magazines near the register. Or, you can see this if you go down to the beach, to any mall at any place in the world, or on the internet where there are videos and images by the millions and growing. And it's into this precise situation that a biblical sexual ethic needs to be proclaimed.

"Many people are telling us that doctrine doesn't matter..."

In 1st Timothy, Paul desires to ensure that Timothy proclaims sound doctrine and that it is preserved. His instruction to Timothy is beneficial. He is to teach sound doctrine (1st Timothy 1:3; 5:17; 6:3-5), raise up leaders who are able to teach sound doctrine (1st Timothy 3:2), command sound doctrine (1st Timothy 4:11, 13, 16), and guard sound doctrine (1st Timothy 6:20). To do so is not a trite or secondary matter to Paul, it is a gospel issue (1st Timothy 1:11).

Many people are telling us that doctrine doesn't matter. And yet, Paul's instruction to Timothy is telling: doctrine matters. The famous Martyn Lloyd-Jones taught through a series he entitled, *Great Doctrines of the Bible*, for this precise reason. Lloyd-Jones, a medical doctor, was trained to diagnosis patients and to give them the right remedy. To Lloyd-Jones, as a pastor to fail to provide the correct diagnosis and to deliver God's people the proper treatment was to fail in his task. And it's the same today for pastors and ministry leaders. Paul's instruction to Timothy is binding to us today because of the inspired, inerrant, sufficient, clear, and authoritative Word of God. To fail in this is to fail in our task. And this is vital because sound doctrine matters, but it matters because it enables right-living before the face of God.

We are seeing many people abandon a biblical sexual ethic because they don't believe in the Word of God. Instead, they think that they can redefine or even remove biblical sexual ethics from the Bible. And to do so is to rip out Paul's instruction on many matters related to the Christian life. For example, how can we know about the fruits of the Spirit? In the context of talking about the fruits of the Spirit, Paul talks about biblical morality. Furthermore, when talking to the Corinthians (1st Corinthians 6), Paul talks to them about biblical sexual ethics. So, we would have to rip 1st Corinthians 6, and Galatians 5, right out of our Bibles. And we would have to take out Colossians 3, and many other passages in the Bible, including vast portions of the Old Testament law that teach about biblically informed sexuality and ethics.

And yet, we see this redefinition all over the place on biblical sexuality and biblical sexual ethics, precisely because people don't believe in sound doctrine. They have doctrine, make no mistake about it, but it is not *biblical* doctrine. Such doctrine is not binding on people's lives because it originates in people's minds and hearts, and not in the Word of God. Defining orthodoxy often focuses on how we feel, rather than on what the Bible teaches. Doing so gives the wrong diagnosis and thus offers the wrong remedy. The right remedy is—to begin with—what the Bible teaches, because the Bible also provides the proper remedy in the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

“Paul gives the right and wrong use of the law, tackling those things false teachers were either failing to teach or were contradicting...”

Paul right out of the gate charges Timothy to “charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine” (1st Timothy 1:3). He goes on to explain to Timothy people who were setting themselves up as teachers of sound doctrine. Paul goes on to describe these false teachers, describing them as those who make confident statements they do not understand nor do they know anything (1st Timothy 3:7).

Paul gives the right and wrong use of the law, tackling those things false teachers were either failing to teach or were contradicting with their lives. 1st Timothy 1:8-11 states, “Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.”

Earlier, I explained how biblical sexuality and biblical ethics are under attack,

but it's also important to note how both of those points, lead to the heart of biblical morality. If we abandon biblical sexuality and a biblical sexual ethic, what we are doing is abandoning any framework for biblical morality. And if we have no biblical morality, then why would we ever care how we live before the face of God? Why would we care about sexuality at all? And this is precisely the point, many people today don't care. They call themselves Christians but live in open rebellion against the God they say they believe in the Bible. They live lives filled with pornography, sex outside of marriage, and many other things that are outside the bounds for a Christian.

According to Paul in 1 Timothy 1:8-11 this list of sins, a list that includes murder, homosexuality, enslavement, lying, also adds, "whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine." Paul's statements in 1 Timothy 1:11 should genuinely get our attention. Paul's definition of sound doctrine is opposed to the vice list of 1 Timothy 1:8-10 is such that it is "in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted."

The gospel is itself the fountainhead of sound doctrine. If we get the foundation wrong, then every other part will crumble and fall. For example, if we are wrong on the creation, namely, how God created men and women, how then can we understand what happens in Genesis 3? And if we don't know what happens in Genesis 3 how can we begin to understand what happens in the rest of the Old Testament and even in the New Testament? The answer is we can't. When they put in the foundation for a house, it's one of the essential aspects of the home. It has to be strong. It has to be right. And the same is true with the gospel. That is how deadly serious it is that sound doctrine matters. It matters because it gives us the right foundation to build the rest of our doctrine and theology. Sound doctrine entails sound biblical ethics. To compromise on biblical ethics- same-sex marriage, abortion, etc. is to compromise sound doctrine, which 1 Timothy 1:11 says is to compromise the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

Christian ethics is not an agree to disagree issue. The Nashville Statement from the Council on Biblical Manhood is clear on Article X on this matter:

"WE AFFIRM that it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness."

"WE DENY that the approval of homosexual immorality or transgenderism is a matter of moral indifference about which otherwise faithful Christians should agree to disagree."

If we say that this is an agree to disagree point as Christians, we are missing Paul's position and denying the foundation for Christianity, the gospel. Paul's teach-

ing is clear; we are to confront false teaching wherever it is that does not go along with the “Gospel of the blessed God” who we not only believe but have been entrusted with His Word.

You and I are living in a culture that places its feelings at the forefront. In many ways, feelings are the doctrine of our culture. Every single person R.C. Sproul once remarked is a theologian; the question is whether they are a good theologian or a bad theologian. And bad theologies exist, because of bad theologians. They perpetuate unsound doctrine because they are not sound. They do not believe the gospel. And this is precisely what we are seeing in our culture, even in many quarters of the church. People are opposed to the God of the Bible, the God they say they love is opposed to what they believe on matters related to same-sex marriage, abortion, homosexuality to name a few things. And yet these people continue, undeterred by teaching false doctrine. They are unafraid; they have no fear of God. They are, to put it bluntly not converted. They are not regenerate. They are false teachers perpetuating false doctrine because they don’t believe in the God they say they believe.

Our response to such people should be to continue to preach the Word in season and out of season. We must, in a culture that is greatly confused about biblical sexuality, preach the Word. It is not a matter of our opinion; it is a matter of the authority of God’s Word. God’s Word teaches this about biblical sexuality and biblical sexuality, and so we stand opposed to the position of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, transgenderism, and so on.

We do so not because we are opposed to image bearers, we do so because we are opposed to those who teach contrary to sound doctrine. We are not against people themselves, we are against the positions they hold, and so we continue to proclaim lovingly and biblically that the truth matters. And that is a matter of love to confront error. It is also a matter we should pray about. Because the truth matters, people matter, and we as Christians are called to love God and people. We must not only proclaim but pray for those who are lost that the Lord would open their eyes to the truth of the Word and smash their opinions and unsound doctrine into a million pieces, and reveal their utter need for the Savior, who bled, died, was buried and rose again for them.

“We must not only proclaim but pray for those who are lost that the Lord would open their eyes to the truth of the Word...”

Only the Lord can illuminate the truth of the Word by the Holy Spirit, but we must be faithful. We must stand fast. And we must

proclaim sound doctrine, sound living, and sound ethics, and morality matter. If we don't, we fail, in our task, in our mission to make disciples. And so this is desperately urgent and needed because we have been given the diagnosis about the human race, we are sinners by nature and by choice, but also the remedy- there is hope in Christ alone, through faith alone by grace alone. So let us stand, and proclaim with urgency, even if people don't want to hear, the message that sound doctrine, sound living, biblical morality, biblical sexuality, and the whole counsel of God matters with passion, with all we are, to the glory of God, even as we live before the face of God.

A Letter from a Seasoned Ministry Leader to a Young Ministry Leader Beginning in Marriage

By Dave Jenkins

Dear Young Man,

I remember well the joys of finding the lady I would marry. Let me tell you the story. I was twenty-six years old at the time. Since I was nineteen years old, I wanted to meet a young lady who loved Jesus and the church. I searched desperately, even dating many young ladies to find *the one*. Sadly, in reflection, I gave away my heart way too quickly, and even moreso, didn't guard it as well as I should have. Now, I want to write to you about three critical lessons as you begin your marriage.

First, your wife needs you to be the man you tell others you are. In marriage, you are going to be utterly exposed. There is no hiding behind your theological knowledge. There is no hiding behind your struggles or faking out other people. You are completely and utterly exposed before your wife. You will fight with your wife, make no mistake about it. If you want to continue in ministry, it will be how you process and deal biblically with those confrontations/



arguments/disagreements, that will determine the trajectory of your life and ministry.

You see, ministry to people is not first and foremost about your spouse. Ministry to others begins with you and God, not with you and your spouse. While your wife is your most crucial ministry focus, even more vital than your relationship with her is your relationship with God. If you want to last for the long haul, and love and care not only for your wife but also for others, you need to grow in communion with Christ. You need to read your Bible daily—not out of duty but out of delight, regularly pray, and avail yourself of accountability and friendship that takes time to cultivate with godly men. Doing so is hard work, even tedious at times, but it is necessary.

Second, as you are growing in your understanding of the Christian life—which you should do by reading not only your Bible, but also other excellent and godly books grounded in sound theology—you should also be applying the truths you are learning to your life. Your home is the place for this. Early in my marriage, I was unforgiving and quickly became convicted of this fact. My wife and I would have arguments early in our marriage where things were not well, and I didn't forgive. I didn't move on from the fight. Instead, I would let it fester, and bitterness grew as it always does. And this is vital; as I mentioned earlier, you cannot hide in marriage. The issues that are in your heart will come to the forefront of your marriage. It may take a month, a year, or several decades, but they always come out. And how you deal with those issues demonstrates your spiritual maturity. Marriage is the caldron where your theology is put on display in practice.

This is why I had to learn to forgive and repent in my marriage. One day, early in my marriage, I remember sitting in my office after a fight, thinking, *Here I am, a Christian and a ministry leader, and I just fought with my wife...* And I asked myself this question, "What part did I play in this fight?" More than likely, I was responsible for pushing my wife's buttons, and my buttons were pushed. So, I then realized I needed to repent for being unloving and unforgiving of my wife, and did at that moment. Then, I went to my wife and apologized specifically to her.

Now, what a wife wants to hear you say is not only that you are sorry, but for you to specifically apologize. Let's say you were ungodly with your words. Here is an excellent example of what to do in this situation:

Sweetheart, I am sorry for how I used my words in our last conversation. I sinned against you by saying [the things you said] and am very sorry for what I said and

how I said it. It was very unloving of me to say [the things you said]. Will you please forgive me for this?

You should not use this example every time...or even most of the time. It needs to be genuine. This template is only to help you understand the principle so you can use it in your marriage.

Third, you need male Christians—preferably older, seasoned friends—who are further along in the Christian life. This is something that will not only help you to grow, but will help the other experienced men in your local church to grow. I've been blessed with some older men in my life who I can share openly and honestly with, and who share openly and honestly with me. This is an important and neglected aspect of ministry. Friendships with seasoned, older men, even seasoned, older pastors, are essential. They have wisdom and knowledge you do not have, not only theologically from their years of study, but also from life experience. And it's not only the theological wisdom you need; it's the life experience you need to glean from.

In a Bible study I led at my previous church in Southern Idaho, before moving here to California, there was a guy who was difficult to deal with. We were going through the Gospel of John verse-by-verse in this Bible study. And I was having a hard time dealing with him because, right after I would finish explaining something from the text, he would interrupt and make a point outside of context of the study. Now, that was okay that he wanted to ask questions, but when he did that it bothered me. It felt like he was taking the Bible study another direction other than the one that it needed to go in my estimation from the biblical text. And so, I often told one of my pastors about this. He said to me, "Dave, you need to pray for this man." Well at this point, I was exasperated at this man and didn't *want* to pray for him. So I told my pastor, "No, I don't want to pray for him." He said, lovingly, "Dave, you need to pray for him."

I thought to myself, *Okay, okay, I will; I'll pray for him.* And so, I did. Well, what began to happen over some months was my heart towards him changed. And I did this with other situations that were difficult to me; I prayed for each person. God changed my heart. He not only changed my heart, but also how I viewed that person. I began to see that person as Jesus did.

And, dear young man, whether you know it or not, you need friends to help you with this. You need the wisdom of other godly men, to help you grow in grace. You need help to apply the truth of God's Word you are studying to your life and marriage.

Dear young man, you are beginning an incredible journey in marriage. I don't know where you are at in your walk with God, including where you are at with your

knowledge of Scripture and theology. I do know one thing, though: that you need to read and study the Bible with all of your heart, mind, and strength. If you are going to last for the long haul, you need to get in a local church and get involved (if you aren't already). You also need to begin to minister to others (if you aren't already), and start finding out where your gifts and talents are, and what direction the Lord is calling you in ministry as it relates to others—whether it is as a vocational elder or layperson.

Wherever you are at today, let me encourage you. If you remain idle and stuck in the place you are at now, and remain there for ten, twenty, or thirty years, you will not make a significant difference in the lives of others like I know you want to do. I *know* you desire to make a significant difference since you are reading this letter, and that you want to grow. So, begin today to repent of your sins, and continue on each day to do so. Pick up your Bible and read it. Talk to your wife about what you are reading and ask her what she's reading and praying about that. Grow together in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. And, as you do over the years and decades, you will see growth not just in your life, but will leave a harvest of righteousness that will go on and on in your family tree to the glory of God.

Your Friend and Brother in Christ,

Dave Jenkins

10 Ways to Exercise Christ-like Headship

By Owen Strachan



Few words are more invested with meaning than the term “headship”. It’s a Christological and theological term that is grounded in Ephesians 5:23, which reads, “For the husband is the head [Greek, *kephale*] of

the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.” This is the preeminent statement in all of Scripture on what a husband is and is to be.

This means that the husband, in John Piper’s seminal words, is the one who takes “primary responsibility for Christ-like servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home” (*Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 84). There is so much to unpack here, and it can be confusing for modern men to understand, especially since a secularizing culture dislikes, even detests, the concept. Because that is the case, let me suggest ten ways by which godly husbands can practice Christ-like headship in their home.

10. Christ-like male headship means that you see the spiritual nourishment of your wife as your primary duty

(Ephesians 5:28-30). This doesn’t happen by accident; it happens as, on a regular basis, you open the Bible with her, pray with her, and talk about God with her. You don’t need to be a global theologian to read the Bible and pray, right?

9. Christ-like male headship means that you love just one wife. Like Jesus, who loved only his bride, you have eyes for no one else. You save up your affection for her. You live on a continual mission to treasure her and to make her feel treasured.

8. Christ-like male headship means that you train yourself to know the Lord in a vibrant way. You recognize that your family will only flourish under your leadership when you are flourishing in Christ. This means being in the Word regularly, praying regularly, and being a faithful church member. You don’t have to be a spiritual all-star future biographer, poring over your Moleskin for clues into your thinking. You do need to be faithful to your Savior, by the Spirit’s awesome power (Romans 6, 8).

7. Christ-like male headship means on date night/ vacations, you first consider, “What would she like to do?” not, “What would I like to do?” If you’re on vacation or a date, you’re first trying to find activities she would enjoy. With apologies to 1990s-era bracelets, I try to ask myself, WWBL—“What would Bethany like?” For you, this may mean that you forgo a war museum, a basketball or baseball game, or a superhero movie. Then, not only do you find something she would like to do, but you enter into it *fully*. You’re present with her. She will love you for it.

6. Christ-like male headship means that at dinner (even after a long day at work) you hold the baby so your wife—frazzled from kids and home-making—can eat first.

Your food is getting cold; your stomach is growling. You are hungry, and mannishly so. But you hold your child so that the woman who sacrificially gives 100% of her energy each day to care for your children can, at the very least, eat a hot meal. You can't make child-raising easy; it's always challenging. You can, however, make it more pleasurable (or at least tolerable).

5. Christ-like male headship means, when conflict happens (as it will), you lead in apologizing. First, before you speak, you listen well, inviting your wife to share what hurt her. You don't interrupt her or fight her off. As you think about what you've done, you confess your sin to her. You don't offer excuses; you display humility by owning your faults *like a man*. You lead in showing humility; you don't expect her to show it first.

4. Christ-like male headship means that you show strength wherever you can. You're not a sphinx; you're not a superman. You can and should show genuine emotion, and you should make clear to your son (s) (if applicable) that men get sad, men get angry at evil, men are tender and gentle with women. But like David charged Solomon, you're engaged in a lifelong process of "showing yourself a man", and thus being strong for others (1st Kings 2:2). When hardship hits, headship persists.

3. Christ-like male headship means that you put yourself in harm's way, gladly taking a hit to protect your family (and the weak). Christ "gave himself up" for the Church (Ephesians 5:25). You do the same for loved ones and, by extension, those in your neighborhood without protection. You do so willingly, without fear, knowing that this is your divine call as a man. You may not be a fearsome linebacker; your shoulders may not ripple with muscle. But as a God-ordained head, whether 6'6" or 4'10", you put yourself in the line of fire, and you take others out of it.

2. Christ-like male headship means that, like the best leaders—generals, presidents, coaches, and so on—you solicit gobs of wisdom from wise counselors (namely, your wife). You generously and gladly solicit your wife's wisdom. If your relationship is

like mine, she will put you to shame in this category. She will have good idea after good idea. *None of this threatens you or upsets you.* The strongest men are not those who never listen. The strongest men are those who are so confident in Christ that they crave wisdom, celebrate humility, and are glad, not threatened, when others contribute.

1. In these and 1,000 other ways, Christ-like male headship means you die to yourself daily. This is your constant thought throughout the day: *how can I be like Jesus and die to myself for the good of my wife and my family?* He “gave himself up” for others. In the power of His cross and resurrection, I am going to do the same, come what may.

Conclusion

You may never have witnessed this kind of leadership. It might only be theoretical. Men in your past might have abused their authority and strength, and doubly damned themselves by justifying their abuses as part of manhood and leadership. If this is your experience, I invite you to consider the cross, which makes all things new. Christian leadership doesn’t mean everyone bowing down to you because you’re so great. It means, like Jesus, that you become a courageous servant, dying to yourself for the benefit of others. If you have heard differently, wipe the slate clean. The Bible’s word is better than any other. Read Ephesians 5 again, and soak it in.

Our culture may reject male headship; it may undermine men. None of that matters to you. None of it bogs you down. Whether trained by a godly dad from birth, or newly learning about headship as a young believer, your face is set like a flint to pursue the glory of God as the Christ-like head of a home. That’s your goal; that, like a distant trumpet summoning you to sacrificial leadership, is your call.

Marriage and Friendship: Becoming Best Friends with Your Spouse

By Dave Jenkins



Marriage is often painfully hard. After all, marriage is the joining of two sinners, preferably if they are Christians (so saint-sinners) together in covenant before God. Marriage according to the Genesis 3 world

is not perfect. In the New Jerusalem, there will not only be no more marriage, there will also be no more sin. In between Genesis and the New Jerusalem, there is difficulty, pain, hardship, difficult choices, and hard financial decisions. In a covenant marriage, one-man and one-woman vow before God, the pastor, and those gathered, that they will love, care, and cherish one another. And that's a deadly serious vow, but it's also a deeply rewarding one.

The early years of our marriage from my perspective were often difficult. I was unforgiving, unloving, and harsh at times. I had a lot of room to grow. The Lord has done excel-

"Friendship with the Lord is made possible because of Christ."

lent work in my life in over ten years of marriage. He has addressed, and continues to address, sinful patterns of thought and behavior in my life. The Holy Spirit is very good at convicting those who are His own. In fact, that is one of the means of assurance faithful Christians have that they are Christ's and He is theirs. In this article, I want to sketch out something that I am still very much learning, so I will share openly and honestly; I don't have all this figured out, and I don't think I ever will. Even so, I am growing in these things. So with that said, here we go.

Friendship with the Lord is made possible because of Christ. Christ Himself says we are His friends now through His finished and sufficient work (John 15). And as friends, no longer enemies of the Cross, we enjoy union with Christ, and all the benefits of Christ Himself—including communion with Him. And such friendship is essential to a healthy friendship with our spouse and with everyone else. If we are not enjoying our friendship with God, we will not enjoy being friends with others, and we will also have little to no chance of maintaining healthy friendships with others.

In the past year since I stepped aside from local church ministry, when we moved from Boise, Idaho to the Mojave Desert in California, near Edwards Air Force Base, I've been learning about friendship more with my wife. I've been learning to pursue my wife better not just saying the right words with others, but doing them. However, I also need to say that I was already doing that, so please don't take this statement as me not practicing what I preach. I only mean to say that I'm rediscovering afresh the importance of these truths for me, and applying them to my marriage more consistently.

My office in our new house is about two steps away from the garage. When Sarah comes in from working at the base for the day, I try hard to greet her. Or once she is inside, I come from wherever I am in the house to say, "Welcome home, I love

you.” That is a tiny thing, but one that means a lot also. When on the phone, I actively try hard to listen to her so that she knows that I’m paying attention. I’m working harder to ensure that she knows I love her, treasure her, and what she says to me is precious and vital to me. And it wasn’t that I wasn’t doing these things before, to be clear, it was that I’m much more intentional about them now.

Men, friendship with our wives is not hard. We say we love

“When your friendship with your wife goes cold, it is a reflection of a cold heart toward the Lord, make no mistake about it.”

them. We say we love the Lord. Great, now let’s combine what Jesus says about the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) here. Jesus tells us to love the Lord and love one another, especially our neighbor, as ourselves. If we love God, we will love our neighbor. Our neighbor is the “bor” (or *body*) that is “neigh” (or *nearest*) to us. This is our wife. Yes, we are in a covenant relationship with our wives. Yes, we are to honor, cherish, protect, and provide for them. But even more so, if we truly love our wives, as we say we do, how are we doing at pursuing her heart, loving her, as we say we love Christ?

I know that’s a tough question to ask, but it’s still a vital one. It’s one thing to say, “Well we are going to have theological dialogue.” Or, “We are going to have family worship time” (or whatever you want to call it). Even more so, it’s harder to sit and listen as someone talks about a topic (especially one we are not 100% interested in), including theology. I mean truly, genuinely listen, and be *present*. And we should delight to do this, as men, with our wives. But I have to wonder have we lost the wonder of conversation with our wives, as we first had when we first got married?

In some ways since moving I am rediscovering the glory of my wife again, and she knows it. When we first met over ten years ago, we would have extensive conversations about every sort of topic. We would listen to one another and chat; we would enjoy one another. We fell in love very quickly because of this. We enjoyed each other. But over time I’ve seen, not just in my marriage but in others marriages as well, that sometimes there is drift from these things. It may not appear right away. However, as I said earlier, it takes intentionality to stay focused on one another, and a lack of intentionality will mean your friendship with your wife will grow cold.

When your friendship with your wife goes cold, it is a reflection of a cold heart towards the Lord, make no mistake about it. As men, we are commanded to love our wives (Ephesians 5:13-33). We are taught in Ephesians 5 to love our wives as Christ has loved the church. Whether you take your wife on a date night, or every night you

sit and talk, you should make time for your wife, Men. Part of your God-given task is to shepherd your wife. How are you doing with that?

Even more so, your shepherding of your wife is a reflection of what you think of Christ. If you think so little of Christ, that you are apathetic about your friendship with your wife, and your shepherding of her, I have to ask the question, “Why are you, if you are in fact in ministry, doing ministry of any kind at all?” Those are hard and sharp words for a reason. I have seen men who are in ministry, who are only interested in the title and responsibility of ministry, and not interested in their wives and/or children. And yet, nowhere in the Bible are we told that we are to prioritize our wives and children after our ministry. Instead, we are taught that we should prioritize our family before ministry, the Lord before family, and the Cross before everything else. Jesus is either Lord over all, including our ministries, or He isn’t. It’s that simple.

And it’s especially important to say these things, because of our cultural moment in time. We are living in a time when marriages are crumbling under the weight of busyness. I get it; my wife gets it. Also, we are all so swamped. But, the things said in this article about marriage are to be the norm, not the exception to the rule. Every Christian is to have a sound and healthy marriage because they believe the Bible and the truths therein. If we say we believe these biblical truths and don’t practice them in our lives, we are saying by our lives that what we believe doesn’t matter.

Now, I get it, I really do. You’ll read that sentence and think, “Geessh, I have to be perfect!” And that’s precisely the point I want you to see right now. I want you to see that you can’t do this *on your own*, and your desire for perfection is part of the problem. By beginning to see and feel your insufficiency you can see the problem and also the solution. In marriage, you will face difficulties. How you deal with that difficulty says everything about your character at that moment. And yet, there is hope—there is the gospel which reconciles husband and wife to one another through Christ. So, how do we fight for friendship in marriage?

First, put away your phone. When talking to one another, hopefully during dinner each night (I know this is going to be harder for husbands and wives with kids), be determined and consistent to put away the phone and talk to one another. Find your wife in the house to say hi or chat for no reason. I was told by Sarah’s family members, to search her out and tell her how special she is. And that applies to not just around the house, but at the dinner table as well.

What better example, Men, can you give for your children, than telling your wife that you love her. You are showing your children that you love their mother (or step-mother) in such a moment, which will have an impact on them at a worldview

level. What better example than finding your wife and telling her, perhaps when she made a nice dinner, etc., that you appreciate her. You are showing your children that you value the contributions your wife makes to the home. In an argument, instead of getting heated, you treat your wife with respect and value her words. You are also telling and teaching your children, that you cherish your wife, and desire to love her, not only in word, but deed. Putting away your phone underlies the principle of intentionality and of purposefulness in loving our spouse and giving her our full attention.

“Marriage is hard, but it’s also worth it.”

Second, take your family to church each week. Part of our responsibility as men is to love our families. And part of loving God is to go to church. While the church is a place, it is also a people, the people of God redeemed through the finished and sufficient work of Jesus. If you want to fight for friendship with your spouse, it begins with regularly attending church, sitting every week under quality, expository preaching taught by qualified biblical men.

Third, prioritize your own devotional life. There is no way to have a healthy marriage and friendship with your spouse, or anyone else, if you don’t spend time with God. We can say all we want about Bible reading being a delight or duty, and the whole host of spiritual disciplines, but if we are only making excuses for not engaging those, then we will not grow in Christ, and our marriages will suffer. Our friendships will also suffer, along with our local churches. We need to be in the Word, in prayer, and enjoying the Lord ourselves.

Fourth, find the time each week during which you can take time out with your wife to go out somewhere and enjoy one another. I know some people will say, “But, I don’t have the money for that.” That’s okay. It doesn’t have to be a big deal. It could be something as simple as a walk. It could be sitting on the back patio talking with one another, or watching a movie in your own living room. If we are going to grow in friendship with our spouses, it is going to take time. It takes time to work out issues and talk about financial issues, and to discuss theological matters. Such conversations are not one-offs; they are lifetime talks. Growing together requires intentionality.

Lastly—and this is indeed the most important thing—you are going to need to overlook offenses that you will commit against one another. With that said, you are also going to need to keep short accounts with one another. Wait, which one? Do I keep short accounts, or overlook offenses? It’s *both* and let me explain.

Let's say, Sarah, says something to me that I don't like. She offends me with the way she says it, *but* her words cut me to the heart and lead me to repentance. At the moment, I may not like those words, but she is saying them because she loves me. Instead of responding to the way she says whatever she says, I may say something such as, "I'd like to pray about what you've said and talk to you about it later." That shows that I take seriously what she says, but would like to resume the conversation later, after my hurt or anger has cooled. That also indicates genuine care. If I walk away and say nothing to Sarah, I'm communicating something to her too: that I don't care at all what she said, and I'm just walking away, not thinking or praying about what she said.

You see, I can choose to overlook the offense in the moment of her not talking to me in the best way (which may even be in a straightforward manner) that offended me, while also acknowledging that I will think about what she says. Or, let's say, I say something dumb (No! Say it isn't so!). I need to ask for forgiveness from Sarah. Within an hour or two, let's say, I will go to Sarah and say, "I'm sorry for the thing that I did [or said], will you please forgive me for what I said and did?" She can say yes, or she needs more time and wants to talk about it later. This is but one example of repentance and also of keeping short accounts and keeping the lines of communication open.

Marriage is hard, but it's also worth it. Perhaps today you are in a loveless marriage where you don't feel cared about at all. Before I learned to apologize and ask my wife for forgiveness, I can remember the first time, where I did ask for forgiveness of Sarah. I would ask her, and she would tell me (my perspective of this) to give her time and space, that she forgave me, but she needed space to process things. Now many years later, she can forgive me and say she needs space, and I'm okay with that (and the same with me, if she offends me—I forgive her and sometimes say I need space). Then we can talk later. Why? Because we know we love the Lord and one another. Over time, we've demonstrated that we can work out issues and build up trust with one another. We are friends with one another and care for one another.

I don't know where you are at today in friendship with the Lord or with your spouse. I *do* know that some of this advice and counsel I've given will be hard for some of you to read, for a wide variety of reasons. My intent in sharing this is not to say that you have to do all that is suggested here. It's to say, here is what has worked for me. I am still growing, as I said, in these things. Even so, friendship with your Lord Jesus and your wife requires intentional-

ty and purposefulness. Such an effort is worth it all, in the end, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. Additionally, it will help you to go from an elementary school education to getting your Ph.D. in your spouse, which should be the goal for husband and wife, in marriage, before the face of God.

10 Things You Should Know about Fatherhood

By Ray Ortlund



1. Fatherhood began in God, since He is our Father.

God is our Father at two levels. One, He created us: “Is not he your father, who created you, who made you and established you?” (Deuteronomy 32:6). Two, He adopted us: “You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Romans 8:15). Ultimate reality is not mechanical but relational, not physics but fatherhood.

2. The fatherhood of God, rarely taught in the Old Testament, is strongly emphasized in the New Testament.

It was Jesus who taught us to pray to “Our Father” (Matthew 6:9) and to see God as our Father (Luke 15:11–32). What Jesus emphasized

proves that perceiving God as our Father is a high-point in biblical teaching. A father can enrich his children with a great spiritual inheritance.

3. Fatherhood came down to us men as a grace from above.

“I bow my knees before the Father, from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named . . .” (Ephesians 3:14–15, ESV margin). We didn’t project our notion of fatherhood onto God. Rather, God handed down to us His own vision for what fatherhood means.

4. A father can enrich his children with a great spiritual inheritance.

“O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old” (Psalm 44:1). Each generation does not have to relearn everything from scratch. A father can give his children a head start by passing along the old stories of what God has done.

5. Sadly, a father can also pass down to his children sinful patterns.

“And the Israelites separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers” (Nehemiah 9:2). Some family traditions need to die!

6. A father must guide his children toward what is right and good.

“The LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3:12). Discipline is an important way a father loves his children.

7. A father is careful, in disciplining his children, not to become harsh.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger” (Ephesians 6:4). After all, God our compassionate Father, “remembers that we are dust” (Psalm 103:13–14).

8. A father boldly claims his entire family for the Lord Jesus.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Lead your family in serving God together.

9. A father provides for the legitimate earthly needs of his family.

“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of

his household, **he has denied the faith** and is worse than an unbeliever” (1st Timothy 5:18).

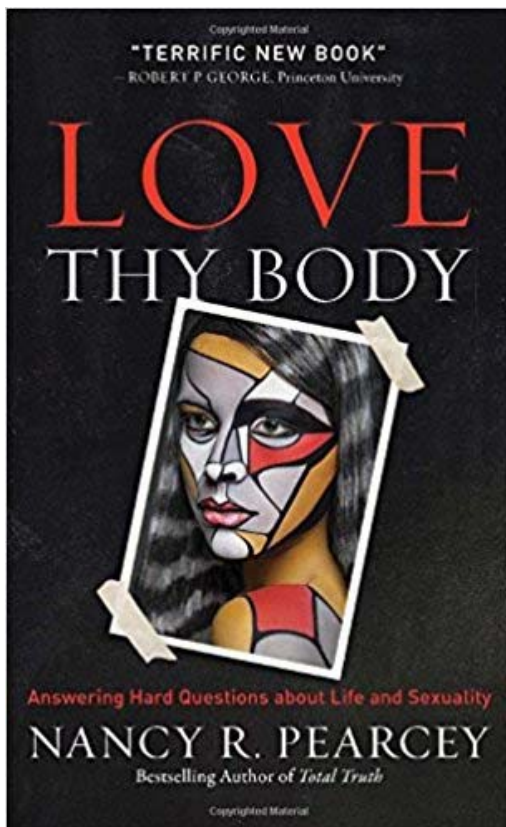
10. A man becomes a spiritual father by leading someone to faith in Christ, and a pastor is a fatherly presence among his congregation.

“I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment” (Philemon 10). “For you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God” (1st Thessalonians 2:11–12).

A Book Review:

Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality

Reviewed By David Steele



The publication of Nancy Pearcey's book, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity From Its Cultural Captivity* sent shockwaves throughout the evangelical world and helped equip a new generation of apologists. *Total Truth*

confronted the notion that scientific knowledge and moral knowledge are separated into two domains. The lower story includes objective truths that are public and valid for all people. This is the realm of empirical science. These truths are fact and verifiable. The upper story includes the realm of moral knowledge, which is private, relative, and subjective. Hence, the so-called unified concept of truth was obliterated and separated into two domains.

Pearcey's subsequent works, *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning* and *Finding Truth: 5 Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes* have also left an indelible mark on the church and

culture at large. The impact of these books on me personally, cannot be overstated. My suspicion is that many people would concur.

Nancy Pearcey's newest offering, *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions About Life and Sexuality* picks up where the other titles left off. The overarching goal of *Love Thy Body* is to "uncover the worldview that drives the secular ethic". Ultimately, the book is designed to "show that a secular morality doesn't fit the real universe".

Readers familiar with Pearcey will quickly see the influence of Francis Schaeffer on her thought. It was Schaeffer who originally exposed the so-called "fact/value" split which has created a fractured epistemology that continues to be propagated today.

Pearcey shows the practical outgrowth of this fragmented worldview (or the two-story worldview) by pointing to several contemporary culture matters including abortion, euthanasia, "same-sex marriage", and transgenderism. She helps readers understand how these various worldviews have been smuggled into our culture and links each of them to the two-story dichotomy.

Readers will be encouraged and challenged to walk through the argument of *Love Thy Body* and will be better equipped to not only contend with culture but also reach out to people who have been deceived by a pagan worldview.

Readers will discover that Pearcey's argument is not combative. Rather, her heart cries for people who have been co-opted by this deviant worldview. She pleads with readers to reach out and love people with Christ-centered love: "Christians must present biblical morality in a way that reveals the beauty of the biblical view of the human person so that people actually want it to be true."

Love Thy Body is a book that is filled with description and prescription. Facts and figures run through the book, but the author is not content to leave her readers with data alone. She sets forth a workable prescription which is set on helping people and healing them at the deepest level. Therefore, "We must work to educate and persuade on a worldview level," writes Pearcey. Such an approach is imperative if Christ-followers have any hope of reaching a lost world with the saving message of the gospel. Running through the book is a mindset that Pearcey, no doubt, learned from Schaeffer, namely, sharing the gospel with a tear in one's eye.

***Love Thy Body* is riveting, challenging, educational, a shot to the heart, a challenge for the mind, and bold push for the feet.** It will spark controversy in some venues and may even precipitate debate in the local church. Surely, this kind of debate is necessary as Christians seek to influence culture for God's glory.

“Gay Christianity”: What is the Biblical Worldview and How Can We Apply a Biblical Hermeneutic?

By Dave Jenkins



It happened

again. Only this time, I was charged with being intolerant, unloving, and bigoted. You see, I had written an article detailing why biblical Christianity is against the idea of “gay Christianity”. I was told—literally—that, “[I] hate gays as people.” Now over the years, I’ve heard this said repeatedly. After all, I grew up in Seattle, WA—

which is considered one of the top three most liberal cities in the United States—and spent the first twenty-six years of my life there. I was educated in schools in Seattle, and went to a community college that had liberal teachers, who preached their liberal ideology to the malleable young minds there.

Some people will think that a Bible-believing Christian writing an article with the topic I have, in an issue on complementarianism, is different. And perhaps you

are right—it *is* different—but not in the way you think. You see, I also went to a private school from grades 3 through 6. There the teachers were LGBTQ *members*, before LGTBQ was even a “thing” in the early 1990s. I was friends growing up with people who identified as LGBTQ. I ministered to people at the community college I went to in the early 2000s who were LGBTQ and wanted to know what a Bible-believing Christian thought about these issues. I told them, hopefully respectfully, what the Bible teaches, and why I hold to that position. Did they agree with me? No, they did not, but at least they learned what the Bible had to say, and hopefully heard good biblical arguments on biblical sexuality.

“Many Christians teach that homosexuality is the worst sin, when in fact *all* sin, including sexual immorality, as R.C. Sproul has rightly noted, is a cosmic treason against a holy God.”

To be clear here, Christians are *not* against the LGBTQ crowd. It’s often thought they are, and there has, unfortunately, admittedly been those misguided folk who show animosity toward the LGBTQ community. It’s often assumed wrongly that all Christians are unloving and unkind because all they do is target groups of people and say how they are wrong, sinful, etc. because they don’t hold to biblical views. Without getting into a lengthy discussion here, I will say this, because this goes both ways: both sides shut down conversation with one another on this topic. The LGBTQ community says that Christians are unloving because they refuse to accept LGBTQ people as identifying as such. With that said, Christians often also do the same. Many Christians teach that homosexuality is the worst sin, when in fact *all sin*, including sexual immorality, as R.C. Sproul has rightly said, is cosmic treason against a holy God.

Some people also say that it’s unloving to say anything that goes contrary to the cultural norms of civilization. The problem with this is it’s culturally acceptable for people who openly identify as LGBTQ to publicly protest and say whatever they want. Yet, at the same time, if a Christian speaks out in the public square about biblical sexuality—that is, marriage between one man and one woman for life, and against homosexuality and transgenderism, and so on—they are “wrong”, “bigoted”, etc.

What we need to understand here is that everyone is engaged in theology. The person who identifies as LGBTQ is saying that they have convictions. They have ideas about how they want to function in life, where they want to find meaning, identify,

value, and worth. They want to live from this worldview and this place and be accepted as such. They want, in other words, for people to accept them as they are, without reservation and without qualification. The main problem is that they want this acceptance *universally* and without equivocation. In other words, they want people to accept them as they are and then for people to also accept *their doctrine*.

Everyone has a set of doctrines they adhere to. Deeply embedded into every person is an innate desire for doctrine, for truth—the pursuit of which the Bible, in Ecclesiastes 3:11, says was set in their hearts by the Lord God. With that said, when we consider what identity, meaning, value, and worth are for in a biblical worldview, we can see the problems with interpreting the Bible through a lens of the world, instead of from the Bible.

The Bible invites us to know the grand story God has invited us into, that scarlet thread of redemption. And yet, to counter this story the world has its own story, one of cultural acceptance and cultural norms. This cultural acceptance is in vogue today.

“Behind the “gay Christian” movement, for example, is the radical redefinition of what it means to be a Christian.”

People can say, “Well you can’t tell me what to do with my sex life or my moral life! You have no control over me at all.” And yet in the next breath, they will tell Christians to be quiet, even trying to silence their viewpoint in the court of law, and in the public square, while remaining tolerant of those who support *their* perspective.

Behind the “gay Christian” movement, for example, is a radical redefinition of what it means to be a Christian. Bible-believing Christians rightly believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, sufficient, and clear Word of God. And it’s because of those convictions that they interpret the Word. Likewise, when those convictions begin at the foundational level with the wrong convictions when such people come to interpret the Bible, or even ask questions of biblical texts, they get the wrong answer. So our convictions matter, to be clear, because they are shaped by our worldview, which affects how we interpret not only the Bible but thus also the world around us.

I remember sitting with one lady, having a conversation over a meal in a public restaurant, around a decade ago. She was a fellow student in one of my classes at a community college in the Seattle area, and she had questions. She knew I was a Christian and held to a biblical worldview. She had questions concerning what

Christians thought about *desire*. What I tried to help her see is that her desires were out of order. God assigns a specific gender for men and women. They are to function within that specifically assigned gender according to the biblical worldview. After all, God created men and women equal in dignity, value, and worth, but also assigned to them different roles and functions. A man is a man, and a woman is a woman.

Well, this young lady didn't like what I said. Over the past ten years or more since that conversation, I've seen this issue only get worse. But even before it got worse, I was in the thick of it growing up. And not only in the thick of it on issues of homosexuality, but also in ministering to people affected by homosexuality and pornography, etc.

Behind the gay Christian movement are the wrong convictions about the Bible and the wrong interpretation of the Bible. The gay Christian movement says it doesn't support the viewpoint that the Scriptures teach: the wrongness of a man being with a man and/or a woman being with a woman sexually. And yet, what we have to understand, even at the most basic foundational level, is God Himself says that He created man from the dust, and then created Eve from Adam's rib. So, in order to justify this position, the gay Christian movement has to completely disregard Genesis 1-2, along with Romans 1, and many other passages that contradict its viewpoint.

My question is this: "Why even refer to the Bible in the argument if you don't believe the Bible is the Word of God?" And yet, that's precisely what the gay Christian movement teaches. The main problem with the gay Christian movement is that Jesus and Paul were not only *not gay*, but they never supported any redefinition of marriage; instead they defended the writings of the Old Testament, which informed their teaching. Jesus and Paul upheld traditional definitions of marriage—between one man and one woman for life, under God. Jesus and Paul taught contrary to the world's definition of sexuality—that is, they explained that a man is to marry a woman and a woman is to marry a man.

Now this entire movement makes the argument saying, "Well, Jesus and Paul were single and celibate." Now that's true, Jesus and Paul were single and celibate. But, they also *weren't gay*. Both Jesus and Paul upheld the biblical teaching of Genesis 2-3. In fact, Paul goes so far as to link in Ephesians 5, Christ's finished and sufficient work, with that of sanctifying the Church. So, if we are going to press this argument further, those who hold that Jesus and Paul were single and celibate, and that either one of them would support the view that there is such a thing as a "gay

Christian” and/or a gay-but-celibate Christian, then that would make Jesus complicit in sin. That flies in the face of what Paul is saying in Ephesians 5, namely that the church is blameless because of Christ. The Church is also redeemed by Christ. Furthermore, it would deny Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 5 and other places. Why then would a man have to be commanded to love his wife in Ephesians 5? Why doesn’t Paul say that a man can love a man, or a woman can love a woman, and then command them to do so? Well, the reasons become apparent. The Bible throughout teaches that a man is to marry a woman, and a woman is to marry a man.

So the whole idea behind gay Christianity begins with the wrong presuppositions about the Bible. And yet, there are entire movements to make this normalized in the Church. One example is Brian McLaren, who years ago said we needed a five-year moratorium in the Church from talking about homosexuality. After five years to no one’s surprise at all, he came out and taught that the Church was wrong on biblical sexuality. His evidence? His opinion. Note, it wasn’t the teaching of Scripture that convinced McLaren over those five years. It was *his thinking, his opinion* on the topic. And this is precisely the problem with the whole idea of being gay and Christian and/or gay Christian and celibate. The problem is that it makes the Bible say what *you want it to say*, rather than what it actually says. It reinterprets the Bible to mean what we want our opinion to be and therefore we justify that opinion because of our preconceived ideas about truth and biblical authority.

In our society, we are facing an epidemic of massive proportions. We are facing challenges to biblical sexuality and gender roles on every front. To be sure, we should not be silent on these issues. But make no mistake about it, the issue of Gay Christianity and/or being a “gay but celibate” Christian is a massive one. And there is everything at stake. Is Jesus Lord over all, including our sexual organs? Is Jesus Lord over all, including our morality and life decisions? The answer the Bible gives is a resounding *yes*, but is grounded in the work of Jesus.

It’s interesting that when Jesus ministers to people—primarily, people in sexual sin—He does so lovingly. He doesn’t shatter them into a million pieces with wrath and harsh words. Instead, He comes with the power of the grace of God, and the full authority of the Son of God, and the Son of Man to purify and cleanse them with the forgiveness of sins. Think about the woman at the Well. Jesus asks this woman questions to get her to see her need, which she does. Think of other situations in the Bible. The same is true. And yet, today we are told that those people who sinned sexually in the Bible can do whatever they want. So, according to this position, we can

live however we want because we are morally autonomous creatures, who will not ultimately be held accountable and responsible for our behavior by the Creator. The truth is, we are doubled owned by the Lord God, by virtue of Him being the Creator and Lord over all.

From every angle, the biblical worldview of the Scriptures has a better story and a better hermeneutic than the one advanced by the Gay Christian movement. If I walk up to a Mormon and begin a conversation, I am going to ask him to tell me about who Jesus is, and he is going to say to me he is a Mormon Christian. The Mormon identifies as such—as a Mormon, but also as a Christian. So when I ask whether he is a Mormon or a Christian, he is going to tell me he’s a Mormon *and* a Christian. The same is true with some of those who are LGBTQ. They are going to tell you they are gay plus Christians.

The problem with that viewpoint is that the Bible nowhere supports the identification of a Gay Christian. The only identity the Bible recognizes is *Christian*—one who has been legally forgiven of their sins by Jesus’ blood, and whose sin is no longer remembered before Him. And yet, we are seeing an entire movement of people who say that Jesus and Paul support the Gay Christian idea because they were celibate, and so, therefore, we are told that we must believe that one can be Gay and Christian while celibate.

As is the case with all repentant sinners, who have placed their whole trust in Jesus Christ, their sanctification must continue daily. There will be struggles, but

“He first lived that kind of life, and died because of that lifestyle in place of sinners and for their sin, being buried, and rose again for such people.”

the Holy Spirit always provides a way of escape when dealing with temptation. And like any person dealing with sinful thoughts, Christians must always be on-guard, taking every thought captive.

At some point, as Christians, we must recognize that doctrine divides. The Puritans were famous for understanding this, in fact, they called it “dividing the audience”. Jesus called

people to a life that was all in, not to a life of cheap grace, but to costly grace and costly discipleship, to use Bonhoeffer’s famous phrases. And Jesus calls us to this kind of life, make no mistake about it, because He first lived that kind of life, and died because of that lifestyle in place of sinners and for their sin, being buried, and rose again for such people.

And let's be clear here, Gay Christians are not the worst sinners out there. It's often thought that homosexuality is the worst type of sin. It's not. All sin is cosmic treason against a holy God. When we sin against the Lord, in our thoughts, deeds, and actions, we are choosing to find identity, meaning, value, and worth, in that thing or identity, more so than God. And at the root with gay Christianity is that problem—that they would instead identify as gay plus something else, rather than simply just *Christian*. They want the whole world to know them as gay *and* Christian.

Well, as we've seen, there are significant differences between the worldview of the Christian (from the Bible) and that of a "gay Christian". One comes to the Bible and sees it as the very Word of God. Another casts doubt on the Bible to support his/her position, and then comes back to the Bible to interpret it to mean what they want it to say, rather than what it teaches.

Gay Christians have a faulty hermeneutic because they have an incorrect and wrong view of the Scriptures. Jesus and Paul were not gay; they did not tell people to go against the teaching of the revealed Scriptures, to violate the clear teaching of

"And sadly they don't because many so-called Christians have chosen to live a worldly life..."

Scripture, all because of one's opinion. Instead, Jesus expounded upon the Old Testament and viewed it as authoritative. And in the same way, Paul did also, grounding his arguments on elders in 1st Timothy 3 and Titus 1 on Genesis 2, and similarly from Ephesians 5, and other places on Genesis 1-2.

So, at the end of the day, when we consider where arguments come from, we must understand them at the foundational level. At the foundational level, Gay Christianity fails. It fails to account for the historical position of the Church on the nature of the Bible itself, and in sound and right interpretation because of those convictions. Furthermore, it has to rip biblical passages out of the Bible, such as Genesis 1-2, because to not do that would go counter to the argument. Moreover, in the very clear passages in the Bible such as Romans 1 and others on this subject, the Scriptures are opposed to the positions of LGBTQ.

Worldviews matter because people matter. And behind those worldviews are convictions and behind those convictions are choices. And behind the choices we make are the identity we choose to identify with. By beginning at the wrong place,

gay Christians hand over the argument. They teach doctrine, but it's not sound biblical doctrine. It cannot nourish your soul. It cannot help you grow in grace. Instead, it only leads people away from the God of the Bible and in open rebellion against God, who created man and woman in His image and likeness and gave them dignity, value, and worth. Through Christ, every person can have a new identity, but only when the Lord sovereignly removes their heart of stone and replaces it with a new one. That is where the Christian's true identity is in, not an opinion, but in a Person, who is fully revealed in the Word of God. It's not only a wrong hermeneutic being used in the Gay Christian movement; it's an erroneous view of the Bible. And that leads to all sorts of errors, including to the wrong Jesus—the one of our popular culture—instead of to the real Jesus, who is fully revealed in the Word of God, the Scriptures.

The sad thing is those who advocate that people can be gay and Christian are the same ones who suggest that it's unloving to point out what the Scriptures teach. They consider it judgmental to do so. They will shout you down, call you names. But calling names and shouting down people doesn't prove an argument. Refusing to engage the debate and shouting down people, refusing to dialogue and even engage with the Scriptures supposedly being employed, is not intellectually honest, it is intellectually *dishonest*.

It is not unloving to point out the inconsistencies in the Gay Christian movement. True Bible-believing Christians tell people they are wrong from the Word of God, not because they get some enjoyment out of it. If they do, they don't understand that they too can fall and need help. Instead, Christians point out the error to highlight the truth of God's Word. We make the argument from the Scriptures to say a soul is at stake; an eternity is on the line. That is not unloving. Non-Christians should expect, even demand, Christians make that argument and engage passionately to see souls won for the sake of Christ. And sadly they don't because many so-called Christians have chosen to live a worldly life instead of a godly life in Christ, which is part of the problem.

As Christians, we must stand on the full authority of the Word of God and proclaim the authority of the Son of God and the Son of Man over everything, including our pants and sexual organs. If we fail in that task, we will concede not only the argument, but the Gay Christian movement will continue to make advances in the Church. The best apologetic against error is to preach the *whole counsel of God*, since the Bible is its own best apologetic. The Bible speaks loudly to these issues. Either we are going to stand for the Bible, or we are going to fall on our "sword". Either, we will see the Lord through the Word, and by the Holy Spirit do what only He

can do to bring the dead to new life, and to equip the saints for service to make disciples, or will cave into cultural accommodation.

My sincere prayer is that we would stand on the authority of the infallible Word of God. As soldiers, we have been summoned by the Lord God to proclaim a message that is foolishness to the world, and that includes what the Bible says about sexuality. Jesus is Lord over all. Therefore, we must proclaim, since God requires us to preach the whole counsel to make disciples, the Word of God that testifies to the finished and sufficient work of Christ. To fail in that task is the height of folly, for it demands our all, everything we have, and we should strive, with all we are, to proclaim the Word. Christians have the right convictions about the Bible itself, and therefore interpret the Bible in light of those convictions, and make disciples of the nations through the gospel, as a result. May the Church of God repent, awake, and stand fast on (and for) the Word, to the glory of God, and the good of all mankind for His glory.

How to Preach on Biblical Gender Roles

By Dave Jenkins



In this issue of *Theology for Life Magazine*, we are learning about biblical gender roles, biblical manhood and womanhood, all with a focus to help people learn what these great truths are, and how to minister to them. These issues are not for the ivory tower. They also are not for debates. The Bible teaches that men and women are equal in dignity, value, and worth, but distinct in role and

function. What that means is that a man is a man, and a woman is a woman. A man is not a woman, and a woman is not a man. Those fundamental realities are what Genesis 1 teach; specifically, how Adam was born from the dust, the Lord breathed life into him, and he came into being. Furthermore, Genesis 2 declares that woman was brought to life from Adam's rib and the Lord breathed life into her. These truths frame the whole purpose of not only biblical manhood and womanhood, but how to preach on biblical gender roles.

Some people in the church believe there is no difference between being a man and a woman. To these Christians, a woman can do whatever she wants because she is given freedom from the Lord in His Word. And yet, as I read Scripture, I see that there are still limits in place for her. A man is called to lead in the home and the church. When we go to the New Testament, for example, the pattern established by God goes back to the creation account in Genesis 1-2 regarding marriage and church leadership. In 1st Timothy 3 and Titus 1, Paul establishes that an elder must be a one-woman *man*. And this is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak.

“Lastly, as you are preaching through topics related to biblical gender roles, tie it to the *whole of the Bible*.”

Some people say, well a woman can do whatever she wants. After all, we don't live in the 1st century culture, and therefore we are not restricted by the cultural baggage of 1st century Judaism. And yet, what's interesting in saying that is such people reveal something about what they believe about the Bible.

Namely, they doubt the authority of God, which has devastating effects on how they interpret the Bible. In this case, when we cast down or even cast aside the authority of Scripture by questioning whether the cultural language is still to be interpreted literally in the 21st century, what we are doing is questioning whether the Bible is trustworthy, sufficient, and authoritative.

What these people are actually saying is, “Well, the Bible can be right on salvation; it can be correct on eternity; it can even be right on the destiny of the lost going to hell—a real place of eternal, unending, unrelenting, conscious punishment. But the Bible cannot be right about a woman not being able to do whatever she wants in the local church!” We cannot go into the whole argument in this article, as there is

not enough space. Entire (very thick) volumes have been written on these issues. I raise this point only to say that what we believe about Scripture itself matters because it will affect how we interpret the Bible. And how we interpret the Bible is how we will preach the Bible. So what we believe about the Bible matters. It matters that we consistently hold to a biblical and orthodox position on Scripture itself, so we do not veer off the road into the dead end of theological liberalism.

As Christians, we are all to preach the whole counsel of God. We are not to shirk our responsibility on this point. Heaven and Hell hang in the balance. As church members, we are to go forth and make disciples of the nations. Pastors are to herald the gospel in season and out of season, and preach the whole counsel of God.

Preach the Whole Counsel of God

First, we need to understand that the primary and most important responsibility of every pastor is to preach expository sermon series going through books of the Bible. For example, when going through the Book of Ephesians, which has much to say about the topic of biblical gender roles, you could slowly go through Ephesians 5:13-33, taking a month or more to preach and teach on these subjects. When doing so, one of the pastoral staff or elders could write articles that explain why the church believes this is so important. Another idea is to host a time of question and answer in the evening on Sunday or during the week for people to ask questions on these issues. These are just some ideas, but the main point behind them is to not only preach through books of the Bible, and in so doing address the topic of biblical gender roles, but find specific ways to add to what you are doing as you are preaching and teaching through these issues.

Lastly, as you are preaching through topics related to biblical gender roles, tie it to the *whole of the Bible*. The Bible has one unified message. For example, why does Paul ground his argument in Creation in Ephesians 5, 1st Timothy 3, and Titus 1 (and other passages) regarding the importance of male leadership in the home and the local church? Is it to exclude women from doing anything in the church? Surely not, otherwise Paul would not have thought highly of women and used them as coworkers to expand the gospel.

Marriage

Marriage is under assault from homosexuality, transgenderism, pornography. And even more issues seem to assault our senses every day, from the newspapers to the front row of our churches. The people sitting in our congregations need to hear the truth about marriage between one man and one woman for life. They need to be reminded, again and again, regarding what marriage is about. Marriage is not about *feelings*. Marriage is also not about how much one loves another. Marriage is *a covenant* grounded in the *character of God*. It is not merely signing a paper contract where the pastor rubber stamps it. No, something more significant is at play than a mere formal ceremony. What's at stake is the glory of God, who created man in His image and likeness and who instituted marriage.

Marriage is not only for the couple, it is a display of the glory of God in the lives of two people—sinner-saints—who have joined together under the Lordship of Christ, to do life with one another for as long as they both shall live. Pastors are charged with providing spaces where both men and women can grow, where they can share openly—men among men, and women among women—in Bible studies and prayer groups with one another about what is honestly going on in their lives in the context of the local church. These times should be structured around the Word of God, prayer, and fellowship.

Redemption, the Great Commandment, and Loving People

Jesus has taken the hearts of stone of His redeemed, Beloved Bride, and sovereignly removed them, giving them new hearts. He has and is redeeming a people for His possession; a people called out from among the tribes of every tongue and nation. Redemption is a beautiful picture of what biblical gender roles are because of our Covenant Head, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the head of the Church, the Chief Shepherd, and the Lord our Righteousness. He not only commands men to love God, but He also commands everyone, everywhere to first love Him and then one another.

When we get the order wrong (love people and then love God) we are preaching a false gospel. The people of God need to hear the gospel story declared from the Word of God. After all, it's not only marriages that are on the line; it's eternity that is

on the line. Each time you go to the pulpit and preach the Word, eternity hangs in the balance. You are facing people who come with all sorts of issues. Perhaps throughout the week, a husband yelled at his wife. A wife disrespected her husband. Maybe some people are having affairs in your church. Church members are at odds with each other. Dozens of others are looking at porn. And you are standing before them as an instrument, a vessel, to proclaim the glories of the biblical text.

My encouragement to Pastors is to preach the whole counsel of God. Do not shirk from your responsibility to declare all God has said. *Do not water it down*. Do not say, “Well, that’s cultural”, or “That’s not true”, or anything of the sort. No, as a Chris-

“And yet, we are seeing nearly this whole generation of pastors fall into the cultural lie.”

tian Pastor, you are called of God and have been commissioned by Him to preach the whole counsel of God to His entire people. The most unloving thing you can do is to shirk your responsibility. In fact, I will go so far as to say that to not preach the whole Word of God to the entire people of God is criminal (sinful). A criminal does what is wrong and commits a crime, but those crimes may affect only a dozen people. As a Pastor, you may affect *thousands* of lives, or more, for all *eternity*. People are sitting under your preaching, and you will be held accountable to the Chief Shepherd for preaching the whole Word of God. It is not *your* Word! It is God’s Word. God uses you to preach the Word.

And yet, we are seeing nearly this whole generation of pastors fall into the cultural lie. They think that they have a better word than what God has said. The sad result is the slippery slide of women becoming pastors, which is only the start of a slide away from biblical truth. At the root of that slide is believing the wrong things about the nature and character of God, and thus the Word of God itself. When we have a right view of God, we will have a correct view of His authority, and in turn, have a proper and orthodox view of the Bible itself.

As you stand before the people of God this Sunday be challenged, even convicted, of the urgency of your task, Pastors. Bible study leader, as you teach the people

week in and week out, you also be convicted of the seriousness of the task before you. Biblical counselor, as you sit in your chair in your counseling office and people come in and out, and counseling sessions go by, be convinced of the importance of your task. Christian author and blogger, be convicted and challenged about the urgency of writing with excellence, demonstrating sound biblical convictions and interpretation of the biblical text. We all need to take care whatever our role in serving in ministry. We will all be held to account, those who teach, with a stricter judgment (James 3:1).

To married Pastors, you have a responsibility. Your marriage is to be an example to others of the love of Christ. The most countercultural thing you can do even in the church is to prioritize your marriage. That is going to take a lot of intentionality and sacrifice. There will be times when you have to go to the hospital and can't do date night, of course. But there are also times when you will need to not go to the hospital and send an elder or a deacon, or seasoned Christian to go so you can focus on your marriage.

I'm reminded of both of my great-grandfathers. Both of them were evangelists and had an extensive itinerant ministry. They would travel about preaching and teaching the Word of God. And yet, they sacrificed their marriages on the altar of ministry. Do not be that pastor or ministry leader, I plead with you.

There was a time in my life, over a decade ago, during which I gave into the lie of cultural accommodation on biblical gender roles. Specifically for a season, I believed and justified my position that women

can be pastors, after all, God uses all of us. And yet, this is the same sort of thing I've been saying in this article. That position cannot be substantial in light of the biblical evidence for how a man is to lead in the home or the church. Nor is it substantiated by a reading of church history. And yet,

some would claim it is. Behind the positions we practice are biblical and theological convictions that shape us and lead us to the practices that we engage in ministry.

"It will happen because pastors and elders take seriously the charge given to preach the whole counsel of God."

During that period of my life when I believed a woman could be a pastor, I actively encouraged women to be pastors. That was wrong, I see now. It was wrong to encourage women to call themselves pastors and to encourage them then to preach as pastors. And, I'm sure at various times in your life, you've held to non-biblical ideas before, and you may have even seen the futility of false views. Now, I need to repent publicly. Even though many years and much time have gone by, I should not have done what I did. While I never taught on that position openly, it matters little. Biblical truth matters as I've said in this article and it matters not only for me but for you.

Perhaps today you've shrunk back from preaching on biblical gender roles. All around you in your congregation are men who are hurting and need to hear what it means to be a man. All around you are also women who think they need to look like the lady in a superficial fashion magazine. We airbrush ideals of manhood and womanhood in our culture, and treat both as unimportant. After all, in the movies we see chiseled bodies, toned abs, six packs, and ripped muscles, and think, "That's a man", or "That's a woman because she has all the right curves in all the right places." Not to say that it isn't good to be fit, because it is. But the definition of beauty has to change in our churches. The way we view one another has to change. It has to change because how we see one another, is not to be as objects for enjoyment, but instead as brothers and sisters in Christ.

And how will this happen? It will happen because pastors and elders take seriously the charge given to preach the whole counsel of God. The entire Bible addresses the whole man. The Bible addresses the issue of beauty by telling us that God created man in His image and likeness. Men and women are equal in dignity, value, and worth, but distinct in function and role. Each one of us has our role to function within, whether that's women teaching a women's Bible study, or a man preaching from the pulpit. The critical point is that we are shaped in our minds and hearts around the authoritative Word, to which we are to submit. And behind the preached Word are convictions that need to be straightened out. Much like I had to do to think through what the Bible teaches on biblical gender roles, specifically on *men only* being pastors and elders. We may need to revisit our convictions, and that is not bad.

In fact, it is wise to do so; doing so is right.

As Reformed Christians, we believe in Sola Scriptura. Our battle cry is the Scripture Alone—the inspired, inerrant, authoritative, sufficient, and clear Word. And all of that means we are to hold not just the right biblical and theological viewpoints, but then to practice and implement what we preach to others about those biblical realities. And the more we do this, people will see that we hold to the truth not only in theory but in practice. Furthermore, the place where the theology comes to life for people is in our lives, which is why we need to be growing and prioritizing our marriages.

Pastor, the more people do that, and the more they see us loving our wives, they will fill in the details on how they are to love their wives. And, Pastors' Wives, the same is true for you. Women of the congregation will look to you to see how to respect their husbands. As you lovingly respect your husband and follow his leadership as you follow Christ, you are giving an illustration for other women to follow. They are looking to you to see how you are living. And they will follow your example whether you know it or not, or they know it or not.

And so we not only have work to do to preach the Word in season and out of season, but work to do in our hearts, in our marriages so that our doctrine and life matches by the grace of God. And when we fail (and we will, from time to time) perhaps, even more, we eat that humble pie. We apologize—for example—to our wives; Men, repent and pick up our cross and follow Jesus once again.

We take specific ownership before people about how we fail. And that even is a demonstration of the grace of God; a fill-in example ready-made for people to see what it looks like for their pastors or ministry leaders to walk humbly before the face of God. That is not only countercultural, it is a Scriptural, God-honoring, Christ-glorifying life that is aimed to destroy the arguments against biblical manhood and womanhood itself.

Such a life testifies of the glory of grace and is a living, walking sermon illustration. But make no mistake, such a life not only preaches the Word in season and out of season. It doesn't do so on its own. It does so because of grace. It does so because the Spirit is at work in a person's life. It does so to be an example of what god-

liness is like in a world confused about what it means to be a man and/or a woman. In other words, it's the Christian life, not just in theory but practice. And that's what we need: not just more theory, but doctrine and life together, as the Scriptures teach, and as the church has held together for millennia.

Doctrine and life together is the most significant cultural answer to the great problems of confusion about sexuality in our day. When a husband loves his wife, and a wife respects her husband, they are doing as the Bible teaches. They are doing so because of biblical and theological convictions. They are doing so because it's been taught from the pulpit and modeled by the lives of godly men and women in their local churches. This is the kind of preaching we need, not just preaching that preaches the text but joins head, heart, and mind together to provide biblical preaching that focuses on the text, as well as illustrates that truth in how a person lives. It is not only preaching we need, but also Christian living, to answer the questions surrounding biblical sexuality. A life well lived before the face of God—a husband loving his wife, a wife respecting her husband—is the most significant answer that we can provide to a culture confused, not only about what biblical genders are, but also why they matter.

Biblical Beauty, Gender Roles, and the God Who Makes All Beauty in His World

By Dave Jenkins



Beauty. It's a word that is loaded with meaning. To many in our culture, influenced by the Greco-Roman idea of beauty, beauty is about a perfectly sculpted body. It's hiring a whole team of people to make you physically attractive to (now) someone of the same gender *or* the opposite sex. But biblical beauty is the opposite of

this. Biblical beauty is concerned, not only with the outside, but *especially* with the inside. And this is significant.

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, I was confronted head-on with the world's definition of beauty. Seattle is a city awash in New Age thinking and theology. It is a place where anyone can be tolerated, except Christians. There are few places on the planet that are more beautiful than Seattle, but also few places that are as spiritually

oppressive as Seattle. I say that not as a casual observer to Seattle. I was born in Seattle. I was raised in Seattle. I know what I'm talking about when it comes to Seattle. And Seattle is also one of the top three most liberal cities in the United States, next to San Francisco, at the top of that list, and Boston.

Beauty abounds in Seattle. There are few things more beautiful than a clear sunset at the pier in there, which I often enjoyed. There are few things more beautiful than the view where I lived as a teenager, looking out at Lake Sammamish—and in the far distance to Mount Rainer—from my parents' home in Bellevue, Washington. Even now in Southern California, there are few things as nice as the sunrise, even if you are not near the beach at all. The beauty of it is captivating.

We often think of beauty in our day as the physical body or nature, but it's not just physical beauty or natural body that God is concerned with. After all, He orders the creation to function as He intends. Without His sovereign hand moving and shaping all of history according to His sovereign will, history would come to a crashing halt. And yet, history continues, moment after moment, day after day, month after month, year after year, decade after decade, and century after century, because of God. People come and people go; the Lord remains. Great is the Lord and worthy of all praise.

Within the doctrine of Creation, we see that God created men and women in His image and likeness. And there we see that God says that He saw it was good. He didn't say it may appear good, but that He saw it was good. God created the world, as we know it, in six days, and on the seventh day, He rested. Creation in a biblical worldview is not an accident. It has an intentional design and shape. And on one of those first six days, God created Adam from the dust, breathing life into Adam's lungs and making him in His image and likeness. And then the Lord saw that it was not right that man be alone and so He took from Adam's rib and made Eve.

"God created man— Adam— first, and then woman—Eve."

God created man—Adam—first, and then woman—Eve. He established the parameters of the relationship when He commanded Adam to lead in the Garden, naming everything therein. Adam was designed to lead in the home, and Eve was to be his helpmate. Within theology, there is a view called complementarianism, a perspective on gender roles that says men and women are equal in dignity, value, and worth, but distinct in function and role. Men and women were designed to function differently—

men as men, and women as women. God saw that was good.

And this brings up an important point, and one that is not often considered within discussions on complementarianism as it pertains to beauty. We often want to focus on defining very clearly—and rightly so—what we mean by *a biblical perspective on gender roles*. There are reasons, we don't believe a woman is to be a pastor, and those are Scripturally grounded and use proper, sound hermeneutics. But even more so, we see a difference between the genders in how they are to function. We don't believe a woman should function as a man, as complementarians, because

“The Lord God does not make mistakes.”

she was explicitly assigned a specific gender. Neither, do, we believe that women are insignificant or unequal in worth, dignity, and value. We *do not* think that women should be ignored, looked down upon, made light of, tossed aside, abused, or in any way neglected by their husbands or the local church.

And it's significant to bring up what I did in the previous paragraph for the following reason: sometimes it's thought that complementarians are against women, *and that is not true*. Complementarians uphold what the Bible teaches and want men and women to function according to their God-given design. Complementarians are not for domestic abuse. They are not for a man yelling at his wife or a wife screaming at her husband, or children yelling at their parents (or vice versa). Abuse in any form is *wrong* and an assault on the glory of God, who created men and women in His image. When we engage in ways that are sinful, we need to repent. When we sin, we distort the beauty of God and revert to behavior in-line with the Fall, instead of the new creations we are now in Christ.

Biblical beauty fights against pornography, against sex trafficking, etc., because God created men and women in His image and likeness. Pornography is an assault on the glory of God. God created men and women to mirror Him, and instead of reflecting Him, we choose to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We craved, even longed for (and still do), the satisfaction apart from God. And what He offers in His person as God—Creator and Lord—is beauty. He gives us meaning and true satisfaction, not according to the world's design and methods, but according to the intended design He established in the created order.

The Lord God does not make mistakes. Instead, He is faithful, to the full revelation of His Person. That is, God says He is holy, which theologians call the controlling attribute of God's character. And God's holiness means that He cannot lie, for

example, for to do so would be according to His divine revelation, a sin. And if God sins that means He could also change His mind, which would undermine His faithfulness. Biblical beauty sees God as God, as He has revealed Himself in His Word. It considers the horror of the cross as beautiful. Now, that will shock many people that the cross is a form of beauty, but it is. The Lord Jesus, fully God and fully man, was slaughtered as the innocent Lamb of God in place of sinners and for their sins. *Why?* Well, if we go back to the Garden of Eden, we can see the first gospel given in Genesis 3:15. And if we read the Old Testament, we see not much that is beautiful at all, we see a lot of sin in the books of history; but, even so we see beauty.

What am I saying here? Simply put: God is God. God is beautiful. The Lord God is the Creator, and He creates to make things beautiful. All of creation is beautiful in the eyes of God; in particular, men and women who are made in His image and likeness. Sure, we live in a messed up and fallen world. Does God love that the world, He created, has fallen into sin? No. But even so, He still loves the Creation He made. He is the Lord over it. He could wipe it out with a whisper or roar of His mouth, or just a thought and no sound at all. He would then begin again with a word of His command, and yet He doesn't. God is God, and He is good.

At the heart of the contemporary culture's fascination with beauty, whether from magazines to movies, is a fundamental problem with their view of *God*. A high view of God leads to a right or biblical view of His person and the totality of His work. If we have a faulty view of God Himself, we will not be able to understand why Jesus came, why He died, and rose again. Neither will we have eyes to see, ears to hear, nor to be able to know and grow in the truth. And that is what makes God, God.

Only God can open the eyes of the blind and give them sight. Only the Lord God can bring the truth of the New Covenant; inaugurated in and brought to its conclusion one day by Christ Himself. In other words, only God saves, because God wins in the end. God created life; He alone brings life to an end. Everywhere in between it is God Himself, who makes all things beautiful, since He makes all things function according to His sovereign purposes, for His glory.

So whether we are considering the topic of the design and intent of biblical gender roles, or any other matter, God is God. He established man to be a man and a woman to be a woman. Complementarianism most faithfully explains these truths, because it grounds its explanation, not in what we think the relevant biblical passages may mean, but instead, in the teaching of Scripture itself. It does this for a reason, so men and women can function according to their God-given, specifically assigned, gender, and be used in

ways that corresponded to that gender, for the good of others, and for the benefit of civilization, for His praise and glory.

Biblical beauty matters. God makes all things beautiful in time. After all, He takes what was meant for evil and turns it around and uses it for our good, to grow us in His grace so that we can be a blessing to others. God is not in it to hurt us; although, sometimes, He needs to bring us low to humble us, which is painful. And He does that to show us that we are the creature, and He is the Creator. We will either bow to Him and acknowledge His Lordship, or He will reveal our absolute frailty and need. Either way, God wins, and all will bow to Him alone on that final day. God is God. He alone is Lord in and over all. He is sovereign over everything, and alone is worthy of praise. God is beautiful in all He does, including in the person and work of Jesus. Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, is the best demonstration of the beauty of God at work in His story. Jesus alone demonstrates the depths God is in it for, not just to win it, but to show His beauty in the world. Jesus uses His people—sinners in need of a Savior, being transformed by His grace—for the praise of His great name, and the joy of all peoples in the earth.

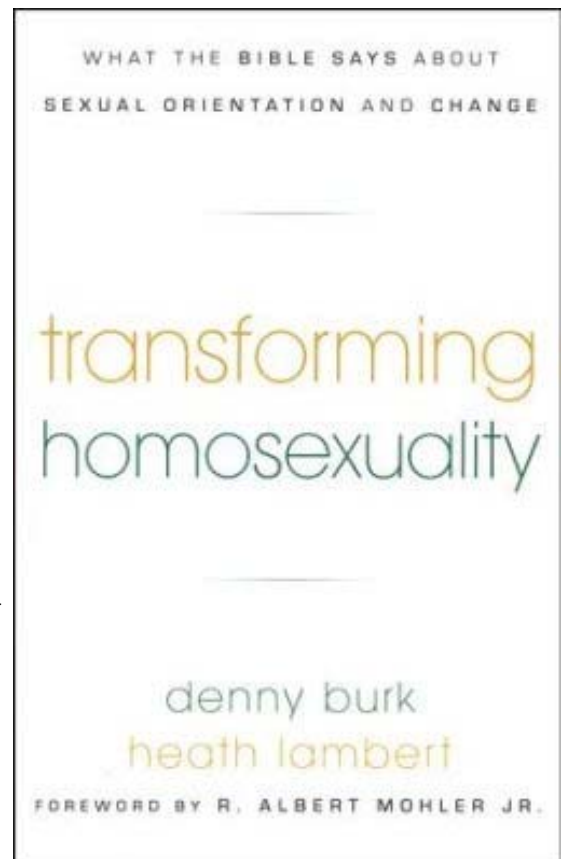
A Book Review:

Transforming Homosexuality: What the Bible Says About Sexual Orientation and Change

Reviewed By Dave Jenkins

Few issues are as controversial as the topic of homosexuality in our day. Within the past several years, in large part due to a decision by the United States Supreme Court on gay marriage, the number of books coming out on gay marriage has significantly increased. With this has come more conversation, articles, books, and magazine issues devoted to the conversation around what the Bible teaches about homosexuality and biblical sexuality.

One book to join this conversation is *Transforming Homosexuality: What the Bible Says about Sexual Orientation and Change*, by Drs. Burk and Lambert. This book seeks to look at the question, “Is same-sex attraction sinful, even if it’s not acted on?” Answers to this question have ranged widely, as has answers to the question, “What does it mean for homosexuality to be transformed?” In this book, Drs. Burk and Lambert challenge misconceptions on all sides, as they present biblical answers on sexual orientation and change, so our



hope and confidence will rest on Christ.

The book has two parts with five total chapters. In part one, consisting of two chapters, the authors look at the question, “What is the same-sex attraction?” and “Is same-sex attraction sinful?” Part two has three chapters and looks at the myths about change, a biblical path to change, and how evangelicals can change.

The authors in the preface clarify their purpose for this book when they explain:

“Our purpose is not to consider again, the ethics of homosexual behavior, but to consider the ethics of homosexual desire, often referred to as homosexual orientation. Faithful Christians are united in their rejection of homosexual behavior. However, there is not as much clarity when it comes to issues of orientation or same-sex attraction. The goal of our work in this book is to establish from Scripture that desires for a sinful act are sinful precisely because the desired act is sinful. We will carefully define same-sex attraction and show from the Bible why it is sinful” (13).

They note, “Biblical change means transformation into the image of Christ. What the Bible commands, therefore, is not heterosexuality, but holiness” (14).

In chapter one, the authors consider four approaches to same-sex attraction and behavior. The first is the liberal view, the second is the revisionist approach, the third is neo-traditional, and the final is the traditional viewpoint. The traditional view is the one the authors agree with. They explain this viewpoint when they note, “Our view is the one of historic Christianity, which sees both homosexual behavior and homosexual desires as sinful” (26). They expound on this when they state, “When we say that ours is the traditional view grounded in classical Christianity, we mean that ours is the biblically consistent way to apply a Christian understanding of human sinfulness and human nature to this contemporary discussion of homosexual desires and behavior” (38).

“We would also argue that our answer informs how opposite-sex-attracted brothers and sisters should pursue a faithful walk with Christ.”

In chapter two the authors consider “whether the Bible’s teaching about temptation, sin, and desire maps onto the experience of same-sex attraction” (40). They note that here that we are discussing “an issue with immediate practical and pastoral implications. How we answer these questions has a profound impact on how we invite our gay and lesbian neighbors to come to Christ. Our answer will also define how same-sex-attracted brothers and

sisters pursue a faithful walk with Christ. We would also argue that our answer informs how opposite-sex-attracted brothers and sisters should pursue a faithful walk with Christ” (41). They clarify:

“The only sex desires that glorifies God is that desire that is ordered to the covenant of marriage. When sexual desire or attraction fixes on any kind of non-marital erotic activity, it falls short of the glory of God and is, by definition, sinful. Again this principle applies to every one of our desires, including opposite-sex and same sex desire. The difference is that opposite-sex desire may have the covenant of marriage as its end or it may not, but same-sex desire can never have the covenant of marriage as its end” (48).

They also teach:

“Does your church and your home have arms wide open to them to come alongside of them, to receive them, and to strengthen them? Jesus said that the world would know us by our love for one another? (John 13:35). One of the ways that we show love for one another is by bearing one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Can you bear this burden with your brothers and sisters who are in this fight? Are you ready to offer help and encouragement to these saints for whom Christ died? If not, then something is deeply amiss. For Jesus has loved us to the uttermost, and he calls us to do the same” (60).

Part two opens with considering myths about change in chapter three. Here the authors look at five myths related to change: first, an understanding of biblical ethics leads to biblical change; second, change is impossible, change is harmful, and change requires homosexual desire; and finally, change happens without real repentance. The authors engage these remarks head-on with biblical faithfulness. They explain, “The only way any person can have any change from any sin—whether homosexuality or anything else is—by repentance” (80).

Chapter four looks at a biblical way to change. Here they look at paths of repentance in Ephesians 5:1-2. In this chapter, they explain that “every time we desire to act out a sexuality that undercuts a biblical ethic, we are engaging in an act of hate” (84). On the point of same-sex attraction they note:

“The effort to defend the sinlessness of homosexual orientation is well intended. The motivation seems to be to provide compassion to same-sex attracted men and women. The compassionate motive is to create a space in their desires that is not dirty, sinful, and guilty. The impulse here is to offer good news that you’re not as bad as you have been told you are. Singling out same-sex attracted people as especially sinful undersells the deep sinfulness that marks all of us. But in another sense, it is not true. It does not help anyone to give sinners the im-

pression that their sin is not sin. This is not the kind of good news that the Bible ever offers to anyone with any sin struggle. In fact, it is at odds with the Christian gospel. Christians have never tried to help sinners by providing false assurance that sin is not as bad as they have believed. They instead have pointed to a Savior who offers forgiveness more amazing than we can fathom. The truth is that persons with same-sex attraction, like all of us, are more sinful than they have been told. Humbly confessing this reality is the only way to experience the full saving love of Jesus Christ. This is the good news of the love of Jesus Christ that sets sinners free and gives them his own resources to love the way he does” (88).

This is why they move to explain in the rest of the rest of this chapter how to repent of covetousness and pursue gratitude, along with repenting of presumption and pursuing discipleship. They also explore repenting of sinful concealing and pursuing open accountability, repenting of cold hearts and pursue singing to Jesus, and how the gospel changes people.

The final chapter of the book challenges evangelicals to teach what the Bible teaches, to proclaim the gospel, to speak humbly and in love by being a friend, listening, being compassionate, sharing the gospel, speaking the truth, being candid about differences, opposing bullying, receiving your brothers and sisters, strengthen your brothers and sisters, and praying.

***Transforming Homosexuality* is a useful book that will help readers to understand the issues related to same-sex attraction.** This book does an excellent job of examining the pertinent biblical problems along with their ethical implications in our lives.

Whether you are actively engaged in writing or speaking about sexual sin, or you know someone who is wrestling with homosexual desires and earnestly want to help them *Transforming Homosexuality* is the book for you. I highly recommend this clear, compassionate, and thought-provoking book, and believe every pastor and Christian seeking to minister to those with same-sex attraction should read, digest, and apply the teaching in this book to their thought and ministries.

Biblical Blessings of Young Marriage

By Rick Hanna



“Mawwiage. Mawwiage is what bwings us twoo-geethah today. Mawwiage that bwessed awangement, that dweam wiffin a dweam ...”

and so goes one of the most famous quotes from the movie, *The Princess Bride*. What makes the quote funny is how the minister pronounces the words. What makes the quote ironic is that many

people do not find marriage to be a “bwessed awangement”, and even less find it to be a “dweam wiffin a dweam”, and still others find that “twooh wahv” was not really *true love* after all. It is no small wonder, then, that many people delay marriage or choose not to marry at all. The average age of people getting married is getting older and older each year. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average of women getting married is 27.4 years and for men it is 29.5. For many, this is great news as these single men and women are able to finish college, get started on a career, estab-

lish some sound finances, and mature to a level when adding marriage into their lives makes good sense. From a biblical perspective, however, this delays fulfilling what was one of the foundational elements for humans from their creation: to get

“Truth #1: It is not good to be alone.”

married, multiply, and exercise proper dominion over the earth. Yet, in spite of this command, many godly, Bible-believing people count themselves among those in our world who say that marriage should be delayed for some or all of the above reasons.

To those who are concerned about what the Bible says, I write this article in the hopes that it might point us back to a biblical

worldview when it comes to marriage. Too many people who love God and desire to follow God’s Word see the pitfalls and the problems of marriage, and seek to discourage men and women from marrying young, instead of seeing that there are wonderful and biblical blessings of finding a spouse and starting a family, fulfilling the first commission given to us on this earth.

Now, before I articulate a number of biblical blessings, I first want to address a big objection raised with young marriage (defining young marriage as between 18-25 years old): *statistics will show that divorce is higher for those who get married young*. As someone who was a statistics major in college, before going into ministry, I am keenly aware that statistics can be skewed in a direction for any number of reasons. Some of these reasons might be purposeful so as to produce the desired outcome. However, other reasons can involve real factors that need to be considered.

For example, an often quoted statistic says that most car accidents happen within a five-mile radius of your home. This is used to motivate drivers to wear their seatbelts even when they are just running to the store. Now, why do most accidents happen close to home? Is it because people are more careless on familiar roads? Is it because they go on autopilot and don’t think? Or, could it be that the great majority of the driving we do is close to home? So, back to our marriage statistic, could the percentage of young divorce be a result of a variety of factors, which would include that they are married longer and have a greater chance at divorce? Certainly other factors could be involved, but to depend on that statistic is fine if you don’t have a Bible on which to base your worldview.

If you believe God's Word is our source for wisdom and guidance in life, we should not be scared away from marriage by a statistic. The logical conclusion of this would be that we should tell everyone to stay single and that would bring the divorce rate down to zero. Yes, that is a bit extreme to say, but the point is we should not form our worldview by statistics, but rather by Scripture. Yes, some of the statistics may be because young people are rushing into marriage, but we should not allow the fear of that keep us from encouraging young marriage in our families and churches. There are many good blessings from young marriage and we need to keep these in mind as much or more than the possible pitfalls and statistics. Before we consider the blessings, let's look at three truths...

Truth #1: It is good not to be alone. This is an inference from God's own words when, in looking at the man He created, He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." If God said that, then the opposite must be true that it is good for the man to not be alone. This is not simply an antidote to loneliness, but rather a part of God's perfect design: that man and woman should marry and become one and thus complete that perfect design. It is at that point that God says, "It was very good."

Truth #2: The starting of a family fulfills the commission from God given to our first parents: be fruitful and multiply. This is not to suggest that everyone needs to have a quiver full of children; but of all the things God could have given the man and woman to do, what He did tell them is that—at the top of the list—is the growth of family life. This runs counter to what most of the world is saying: that you can add the family in later—after you figure out a career, find a place to live, and arrange for yourself a comfortable lifestyle with which you can "afford" children.

Truth #3: The leaving of father and mother to cleave to the wife is indeed living out the created order of things, according to God. In Genesis 2:24, we are told, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast (or cleave) to his wife." The "*therefore*" points us back to the fact that God saw the man alone, put him in a deep sleep, took one of his ribs, and fashioned the perfect counterpart for him: a woman. So, on the basis of God and His creative work, marriage is simply living out the model that God created. Like any technological device we purchase, it works best when used according to its *created purpose*.

Now these are 3 biblical truths of marriage, but the question is whether this should be delayed for some reason. Certainly there are reasons for why we might say that two people should not get married. But for the sake of this article, we will as-

sume that there are no red flags, other than the fact that they are younger than some might *feel* is the appropriate age. Let us discuss the practical blessings of young marriage.

Blessing #1: Those who marry young will more easily blend together because they have not had years of living their own lives. This is one of the great challenges of marrying later in life, where you did not have to worry about someone moving your glasses or “leaving the seat up”; where you did not have to argue about the remote control or listen to endless snoring. It is easier to change and adjust to married life if you are younger. At least in theory, although a lot still hinges on a lack of stubbornness and increased maturity (and lack of petty selfishness) between spouses.

Blessing #2: Those who marry young will have more and complete shared experiences. As someone who has been married for more than 25 years and who married young, I can attest to the joy of having so many shared experiences. We remember things from school, or things in early married life. This is both enjoyable to reminisce, but also it is a strong foundation of seeing God’s faithfulness over many years. We may remember the story of finding our first sofa at a garage sale in a torrential downpour (true story), the desire for a pet that led to our parakeet who loved Sandy Patti (another true story), or the many years of low salary jobs as God led us towards both ministry and adoption.

Blessing #3: Those who marry young will learn early on what it means to depend on God. Now some will marry young and have good paying jobs, but the vast majority of young couples will start with very little. For some, this is too risky a venture and so they would say that young marriage is not safe. However, what better way to see God provide than to step out in faith. What better way to learn the secret of contentment that Paul writes about in Philippians 4. We remember with fondness the kitchen table we found at a thrift store with 3 chairs, the matching area rug that was thrown in with the drenched sofa, and the many other little ways that God provided. We also remember with fondness the gift of God that allowed us to take a family vacation years later to Disney World with our six children. Now we enjoy being able to help our children out a little as they begin their new families. Through marrying young, we have learned together to depend on, and rejoice in, the daily bread.

Blessing #4: Those who marry young will often have the opportunity of

being in a network of family relationships that help to build a solid foundation for a long and healthy marriage. Now, not everyone will enjoy a good relationship with their parents, but many will have recently left their parents' home and many will still be in fairly close contact with their families. This is valuable in that the families can support and encourage the young couple in ways that can strengthen them in the early years, yet still give them the freedom to be their own family. We have benefited greatly from a supporting and loving family, as well as a church family that helped us in those early years of marriage and parenting.

Blessing #5: Those who marry young will share a network of friends and acquaintances that will bring them together, not separate them apart. There is nothing wrong with a wife having her friends and the husband having his friends. That can be very healthy in the marriage relationship. But, in the same way, having friends that are mutual friends, that encourage partnership in the marriage, is also very healthy for a marriage. These friendships become refreshing to both husband and wife, and give further strength to the marriage. It allows couples to do things together in meaningful ways, rather than living two separate lives.

While there are many considerations that any couple must take before pursuing marriage—and a few more that *younger* couples must take in addition—if Christ is the center of the relationship, and the parents have given their blessing, we ought not to delay marriage simply out of a preconceived notion that it is “too risky”. The blessings of fulfilling the purpose God has for His people is worth the risk.

How Should Christians Share the Gospel with Practicing Homosexuals?

By Kevin DeYoung



How should Christians share the Gospel with practicing homosexuals?

I'd start by saying that you preach the *same* gospel that you would preach to someone who is not in the homosexual lifestyle. That's the most important thing to say.

I think what the question is getting at is what might be some particular strategies for sharing the gospel with practicing homosexuals, and certainly there are some things we want to be aware of. Hospitality will be very important; making necessary caveats and qualifications about what we mean by certain words; taking time to show people that we love them, that we care for them, that we want to hear them, that we want to know their hurts, that we want to know their stories. All of that would be important for anyone and especially perhaps for persons in the ho-

homosexual lifestyle.

But the most important thing to say is that we are *all* people and we are *all* created in God's image. And we are born into this world predisposed to sin, and the Bible says that we are children of wrath—sons of disobedience—and that our inclination is always towards evil all the time.

And so, no matter what lifestyle you are in (you may be in a very family-centric lifestyle, where you idolize the American dream; you may be in a homosexual lifestyle; you may be promiscuous; you may be a drunkard; you may just be a proud older brother, self-righteous kind of hypocrite), no matter the way that we are living, or who we are, or how we perceive our identity, *the gospel is the same*.

We need to hear that apart from Christ we are lost; that we have exchanged the glory of God for the folly of created things; that the things we are chasing will not satisfy; that the sins we are committing alienate us from a holy God and will bring upon us His just wrath. But *in Christ Jesus*, He has made provision, so that *His* life can be reckoned to us and *His* death can be counted to our stead—so that our sins can be atoned for, and we can have the very righteousness of Christ, and we can truly be children of God and He can be our heavenly Father.

Pastor, Love Your Wife

By Dave Furman

One might think it would be easy for a pastor to love his wife. A pastor preaches on marriage often enough to know how a husband should love his wife, right? Ignorance is certainly not an option.

We also see pastors exhorting couples during wedding ceremonies on how to have a healthy marriage. In fact, this afternoon I am writing these words while still wearing my suit and tie from a wedding ceremony I just conducted. All who were present heard me challenge the new couple to honor God in their marriage. But what about pastors? How should a pastor love his wife? I'll mention the three things I told the couple today in our wedding ceremony. I think these points are especially relevant for pastors, and I'm guessing you'll see why once you read them!

This is foundational to any marriage. Whether things are going well or you're in a tough time, the most fundamental question you need to ask is: Am I worshipping God? You would think this would be easy for a pastor to do. You're around theological books all day, telling other people how their marriages should go, and preaching sermons on the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. But pastor, how's your



soul? Are you walking with the Lord?

We need to remember that the biggest problem in our marriages will not be our busy ministry schedule, or our circumstances, or even our wife. Our biggest problem in our marriage is *our own sin*. It is only when you are walking with God that you have something positive to give to your spouse.

The Spirit empowers us to love our wives sacrificially, be kind even when we're hurt, and be generous with our energy even when we feel drained. Don't let your soul run on fumes, give everything to your congregation, and have nothing left to give to your wife. Love God with all your heart or else everything about your marriage will eventually crumble.

Surely, as a pastor, you've officiated plenty of weddings, but do you remember your own wedding day? And I'm not asking if you remember what kind of flowers decorated the ceremony? (Roses! We had roses. Someone, please tell my wife that I knew that random fact.) And I'm not asking if you remember all the food and the fellowship. Or the order of service in the ceremony. What you ought to remember is this: the most important thing that happened on your wedding day. You made a covenant. You made a covenant promise before God, your wife, and witnesses that you would, by God's grace, love your wife until death do you part. Feelings of love come and go. Your marriage can't be fueled by feelings. It can only be sustained when you elevate your covenant to God and each other over your feelings and emotions.

Remember the unbreakable promise you made. As far as I know, you made no covenant or vow when you took over your pastoral position, but you did when you wed your wife. Don't neglect her. Remember your wedding day.

Just like the other members of your congregation, you need to have people in your life who know what's going on in your marriage. Walk in the light. Don't "fake it" with the church and don't encourage your wife to "just get it together" in public. Be honest about your struggles. Open your hearts up to the people around you. Allow your wife to be a healthy church member and not a woman who is placed on a pedestal for all to stare at. Allow your wife to have healthy friendships in the church without the fear that she'll expose you for being an imperfect husband and pastor. Together with your wife, enjoy being a part of the church, you shepherd.

In summary: love the Lord with everything you've got.

Love your wife. And together, with your wife, love the Bride of Christ.

5 Tips for Maximizing Your Singleness

By Marshall Segal



Perhaps the greatest temptation in singleness is to assume marriage will meet our unmet needs,

solve our weaknesses, organize our lives, and unleash our gifts. Far from the solution, Paul makes marriage out to be a kind of problematic “Plan B” for Christian life and ministry.

Marry if you must, but be warned that following Jesus is not easier when you join yourself to another sinner in a fallen world. While marriage may bring joy, help, and relief in certain areas, it immediately multiplies our distractions, because we’re responsible for this other person—his or her needs, dreams, and growth. It’s a high

calling, and a good one, but a demanding one, nonetheless, that will keep us from all kinds of other good things.

If God leads you to marry, you may never again know a time like the one you’re in right now. A season of singleness is not the minor leagues of marriage. It has the potential to be a unique period of undivided devotion to Christ and undis-

tracted ministry to others. With the Spirit in you and the calendar clear, God has given you the means to make a lasting difference for His kingdom. You're all dressed up, having every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3), with literally everywhere to go.

But where do I go, and what do I do? I can't answer that for everyone, but following are five lessons that may help you change the world (or at least your little piece of it) while you're not yet married. With God's help and leading, you have the freedom to invest yourself, your time, your resources, your youth, and your flexibility in relationships, ministries, and causes that can bear unbelievable fruit—to live single, satisfied, and sent. God has given you the means to make a lasting difference for his kingdom.

1. Remember that true greatness will often look like weakness.

Most of the time, instead of pursuing greatness through sacrifice, I find myself expecting God to make life a little more comfortable, or relationships a little easier, or ministry a little more fruitful, or affirmation a little more regular. But He says, instead, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43–44). Servants in this life will rule the next. Slaves in this life will be kings forever. True greatness isn't the kind that appears in bold letters on our favorite website. No, it shows up in the details of other people's lives. If we aspire to be great, we need to give ourselves to the small, mundane, easily overlooked needs around us.

2. Notice the people God has already put around you.

God has put you on the planet and in your neighborhood so that you and all the people in your life might seek him. That's God's mission statement for your campus, your apartment building, your block—wherever you live, study, or work. Paul says that God "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him" (Acts 17:26–27).

3. Practice selflessness while you're still single.

"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3–4). That will only get harder in marriage, so practice now. We should think of a few people or families for whom we could lay down our single life. No one is expecting you to care and provide for others right

now—no one, that is, except for God. Let's be mindful of the needs of others, especially those in the church, and consider contributing. It could be money or food, or just time and energy. Maybe especially time and energy.

4. Say yes to the spontaneous.

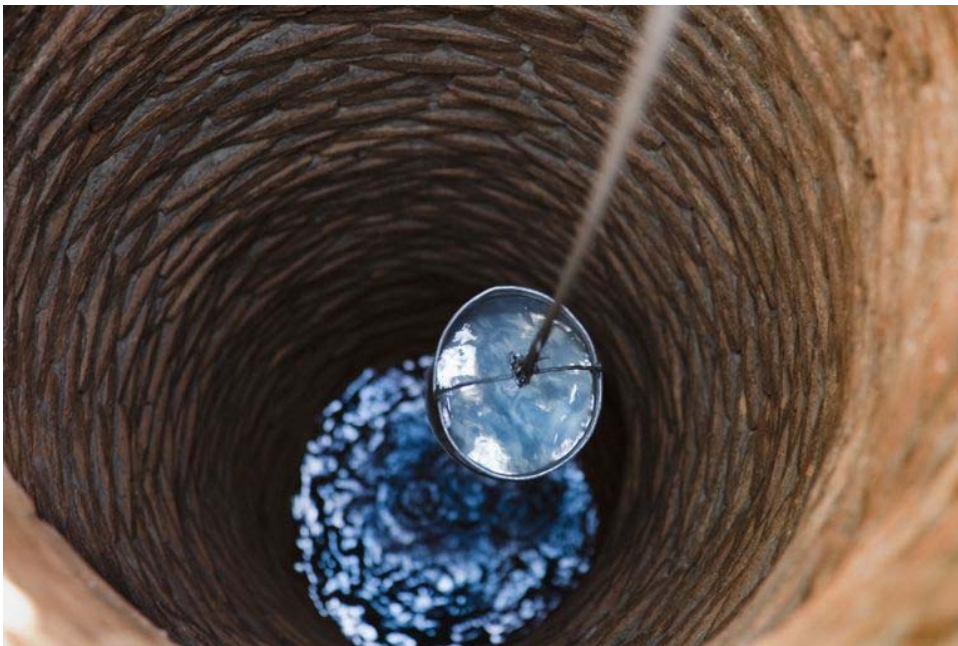
It's just a fact—marriage murders spontaneity; not entirely, but massively. One of your greatest spiritual gifts as a single person is your *yes*. *Yes* to a random phone conversation. *Yes* to coffee. *Yes* to help with the move. *Yes* to stepping in when someone's sick. *Yes* to a late-night movie or the special event downtown. You have the unbelievable freedom to say *yes* when married people can't even ask the question. When the spouse doesn't exist yet, you cannot hurt him or her with the selfless, impulsive decisions you make to serve others. If you get married, you will not always have the same freedom. Be willing to say *yes* and be a blessing to others, even when you don't always feel like it.

5. Do radical, time-consuming things for God.

Just as you are free to say yes to spontaneous things, you're also able to say yes to things that require more of you than a married person can afford. Dream bigger, more-costly dreams. Start a daily prayer meeting or some regular outreach. Commit to mentor and disciple several men or women younger than you. Organize a new Christ-centered community service project. Do all of the above. You'd be surprised, with God's Spirit in you and a resolve to spend your singleness well, how much you and your not-yet-married friends are truly capable of, especially when you dream and work together. Be radical but not reckless. The idea is not to spread yourself dangerously thin, so make decisions prayerfully and in community with people who love you and can tell you *no*. Now please, ask yourself, "How could you use your gifts to do something radical or time-consuming to tell others about Jesus?"

How Jesus Viewed and Valued Women

By James Borland



The place of women in the first-century Roman world and in Judaism has been well-documented and set forth in several recent

books.¹ Most frequently, women were regarded as second-class citizens. Jesus's regard for women was much

different from that of His contemporaries. Evans terms Jesus' approach to women as "revolutionary" for His era.² But was His treatment of women out of character with Old Testament revelation, or with later New Testament practice?

Disciples Come in Two Sexes, Male and Female

For Christ, women have an intrinsic value equal to that of men. Jesus said, "... At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female'" (Matthew 19:4; cf. Genesis 1:27). Women are created in the image of God just as men are. Like men, they have self-awareness, personal freedom, a measure of self-determination, and person-

al responsibility for their actions.

Scanzoni and Hardesty point out that, “Jesus came to earth not primarily as a *male* but as a *person*. He treated women not primarily as females but as human beings.”³ Jesus recognized women as fellow human beings. Disciples come in two sexes: male and female. Females are seen by Jesus as genuine persons, not simply as the objects of male desire.⁴ James Hurley believes “the foundation-stone of Jesus’s attitude toward women was His vision of them as persons to whom and for whom He had come. He did not perceive them primarily in terms of their sex, age, or marital status; He seems to have considered them in terms of their relation (or lack of one) to God.”⁵

Three Clear Examples

Examples of this even-handed treatment of women by Jesus are found in the four Gospels. First, Jesus regularly addressed women directly while in public. This was unusual for a man to do (John 4:27). The disciples were amazed to see Jesus talking with the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar (John 4:7-26). He also spoke freely with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:10-11).⁶ Luke, who gives ample attention to women in his Gospel, notes that Jesus spoke publicly with the widow of Nain (Luke 7:12-13), the woman with the bleeding disorder (Luke 8:48; cf. Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34), and a woman who called to Him from a crowd (Luke 11:27-28). Similarly, Jesus addressed a woman bent over for eighteen years (Luke 13:12) and a group of women on the route to the cross (Luke 23:27-31).

A second aspect of Jesus’ regard for the full intrinsic value of women is seen in *how* He spoke to the women He addressed. He spoke in a thoughtful, caring manner. Each synoptic writer records Jesus addressing the woman with the bleeding disorder tenderly as “daughter” (references above) and referring to the bent woman as a “daughter of Abraham” (Luke 13:16). Bloesch infers that “Jesus called the Jewish women ‘daughters of Abraham’ (Luke 13:16), thereby according them a spiritual status equal to that of men.”⁷

Third, Jesus did not gloss over sin in the lives of the women He met. He held women personally responsible for their own sin as seen in His dealings with the woman at the well (John 4:16-18), the woman caught in adultery (John 8:10-11), and the sinful woman who anointed His feet (Luke 7:44-50). Their sin was not condoned, but confronted. Each had the personal freedom and a measure of self-determination to deal with the issues of sin, repentance, and forgiveness.

Jesus' Valuation of Women Today

Even though clear role distinction is seen in Christ’s choice of the apostles

and in the exclusive type of work they were given to perform, no barriers need exist between a believer and the Lord Jesus Christ, regardless of gender. Jesus demonstrated only the highest regard for women, in both His life and teaching. He recognized the intrinsic equality of men and women, and continually showed the worth and dignity of women as persons. Jesus valued their fellowship, prayers, service, financial support, testimony, and witness. He honored women, taught women, and ministered to women in thoughtful ways.

As a result, women responded warmly to Jesus' ministry. Have things changed too drastically today for us to see this same Jesus? Not at all. Modern women can find the same rich fulfillment in serving Christ as did the Marys and Marthas of Judea, or the Joannas and Susannas of Galilee.

References:

1. James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), pp. 20-78, explains what women's lives were like in Old and New Testament times; Aida Besançon Spencer, *Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), pp. 46-57, covers the position of women in rabbinic writings largely current at the time of Christ; and Mary J. Evans, *Women in the Bible: An Overview of All the Crucial Passages on Women's Roles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), pp. 24-43, describes women in Old Testament society and in the Graeco-Roman world. Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 10, concludes, "It is fair to say that a low view of women was common, perhaps even predominant before, during and after Jesus' era."
2. Evans, *Woman in the Bible*, p. 45.
3. Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1974), p. 56.
4. Evans, p. 45.
5. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, p. 83.
6. Although opinions vary, the present writer regards John 7:53-8:11 as part of the genuine text of John's Gospel.
7. Bloesch, *Is the Bible Sexist?* p. 28.

10 Steps to Finding a Godly Wife

By Grant Castleberry

I am writing this post for my young brother and myriads of other young men like him—young, single men that I have conversations with almost daily about life and relationships. I



know that God does not call every man to marriage, but for the many that he does, it is a good thing that they find a godly wife. Outside of salvation in Jesus Christ, a godly wife brings more joy and happiness to a man than anything else on earth. As the Scripture says, “An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life” (Proverbs 31:10-12).

What man does not want to find that? A woman that he can trust with every ounce of his being. An honest woman of upright integrity that desires her husband's success. But where does a man begin if he wants to find a woman like that? Where does he start to begin the search for a woman of such value? By no means is this list exhaustive, nor are these necessarily in order of importance, although the first one is.

1) Pursue the Lord with All of Your Heart

This might seem contrary to the objective, but it is actually primary in reaching it. Before a man finds a godly woman, he first finds the living God. He begins to long to glorify Jesus Christ with his life and sees Christ as infinitely valuable and worth all of his time and energy (1st Corinthians 10:31). A godly woman will not settle for anything less! She wants a man that could be a spiritual leader for her, a man that she can respect (1st Peter 3:1). So be a man after God's own heart and don't look back!

2) Know Your Value in Christ

Your value is found in the fact that you are created in God's image and that if you are a believer in Christ, God loves you as much as His Beloved Son (John 17:23). If you are seeking your validity or worth in a woman, you will not find a godly woman, because you will be looking for qualities that the world esteems rather than the qualities that God esteems. Rather, you must find your value in God's love for you displayed at the cross.

3) Pray Every Day for a Godly Wife

If you are not praying for a godly woman, do not expect God to bring you one. Seek the Lord in prayer and ask Him to bring you a godly woman. It is OK to do that. Remember, you are asking the Lord for "a good thing". Not a bad thing. And as Jesus reminds us, "How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him" (Matthew 7:11). Also, pray for wisdom and discernment. God is more than willing to give that to you as well if you will ask Him for it (James 1:5-8). Also, start praying for your future wife. Pray for her protection and her own growth in godliness.

4) Search the Scriptures

Read the Scriptures daily and God will give you wisdom, and the Holy Spirit will use the Word to transform and renew your mind to be more like Christ's (Romans 12:1-2). You will read passages like Proverbs 31 and Titus 2, and you will see and learn about what God considers to be a godly woman. A vision for what type of woman God is leading you to will begin to form in your mind as you listen to the Word of God. Most importantly, your own heart and character will begin to become

more like Christ's.

5) Join a Church

Do not just attend a church. Join a church. And by joining a church, I mean a church where the Word is taught as the inerrant and infallible Word of God, where the Word is preached, where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is cherished, and where people are on mission to bring the Gospel to the world. Not only will your relationships with other believers be edifying and challenging, you will now be surrounded by other godly men and women who will pour themselves into your life. Also, this should be obvious, but church is where the godly women are! If you want to see a football game, you go to the football stadium. If you want to find a godly girl, go to a church.

6) Embrace God's Call on Your Life

A godly woman wants a vision that is bigger than her. She wants to join a man on mission that is doing something with his life. She wants to be a part of something special. It is your job to figure out what this is. What are you to do with your life? Where are you to go? How are you going to invest in building the kingdom of God?

7) Work Hard

A godly woman does not want to marry a lazy man. She wants to marry a hard worker whom she can respect. She's looking for a Proverbs 22:29 man: "Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men." This means that it is time to put away childish things—like playing Call of Duty for hours every night—and for you to become good at something! Take ownership and pride in your work and work hard. Strive to become the best at what you do.

8) Do NOT Assume that Every Relationship You Have with a Woman is Romantic

You must first learn to treat all Christian women as "sisters in Christ". It is selfish and myopic to think that just because a woman was kind and had a conversation with you that she is interested in you romantically. Instead, develop appropriate friendships with Christian women in the context of service in the church. A godly woman wants to first see your godly character on display before she wants to trust you emotionally and romantically in a serious relationship.

9) Stop Asking Out the Pretty Face

Young men will often meet a pretty girl and immediately begin to think about

asking her out—without first knowing anything about her character or whether or not she is a follower of Christ. Before you ask a girl out you should know something of her character and her godliness. Find out what church she is a “member” of and how she is serving. Please, stop asking out the girls that just add “Jesus” to a long list of other interests, because there are godly women out there who value Christ above everything else. See number 5. You will most likely meet a godly girl at church or serving at another Christian organization or institution.

10) Seek Older, Godly Men as Mentors

Older men who know the Lord are probably wiser than you are. They have seen more, experienced more, and most importantly have walked with God longer than you have. They will be able to invest in your life and impart wisdom to you in ways that your peers cannot. Also, more often than not, older, godly men are married to older, godly women, who know and are mentoring young, godly women. See where I am going with this? Long story short, pursue relationships with older, wiser men. Where do you meet these men? Got back to step number 5, and join a church!

Talking to Your Children about Transgenderism

By Heath Lambert



I have three young children who each profess faith in Jesus Christ. As we bring them up, my wife and I are continually reminded that we are doing so in an age that is hostile to the Kingdom of Christ and to the Word of God. Of course, this is nothing new. The world system that is opposed to Christ did not begin in the Western world in 2012. It began in Genesis 3. Christian parents have always had to deal with sinful cultures. The only difference about today is the specific shape the opposition to Christ that the culture takes. Just one of those new challenges today is the issue of

transgender.

Fairly recently, my children heard a news report about a young boy who thought he was a girl. His parents, seeing the sorrow that was flooding his heart, wanted to show care for him by embracing his desire to be a girl. They started to dress him and style his hair as a girl and everyone was—apparently—happy. My children were shocked. So was I. All of a sudden I was having to explain things to them that I would not have chosen to explain at such an early age. I know many parents are in the same boat. Faithful parenting in our culture means helping our children think through this from the standpoint of faithfulness. Here are four cate-

gories to help us frame our conversations with our children.

We must speak to our children about God and the authority of His Word. God has revealed himself to us in the pages of Scripture. When it comes to the issue of gender His revelation could not be more clear: *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27)*. This instruction means that gender is inextricably linked with biological sex revealed at birth, and is *not* grounded in *preference or traditionalism*, but in the Word of God. We must teach our children that transgenderism is wrong because it is at odds with God's Word in the Bible. This means that when children struggle with this issue, it is not merely their own problem, it is a parental problem of those who more faithfully need to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

We must speak to our children about sin. When God speaks, telling us who we are and what we should do, we do not like it. We fight against it. This is called *sin*, and we all do it. *For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)*. When our kids encounter transgenderism on the news, with their friends, or in their own personal struggle, then Christian parents need to help them make sense of it by talking about sin. We need to be clear that transgenderism is a manifestation of human sinfulness, but that it is not the only manifestation. We can say things like, "That little boy on the news is fighting against God's Word just the way you do when you behave cruelly toward your sister." Transgenderism is explained by sin, and is far from the only manifestation of it.

We must speak to our children about grace. Grace does not mean that we do not speak about sin, but it does change the *way* we speak about sin. *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people" (Titus 2:11)*. God's grace has invaded humanity, and that means that for the rest of eternity we must never speak about sin without speaking about the grace of God. We can say to our children, "You know that little boy does not understand who God made him to be, but Jesus came into the world to give us His grace so that we can follow Him as we should. Let's pray that we can all trust Jesus to help us, and let's pray for that boy and his family too."

We must speak to our children about kindness. Notice that in each of the examples above, I used the opportunity of transgenderism to speak about our own children's sin and need for grace. This is the way it works. When our children understand a biblical view of sin and grace it demonstrates that sin is not

merely the reality that those transgender kids struggle with. Grace is *not* something that the gender-confused parents need. We all struggle with sin, and we all need grace. When we understand this universal reality it makes us kind. “*Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person*” (Colossians 4:6). Every person needs an answer bathed in grace.

The only people who can offer a gracious word are the people who have experienced grace themselves. It is not enough that our kids know that transgender persons are guilty of sin, and in need of grace. They must also be convinced that they are sinners and in need of grace. When they do they will be able to approach sinners in a transgender world with a kind word of grace as those who have the grace of Jesus themselves.

Recommended Reading on Biblical Sexuality and Gender Roles

This season at Servants of Grace, we've been taking a look at biblical gender roles and the authority of the Word of God. From attacks on the image of God, to the authority of the Word, to a man being a man and a woman being a woman, many people have a lot of questions about biblical gender roles and the authority of Scripture.

With this issue of *Theology for Life Magazine*, we have attempted to cover a broad spectrum of topics within this issue. We understand we haven't covered everything, but we hope readers will grow in their knowledge and understanding of biblical gender roles from the Word of God. If you've found this subject fascinating and would like to study the issue further, please check out the recommended reading list below. These are at the top of this genre in both excellence and readability.

Biblical Gender Roles

- *50 Crucial Questions About Manhood and Womanhood: An Overview of Central Concerns about Manhood and Womanhood* by Drs. Piper and Grudem
- *Designed for Joy: How the Gospel Impacts Men and Women, Identity and Practice*
- *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*
- *God's Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey* by Drs. Andreas and Margaret Kostenberger

Manhood

- *A Godly Man's Picture* by Thomas Watson
- *Disciplines of a Godly Man* by Kent Hughes
- *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing*

for Your Family by Timothy Z. Witmer

- *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Homes* by Vodie T. Baucham Jr.
- *The Masculine Mandate* by Richard Phillips
- *Date Your Wife* by Justin Buzzard

Marriage

- *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Home* by Jason Helopoulous
- *No Ordinary Marriage* by Tim Savage
- *Friends and Lovers: Cultivating Companionship and Intimacy in Marriage* by Joel R. Beeke
- *The Meaning of Marriage* by Dr. Tim Keller

Parenting & Family

- *Shepherding a Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp
- *Equipping for Life* by Andreas and Margaret Kostenberger
- *A Neglected Grace: Family Worship in the Home* by Jason Helopoulous

Young People

- *Passion and Purity* by Elizabeth Elliott
- *Thoughts for Young Men* by J.C. Ryle

Children

- *The Jesus Story Bible* by Sally-Lloyd-Jones

I hope you enjoy reading these books as much as I have. I know you will find them helpful in your further study of these subjects.

In Christ Alone,

Dave Jenkins

Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine*

God deserves to be worshiped by your family in your home.

Gathering together for worship is an indispensable part of your family's spiritual life. In his book *Family Worship*, Donald S. Whitney offers practical guidance for leading your family in daily worship through reading Scripture, praying together, and singing songs.

"This book will equip you to lead your family in worship, without fear or awkwardness or intimidation. This book could change your home."

Russell Moore, President, The Ethics & Religious
Liberty Commission



About the Authors:



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Andrew Walker serves as Director of Policy Studies at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission where he writes about public policy, ethics, and the Church's social witness. He got his PhD in Christian Ethics at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is the author of the *God and the Transgender Debate*. He is married to Christian, and they have two daughters.



Dave Jenkins

Dave Jenkins is the Executive Director of Servants of Grace Ministries, and the Executive Editor of *Theology for Life Magazine*. He and his wife, Sarah, attend Revive AV Church in Lancaster, CA. Dave received his MAR and M.Div. through Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.



Christy Britton

Christy Britton is a wife, mom of four biological sons, and soon to be mom of an adopted Ugandan daughter. She is an orphan advocate for 127 Worldwide. She writes for various blogs.

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Lara d'Entremont

Lara d'Entremont is married and a Biblical Counselor in training. As someone who has been made anew by God and completely transformed by Him, she wants to point you back to that same gracious Savior.



Landon Coleman

Landon Coleman serves as the teaching pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas, where he lives with his wife Brooke. They have four children, Emma, Noelle, Amelia, and Clayton. He is the author of *Pastor to Pastor: Practical Advice for Regular Pastors* and *Pray Better: Learning to Pray Biblically*, both of which were published by Rainer Publishing.

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Dave Furman

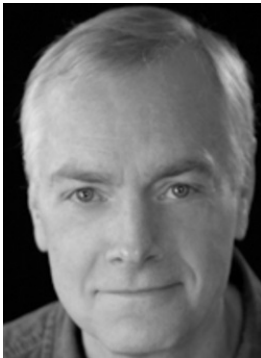
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James Borland is an evangelical professor of biblical studies and theology at Liberty University and former president of the Evangelical Theological Society.

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