

Small Group Guide THE CROSS AND CHRISTIAN MANHOOD

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

June 16, 2013

Genesis 1-3; Romans 5:12-21

Use this resource as a tool to help Christ-followers move forward in their spiritual growth. To do this well requires that the Small Group Leader is building a relationship with the individuals in the small group and has identified where the people are in their relationship with God. Are they Christ-followers? Are they growing in Christ? If so, in what areas do they need to grow further? As disciple-makers, Small Group Leaders shepherd people to know the truth of Scripture, to understand why it matters, and to apply it to their lives. Small Group Leaders come alongside those whom they disciple to discover how loving God, loving each other, and loving those not yet in the Kingdom should shape how they live. The structure of this resource coincides with moving people from knowledge (Main Truth) to understanding (Why It Matters) to application (Now What Do We Do?). Utilize this Small Group Guide as a flexible teaching tool to inform your time together and not as a rigid task list.

GETTING STARTED

Welcome – Incorporate time for greeting one another, enjoying any refreshments, and making announcements. If guests are visiting, make introductions and help them feel welcomed. Ask for their contact information, so you can follow up with them.

Looking Back – Provide an opportunity for small group members to share what God is teaching them, how they are applying what they are learning, and how He has given them opportunities to share the gospel with others. This can be done as a whole group or in smaller groups. Do the people know each other well enough to share more than surface level information? How can time together be used to foster deeper relationships among those in the small group? Also, what are the struggles and needs of the people in the small group? How can the people in the small group sacrificially serve each other?

Looking Up – Hold prayer as fundamental to small group time rather than supplemental to it. Give adoration and thanksgiving to God in prayer. Submit yourself to Him, confessing sin. Petition God for personal needs and other requests. Pray for the disciple-making efforts of those in the group and for the salvation of the lost in each other's families, spheres of influence, and in the world. The Weekly Prayer Focus below can also be incorporated in the group's prayer time.

Weekly Prayer Focus (from Our Worship Guide)

- *Pray for Our Lives: Praise God for our fathers. Praise God for all the men in our faith family who serve in so many capacities, both here and among the nations. Ask God to help grant us understanding about biblical manhood. Pray our families and our faith family would honor the biblical teaching of what it means to be a man, even if that means being radically countercultural. Pray we will teach our sons to aspire to be biblical men and our daughters to honor and respect men. Pray for older men to mentor younger men and explicitly teach, as well as model, what it means to be a man.*
- *Pray for Our City: This week we are praying for the ministry of Jeremy Miller and other Brook Hills members as they seek to evangelize and disciple prisoners at the maximum security St. Clair Correctional Facility. Jeremy serves as a full-time volunteer chaplain there. We are also praying for Liberty Baptist Church in Chelsea and Tim Cox, Pastor.*

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- *Pray for Our World: This week we are praying for Brook Hills Long-Term Missionary Cassity H. serving in South East Asia. Cassity serves as a writer and media coordinator for the IMB in South East Asia. She also serves in surrounding villages every week teaching English to kids living in these communities. There they are able to freely share the gospel and introduce entire families to who Christ is. Join us as we pray for Cassity H. this week and thank God for the work He is doing in and through her life. We are also praying for our Short-Term team led by Brooke Miller serving in New York City.*

MAIN TRUTH

Message Outline

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Genesis 1-3; Romans 5:12-21

God's Design for Men...

- God created men and women with equal dignity (Gen. 1:26-31; Ps. 8:3-8).
- God created men and women with different roles (Gen. 2:15-24; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23).
 - Man was created to be the head.
 - To lead with love.
 - To provide and protect.
 - Woman was created to be the helper.
- God created men and women as a reflection of the Trinity (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1-4; Jn. 5:19-23).
 - This is loving leadership in the context of beautiful relationship.

Sin's Distortion of Men...

- Passive: Sin leads men to abdicate their responsibilities (Gen. 3:1-7).
 - Won't Grow Up Walter
 - Absent From Reality Andy
 - Too Cool Carl
 - Blame It On Everybody (And Everything) Else Bob
 - Rest in Retirement Ron
- Aggressive: Sin leads men to abuse their authority (Gen. 3:16).
 - Tough Guy Tom
 - Get What I Want Gary
 - Living For What Won't Last Larry
 - Can't Put Work Down Dan
 - Put A Good Face On It Frank

Christlike Devotion in Men...

- Christ and Manhood (Gen. 3:15)...
 - Jesus perfectly models true manhood.
 - Jesus mercifully saves us from our sin and from ourselves.
 - Jesus personally makes us into the men God created us to be.
- The Cross and Manhood (Rom. 5:12-21)...
 - The cross compels us to initiate humble, hard-working leadership in our lives.

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- Strive for purity (1 Pet. 1:13-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).
 - Practice spiritual disciplines.
 - Flee sexual immorality.
 - Fight material idolatry.
 - Cultivate personal integrity.
- Take responsibility (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:25; Mk. 12:29-31).
 - For starting a family.
 - For shepherding a family.
 - Spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, physically, and relationally
- Provide (1 Tim. 5:8; 1 Thess. 4:10-12; 2 Thess. 3:6-13; Prov. 6:6-11).
- Protect (Deut. 20:7-8; 24:5; Josh. 1:14; Jdg. 4:8-10; Neh. 4:13-14; Jer. 50:37; Nah. 3:13; Mat. 2:13-14).
- Honor women (1 Pet. 3:7).
- Train boys to be men (Titus 2:1-8).
- The cross compels us to show selfless, sacrificial love for our wives (Eph. 5:22-33).
 - Love your wife faithfully.
 - Love your wife effectively.
 - Love your wife carefully.
 - Love your wife completely.
- The cross compels us to desperate dependence on grace that only Christ can give (1 Cor. 15:10).

Message Summary

In light of Father's Day, we pause our study of 1 Corinthians to consider how the cross of Christ affects our understanding of manhood. Genesis 1-2 indicates God's design for men, which includes being equal with women in dignity but different from women in their role as the head of the family. However, when Adam and Eve's disobeyed God in Eden, sin distorted God's design for men by leading men to either abdicate their responsibilities or to abuse their authority. While manhood is marred by sin, God sent Christ to perfectly model manhood, to save us from our sin, and to make us into the men and women God created us to be.

WHY IT MATTERS

Digging Deeper

Because this sermon topic centers on biblical manhood, consider the demographic of your small group as you structure the group time. If you are a co-ed group, it might be beneficial to discuss some of these questions as a whole group then break up into smaller groups by gender in order to further discuss some of the issues and questions related to these biblical texts. If you lead a women's group, begin the time together by asking why it is important for women to study what the Bible says about manhood. Let this sermon guide you in how to pray for the men in your life and in your church, and spend time as a group brainstorming how you can better encourage and serve your male relatives, friends, and co-workers, etc.

Begin by asking the group to name a TV show or a movie they have recently seen. Ask them to describe how that show or movie depicted men. If there are husbands or fathers in it, how are they characterized? What are other ways that the media typify men? Use this conversation to emphasize why it is important to know what the Bible says about biblical manhood. How do the roles and characteristics of men that culture elevates align with Scripture? In what ways have Christians acquiesced and even contributed to the culture's standard for manhood (and womanhood)?

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Depending on the group, consider asking how many people in the group grew up in a divorced home, how many had absent fathers, how many had abusive fathers, and how many had godly fathers. This will help you to understand and be sensitive to the individuals in your group as you discuss the topic of biblical manhood. Many in the group did not likely grow up with an example of biblical manhood, and some were likely hurt by men in their lives. In spite of a lack of godly men in your past, how can you grow in your understanding of biblical manhood (and womanhood) and in living out the characteristics of a true man (or true woman)? For those who have been hurt by men, have you forgiven those who have hurt you, or are you holding on to bitterness, anger, comparison, fear, or insecurity? Point them to Christ, for He is the only one who can heal the emotional wounds inflicted by men in their lives.

With regard to God's design for men and women, recognize that Christians differ on the specifics of what a man and woman's role looks like in the home, in the church, and in society. Even within your small group, there are likely to be different opinions on what women can and should do in the church, what headship and submission practically look like in a marriage, and whether women be CEOs or President or even work outside the home. Remind everyone that there will likely be times when folks within the group must agree to disagree. Encourage the group to focus attention on what the Bible does clearly say, and together, flesh out the role of headship and helper in marriage as discussed in Genesis 2:15-24; 1 Corinthians 11:3; and Ephesians 5:22-33. The point of this particular discussion about roles is to help men and women better understand what it looks like for men to lead with love and to provide and protect his family.

In discussing how the Trinity plays into manhood and womanhood, the Persons of the Trinity are equally divine yet have different roles with the Father leading the Son and the Son being subject to the Father. The roles within the Trinity do not assign superiority to the Father and inferiority to the Son, so why do we ascribe superiority or inferiority to the Bible's roles for men and women?

With regard to sin's distortion of men, use the following ten descriptions to augment your understanding of the ten types of sinful tendencies that Pastor David described. If your group consists of only men or if you have chosen to separate your co-ed group into separate groups consisting of the same gender for this part of the discussion, encourage the men to reflect on which of these tendencies describe them and why. Provide time for confession of sin. Discuss ways in which the men in the group can hold each other accountable. What specific steps can each man in the group take this week to fight this sinful tendency in his life?

Passive Tendencies

- **Won't Grow Up Walter** – Walter perpetuates his adolescence into his late 20s and even into his 30s or 40s. He has no vision or direction in his life, and his life revolves around him. He might even still be in school or working part-time, and he is not taking responsibility for himself. He invests significant amount of time in his hobbies (video games, sports, etc.), looks for a mentor but does not listen to what such people have to say, and, like a spiritual Peter Pan, refuses to grow up.
- **Absent From Reality Andy** – Andy is married, and while he pays the bills and is physically present with his family, he is emotionally distant from his wife and children. Instead of conversing with his family to know what is going on in their lives, he is absorbed with his phone, computer, TV, hobbies, etc.
- **Too Cool Carl** – While Carl is likeable and the life of the party, no one respects him because his desire to be liked supersedes his need to discipline his children, to confront conflict, and to stand up for what is right.
- **Blame It On Everybody (And Everything) Else Bob** – Bob acts like Adam in Genesis 3:9-12 by blaming others for all of his problems and issues instead of taking responsibility for what *he* is at fault for in his life.

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- **Rest in Retirement Ron** – Ron has retired from his job and revels in living the “good” life, a life with no work. While there is nothing sinful about retirement, a perpetual rest from work is unbiblical because as long as we are able we should be striving to glorify God in the world. For those who are retired, discuss ways in which Christians can use their retirement to glorify God and to spend more time involved in Kingdom work.

Aggressive Tendencies

- **Tough Guy Tom** – Tom thinks he must do the opposite of whatever women do in order to be considered a man. Therefore, he does not show affection or emotion. Tom is emotionally distant and maybe even abusive in his relationships. He does not yield well to authority because he feels that he must be the one in charge wherever he is. While he may seem tough, Tom wrestles with insecurity.
- **Get What I Want Gary** – Gary seeks his own pleasure despite how it affects others. He uses women to gratify himself. He views pornography and participates in illicit affairs because he is after what works best for him.
- **Living For What Won't Last Larry** – Larry works hard to attain status and possessions, but he invests the bulk of his time in things that are not eternal. By his example, Larry also teaches his family to prioritize success, money, position, and stuff. While he spends time with his children taking them to their various practices, he teaches them about achieving earthly success instead of teaching them about what truly matters such as God, sharing the gospel, and studying and obeying God's Word. He neglects the eternal for the pursuits of this life.
- **Can't Put Work Down Dan** – Work consumes Dan's time and attention to the point that he neglects his family. He prioritizes success and/or money above his own family, even as he tells himself that he is working so hard in order to provide a good life for them. Because he cannot put work down and is unavailable, his wife and children feel that he does not care about them
- **Put A Good Face On It Frank** – While there are issues in his life and in his relationship with his wife and kids, Frank tries to cover up the issues and ignore them. He pretends that everything is okay when it isn't, and he is afraid to admit his weaknesses. Ask the men to share what struggles they currently face in their marriage and what issues they face in parenting. Sin easily occurs when we isolate ourselves from others.

If you are in a co-ed small group, ask the men to share with the group how the women in their lives can help them to be the men whom God created them to be. If you are in a women's group, brainstorm together how you can encourage, support, and pray for the men around you. If you are in a men's group, encourage the men to reflect on their passive and/or aggressive tendencies, to discuss their weaknesses with their wives, and to ask their wife, their kids, or another man who can keep them accountable to help them think through the areas in which they need to grow and how they can go about growing in godliness.

While the sermon presents ten sinful distortions of manhood, brainstorm as a group descriptions of what godly manhood looks like (i.e., “Spend Time With Your Kids Sam”). For men, this puts hands and feet to Christlike devotion and helps them to know what godly manhood practically looks like in the home, in the office, and in their interactions with others. Discuss each the six ways in which the cross compels men to initiate humble, hard-working leadership in their lives (strive for purity, take responsibility, provide, protect, honor women, and train boys to be men). It could be very easy for men to feel beat down or defeated because they see so many areas in which they struggle or are failing, so emphasize to the group that they do not possess the ability to do any of these things on their own. Christ provides the grace, wisdom, and strength to live faithfully in each of these areas. Encourage the group to look to Christ for their example of biblical manhood and to be compelled by the cross of Christ to obey. There are likely many areas in which they do need to grow, but direct the men to identify *one* particular thing they can do over the course of the week or next couple of weeks. Help them in clarifying a next step that they can take. For example, if they identify

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shepherding their family as an area of weakness, ask them to pinpoint one step they can take in order to better shepherd their family this week. It might be as simple as putting down work in order to be home for a family dinner – a dinner where they have turned off the cell phone and TV and are attending to the conversation at hand and asking questions of their wife and children. For the men in the group, let this be something that you check on each other about over the course of the week or discuss when you gather again the next week.

Read Titus 2:1-8 as a group. Paul instructs older men and older women to disciple those who are younger. Discuss why this is essential, especially with regard to biblical manhood and womanhood. Challenge those in the group to prayerfully consider whom God wants them to disciple and how God wants them to invest in the next generation. Encourage them to identify the people God has already placed in their sphere of influence. For those who are parents, how can they grow in shepherding their children? Identify fears and challenges involved in discipling someone. How can you better equip the people in the small group to be disciple-makers? If you are in a Brook Hills small group and have questions regarding how to initiate Titus 2 relationships in your own life or how to disciple those whom God has placed in your life, contact our Local Disciple-Making Team at smallgroups@brookhills.org.

Take time to pray for the men in your family, the men in your small group, and the men in your church. Pray for the men to grow in their knowledge of biblical manhood, in their relationship with Christ, and in their obedience to His instructions. Pray for the strengthening of marriages and for the men around you to grow in their love for their wives and in their ability and desire to shepherd their families. Pray for Titus 2 relationships to form among the men in your church, and for men and women to faithfully invest in the next generation.

NOW WHAT DO WE DO?

Group Discussion & Application

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- How does the media and the culture portray men of all ages? Fathers? Husbands? How does this align with Scripture's teachings regarding manhood, being a husband, and fatherhood?
- What are various reasons for the present-day epidemic in our culture regarding a lack of biblical manhood? (Sin, lack of godly father figures, separation of the different age groups in the church, divorce, post-modernism, feminism, pornography etc.) What challenges do men in this culture face with regarding to living out the Bible's instructions? In what ways have we acquiesced to the culture? How have we – men and women - contributed to culture in the denigration of men and in the lack of biblical manhood in our society?
- Read Genesis 1:26-28. God created men and women with equal dignity but with different roles. Discuss how these roles differ in the home, in the church, and in society.
 - Read 1 Corinthians 11:3. Examine the Bible's meaning of headship and the leadership role that God intends men to have. What is the difference between headship and domination? What fears or insecurities do men have regarding leading in the home, in the church, or in the workplace?
 - Read Genesis 2:18-20. Discuss the reason why God created woman. For the women in the group, what are their visceral reactions to reading that they are designed to be helpers? What associations do men and women have with the role of "helper"? What factors contribute to a negative connotation of this role?
 - What is your attitude with regard to your role? Do you joyfully live out the role that God has given to you? If not, why?
- God created men and women as a reflection of the Trinity. Read Genesis 1:1; Jn. 1:1-4; Jn. 5:19-23; and 1 Cor. 11:3, and as a group, examine how they reflect the Trinity.

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- Read Genesis 3:1-7, 16. Because of sin, men gravitate towards either passivity or aggressiveness. Discuss the ways passivity and aggressiveness manifest in men's lives. For the men in the group, towards which of these sinful tendencies do you incline? Why? What is the godly converse of these ten different tendencies? For the ladies in the group, women also incline towards either passivity (spineless doormat who has no voice) or aggressiveness (wearing the pants and trying to dominate men) because of sin. To which end do you incline as a female? Why? What is the godly converse of these tendencies for women?
- In the sermon, Pastor David lists ten ways that passivity and aggressiveness can play out in a man's life.
 - For those who are not parents, which of these sinful tendencies are you implicitly teaching those whom you disciple? What specific ways can you intentionally exemplify biblical manhood and womanhood to them? How can you initiate conversations with them about biblical manhood and womanhood?
 - For parents, which of these sinful tendencies are you teaching your kids by your example? What should you be teaching them? What are specific ways that you can intentionally model biblical manhood and womanhood to your children this week? What changes need to be made in your marriage or in your parenting? In an age-appropriate manner, how can you initiate conversations with your children about biblical manhood and womanhood?
- How does Christ perfectly model true manhood?
- How does the cross of Christ affect manhood?
- Read 1 Pet. 1:13-21 and 1 Cor. 6:9-11. In pursuing true manhood (and womanhood), Scripture urges us to strive for purity in the following ways:
 - **Practicing Spiritual Disciplines** – Discuss the various types of disciplines (prayer, meditation, study of Scripture, fasting, solitude, simplicity, etc.). How does the practice of spiritual disciplines enable us in striving for purity? Ask if anyone has questions about how to practice these disciplines. Identify one thing you can do this week to be more disciplined in your pursuit of God.
 - **Fleeing Sexual Immorality** – In your marriage, how are you fleeing sexual immorality? In your dating relationship, how are you fleeing sexual immorality? In your singleness, how are you fleeing sexual immorality? In your workplace, how are you fleeing sexual immorality? What steps are you taking? What guardrails are you establishing with regard to what you watch, what you read, and how you interact with the opposite sex? What is one thing you can do this week to fight for purity in this area?
 - **Fighting Material Idolatry** – In what ways is your life defined by what you have or by how much money you make? How are you different from the world with regard to your value of possessions and your pursuit of possessions? How are you just like this world in this regard? What sin(s) do you need to confess? What are practical steps you can take to fight material idolatry in your life?
 - **Cultivating Personal Integrity** – In what specific areas do you need to cultivate integrity? How do you do this? What does Scripture say regarding the area in which you struggle?
- For men, what does it look like to shepherd a family spiritually? Emotionally? Intellectually? Physically? Relationally? For women, what does it look like to support your husband as he shepherds the family? For wives whose husbands are not leading faithfully in this role, how can you honor your husband and, at the same time, shepherd your children?
- In what ways are you training boys to be godly men (and training girls to be godly women)? Who are you training? Even if you are not a father or mother, you are responsible for investing in the next generation, so how are you doing this? What all is involved in teaching someone to be a godly man or woman?
- The cross compels men to show selfless, sacrificial love for their wives (Eph. 5:22-23). Is your wife flourishing in her relationship with Christ? What picture is your marriage giving to the world about Christ's love for the church? Are your children thriving in their relationship with Christ? How can you better love, serve, and disciple your family? In what specific ways can you grow in your love for your wife? For your children?
- What next steps should you take this week in applying this text and this sermon to your life?