

## **A Beautiful Design (Part 10) – Together for the Gospel**

Matt Chandler – November 16, 2014

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[Video]

**Male:** Be a man. Be tough.

**Female:** Be sweet. No one likes a smarty pants.

**Male:** Don't be such a sissy. Handle it like a man.

**Female:** You should go on a diet.

**Male:** Play the field.

**Female:** Be sexy but not too sexy.

**Male:** Show them who's boss.

**Female:** You're a princess.

**Male:** You make the money.

**Female:** Let him take care of you.

**Male:** Pick yourself up.

**Female:** Know your place.

**Female:** Keep your mouth shut.

**Male:** The world tells us who we're supposed to be, but it keeps changing its mind, throughout time, throughout cultures. We can't decide what makes a man a man and what makes a woman a woman. The message, the plan... It keeps changing. What if there was something else? What if there was something better, something that existed since the beginning, something untouched by time, something true and perfect?

[End of video]

Hey, how are we? Doing well? Okay. Like four of you are really excited to be here, which is great. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. Ephesians 5 is where we're going to camp out. If you don't have a Bible with you, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. Please grab that. As always, I just want to lay before you that really in churches, what carries the weight is really the Word of God and not the one who delivers the Word of God.

Ultimately, if those two aren't woven together well, I would always encourage you to find another church, including if that church is this one. Really, our authority comes from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit moving and flowing through the Word of God, bearing weight on our lives, leading us into life and joy. I want you to see that what I'm talking about here I'm not guessing is going to work but rather is rooted in something altogether eternal.

It's hard to believe that the fall is gone, that this 10-week series we launched out on 10 weeks ago (in fact 12 weeks ago now) is coming to an end, this being our last message in this series. Really, something switched in me yesterday. I was leaving Fort Worth. I was speaking at a men's event out in Fort Worth. As I was driving back from Fort Worth, I was just thinking about the message. I was going to get here in time to pray with staff, throw on my mic, and go.

I was thinking about my outline and the different slides I had sent in. Then I just felt really compelled to scrap that whole thing and instead be far more pastoral than prophetic today. What I want to do is tell you that coming out of this series where we've pressed so hard on what biblical masculinity is, what it means to be a man, and this series where we said, "This is what it means to be a woman. This is how we function in our roles for human flourishing so that the church and our culture and our nation might be strengthened according to God's good design."

I thought what we could do is instead of me going on and on and on about reinforcing those things that I could simply go, hey, coming out of this series, here are six hopes I have. Really the reason I was thinking about that was the Act Like Men conference was awesome. I love the different things I get to do. I've been president of Acts 29, the church-planting network, for the last three years. That is 529 churches on six continents.

We have network directors in Europe, in South Africa, in Australia, all over. I love that. I don't get paid to do that. It's a hobby. Some people hunt. Some people fish. I like to try to plant churches all over the world. I get to write books and travel and speak, but when I'm building out a sermon series, when I'm considering the application of the Word of God, I am not thinking about Acts 29. I am not thinking about traveling and teaching. I am not thinking about writing books.

I am thinking about you, and I'm thinking about our families. I'm thinking because the Lord has embedded me in this place, and as I look at really the trajectory of my life, I know there is a day coming where I will not be the president of Acts 29. I know there is a day coming. In fact, I don't plan on writing another book for quite some time. Coming home from Act Like Men, which was awesome (it was at the Fort Worth Convention Center), filled with men who wanted to learn and hear about the Word of God, I just found my heart, as tired as I was, eager to be with you.

Things like the doctrine of complementarianism work themselves out on the ground. It's not an idea; it's life. It's not this kind of ethereal theory that this would be great if... No, it's real people, real husbands, real wives, real dads, real moms, real families, real churches, and it's on the ground that theology must matter. It's on the ground that the Word of God must be applied, or we're theorists and not practitioners.

What I wanted to do is I wanted to just kind of establish some things early on out of Ephesians 5, and then I want to just quickly share with you my six hopes coming out of this sermon series. No real review at all. Ephesians 5, starting in verse 15. **"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil."** We're going to read some more, but if we stop there and consider this thing, that sentence backward, I found it to be really helpful.

I think there is an order to it that is right and good, I just think for me, understanding it was more helpful going, "Okay, the days are evil." The Bible here says the days are evil. Don't think *The Walking Dead*, zombie apocalypse, get your crossbow. All right? Don't think that, but rather think

(and I'm just being real frank with you) right now, you are being disciplined outside of the discipleship that occurs in the church.

In fact, our culture right now is pulling on you in ways that pull you away from what is right and good, play into your kneejerk reactions of the flesh, and do not line up with how God has designed us to operate. You are being pulled. You are being disciplined. None of our kneejerk reactions are godly. If someone harms you, you don't think, "Oh, grace upon grace." You think vengeance. "If somebody gets aggressive with me, I'm going to get aggressive back," or, "If someone gets aggressive with me, I'm just going to get in the fetal position," depending on your personality type.

If someone harms us, we want harm to befall them. If someone disrespects us, we want to disrespect back. That's what's in us. That's our kneejerk reaction. Our culture is affirming that and strengthening that and, through every median possible, telling us that's the way we should go. The days are evil. The days are not a gentle current leading us toward the living God. The culture is a raging river pulling us all the more away from God.

Since the days are evil, let's make the most of our time by walking as wise and not as unwise. If you think about it, maybe just this simple word picture will help. There is a path that is laid before us that leads to life and joy and meaning and depth, human flourishing is the way we have been talking about it in this series. Then there is another path we can take, and this path is louder, and there are more lights, and there is more skin, and there is more glamour. This path leads to brokenness, despair, emptiness, and shallow trivialities.

This text is saying, "Pay attention. Are you walking as wise or are you walking as unwise?" Then he goes on in verse 17. Again, this builds. **"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."** Let's not detach that sentence from what we've already read. The days are evil. Let's watch our lives. Let's not walk in a lack of wisdom. Then he goes on to say, "Don't be a fool, but learn, fight, know what the will of God is."

On our two paths, one of those is the will of God, and one of those is not the will of God. The fool walks the path that doesn't lead to reconciliation and rightness with his Creator. Then from there you have verse 18. **"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit..."** On multiple occasions, the New Testament ties drunkenness with wine to being filled with the Holy Ghost. Maybe the charismatics are onto something.

**"And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery..." Listen. "...but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."** Now, what is happening here as 18 starts is, if you don't dig around a little bit, going to sound a little bit odd.

"Don't get drunk with wine. It's going to lead to debauchery. Rather, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then greet one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Is he saying that in Christ, life turns into a musical? Can we hope and pray not right now? Let's pray together. Father, please don't let this be. We do not want *High School Musical* in here. We would like to use words without melody. Right? No, he's not saying that filled with the Holy Spirit, we now burst into song.

He is talking about the dynamic interplay of faith in those who have put our faith in Jesus Christ when we gather, having been moved upon by the grace and mercy of God found in Jesus Christ, there is a gladness of heart in being together. There is a celebration that occurs when we come in weary and worn from the world around us as we have leaned into the Holy Spirit to walk in obedience. We come in busted and weary, and we come together and just rest for a bit together. We celebrate the Lord together a bit because he saw us yet another week forward.

Then even in the relational dynamic, there is this mutual submission. There is what Paul would say in another place is outdoing one another in honor. "Oh no, you take this parking spot. It's too cold out. I'm not parking up here. I'm parking way back there." This is kind of the dynamic interplay among the children of God who have been filled with the Holy Spirit. That really will be the foundation of my six hopes coming off the last nine or ten weeks of teaching. Six hopes. Here they are.

1. *We would fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.* We, The Village Church, the podcast, whatever, not Acts 29, as we walk together, live together in this area as we are neighbors, as we shop in the same stores, as we come in here week after week, as we get in our home groups, as we join training programs, may we, The Village Church, fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. We covered that at length. Let me tell you why I think this is imperative.

Men, let's talk for a second. Being a man in the biblical sense is overwhelming, is it not? See, you're being selfishly passive right now. Being a man in the biblical sense is overwhelming, right? Thank

you. Now, here's why. The call to sacrificial love, the call to lead, to create spiritual dynamics both in the home and in the church, to fight for provisions for our families, the call to come and die always, always, always can be overwhelming.

There is not a day coming, men, where this requirement is not on our shoulders. Sacrificial love will sit on your shoulders as an expectation of God all the days of your life. You will never have "you time." My "you time" is from 5:00 a.m. to about 6:15 when my son, God help me, can't seem to sleep past that 6:15. At that moment, that time, "Matt time," is out the window. Now it's dad. Now it's husband. There is not a day coming where I get to walk in the door and go, "Where is my dinner, woman?"

That day is not coming, not just because my wife is scary, but because God has called me to walk in and go, "How can I serve? What can I do?" Hear me, brothers. This whole, "Well, I worked harder." Whoever worked harder that day is a ridiculous question to begin with. I have three children, and I don't know how many other husbands have made this mistake, but I've walked in the door and watched my wife snap at one of our kids for nothing.

"Why do you keep getting in the cupboard?" I was like, "Baby, he's just trying to get some Goldfish. You don't have to yell at the boy. He just is hungry." It's like, "What did you say to me? You haven't been home all day. You don't know how many times..." "Okay, I'm sorry. I apologize, all right?" "Why are you in that cupboard?" Right? In the end here, this never stops. We are to serve. We are to have our lives wrung out.

Look at me, brothers. I'm trying to love you. We are going to go to bed tired between now and glory every night of our lives. If you think you get vacations, the second you get married and have children, you'll need a vacation from that vacation. Yet the call remains. It feels overwhelming. We're going to need to fix our eyes on Jesus, or we're going to give up. We're going to give in to selfish passivity. We're going to give in to selfish aggression unless we fix our eyes on Jesus.

Ladies, on the week I was writing the sermon for the purpose of woman based on what we see in Genesis 1-2, I felt as I was writing this this thing in my gut. I felt this kind of tension in my gut because although we have clearly shown that to be a helpmate is not inherently inferior because we see that God himself is our help, most often, throughout the Old Testament, there is and will always be an aspect of submission to who holds the primary responsibility for the one who is to help with that responsibility.

As I was writing, here's what I felt in my gut. "Lord, how are women, who have known nothing but men who abuse and belittle and take advantage of and use them as commodities, as recreational devices, how will a woman who has been nothing but harmed by men possibly hear this and understand it as beautiful?" It's hard to be called to submission in a world full of little boys. It's hard. It's hard to walk in submission when you're surrounded by a herd of morons.

How do the elders step into those spaces when men want to walk in selfish aggression for our women? How do the elders engage such foolishness as the Lord will call you to submit to authority? We must all, male, female, husband, wife, single man, single woman, fix our eyes on Jesus. He has written our faith. He is perfecting our faith. Without the gospel, all of this unravels. Without the gospel, there will be no mutual submission.

*2. We would trust the Bible is our authority and that every command and implication in the Bible is meant to lead us to life and lead us to joy.* This is one of the subjects of many where what the world says works and is right is going to collide with what the Bible says is good and right. Here's what happens in any church you ever go to. Any church you ever go to will say they love the Bible and that they teach the Bible. They mean that.

The question actually though is where does the Bible land in regard to authority? Is it the Bible that says, "This is how things work," or is it our experience that says, "No, no, no. This is how it works. Let me take my Bible and make it mean what I want it to mean. Let me proof text, pull something out of nowhere, and go, 'See!'?"

What bears the weight of your skepticism? Is it your experiences and the way you think, or is it the Word of God? Can God be trusted to lead us into the richest possible life? If he can, then we must take the revealed Word of God and apply it. Look at me. Because he's God and because we're created, he's going to disagree with us. Because he is eternal and we are not, there are going to be things that don't make a lot of sense to us.

In that moment, may the play of The Village Church be, "We're going to submit to your Word as it's written. We're going to submit to it as it has been historically and under the banner of orthodoxy applied to the covenant community of faith," and not go, "Well, times are changing. Golly. We have to give Jesus a makeover here. The dude is wearing some parachute pants. We have to make him look cooler because people aren't going to like him if he dresses like that."

To change him is to be rid of all of him. Listen. There is a coming purge of large evangelical churches. See, for the last 20 years, we've fought hard to be respectful. It's why we love famous Christians. We're quick to call them Christians even before we know who they are. That's why we love those *Duck Dynasty* dudes. "They pray. They have beards, and they kill, and they pray." We so want to be mainstream, so not to be viewed as fools, so want to be viewed as legitimate.

That's not what's coming for us. I don't know if you're reading anything, but the culture is not liking us more and more. They're not going, "You know what, maybe there is something to these people." Take heart, friends. The gospel has always thrived in margins. In fact, maybe... Yeah, you can clap about that if you want. Just commit. The church has always thrived in the margins, so I'm hopeful that we'll lean into the Word of God and hold it fast as such.

3. *We would take biblical manhood seriously and celebrate and encourage it.* I was talking with Dr. Adam McDowell, one of our members, a good friend. He said it's funny that when his wife goes away to women's retreats, she is always just encouraged. They're like, "You can do it, girl. You're awesome. Jesus is going to walk with you." Men don't ever get that. Men's retreats are always like, "You're a moron. You're worthless. You're a stupid man." Right? It's just that. Every speaker takes another text and says that to men.

Part of that is because some men like to be talked to directly like that. I personally am not one of those. If you're like, "You're a stupid man," I'll be like, "I'll show you a stupid man." That's my kneejerk reaction right there. You can talk straight, but don't yell at me. In the end, brothers, for all of the sacrificial love, for all of the setting the spiritual climate of your home, for all of the provision, for all of the come and die, look right at me. You can do this.

God will not call you to what he will not empower you to do. You can do this. If you're like, "You don't know me. You don't know what the devastation is. I'm on like my seventh marriage." Then with this one, you can do this. "My kids already hate me." Then own your sin and ask their forgiveness. Whether or not they do or not isn't your burden to carry. You can do this. It will start awkwardly. It'll move forward weirdly, and God will honor it. When you pick up your kid today, you can grab the family devotional, just sit down and read it off the page. God will honor that.

After a while, you'll feel comfortable, and you'll try to get creative. You're like, "Oh, this story of Jesus walking on the water. You know, there's a storm. There's lightning. There's thunder. Let me

give this kid a drum, this kid a flashlight. When I read the word *lightning*, they flash the flashlight, and he hits the thing when I say thunder." Then you'll end up whipping one of the kids because they won't stop spanking the thing, and then you'll learn, and the Lord will honor it.

You will try to encourage your wife. She will get offended. You will learn, and God will honor it. You will pray with your wife. It'll feel awkward and uncomfortable. It will even feel forced, and God will honor it, but you can't just sit around and go, "I can't do it." Your little bathtub of self-pity does not lead toward biblical manhood. You just entering the fray, as imperfect and broken as you are, will be honored by the Lord. You can do this. You can. You can do it, brothers. Get up. Let's go. We have a chance.

Ladies, I say the same thing. You can do this. You can build up with your lives. You can build up with your mouths. You can help your husband become the things God has asked him to become. "You don't know my husband. He's a moron." Hey, listen. I'm not even going to try to take that from you. He probably is. Don't doubt the King of glory. You can do this. You can build up rather than tear down. You can become an expert in his strength.

Ladies, you can make disciples of your children. You can make disciples of young women. You can give yourself over to the glory of God and the work of legitimate, genuine Christian ministry. Let's do this. You can do this. Single women, you can do this. Don't wait around for some man. Start making disciples. The sign of blessing in the new covenant is disciples. You can do this. We would celebrate masculinity. We would celebrate manhood. We wouldn't hate it as so much of our society does. We might encourage men as we watch them doing it.

Fellas, this will not happen if you continue to walk in the pride that has you hiding shortcomings and failures and has you believing that you must be perfect before you do anything. That's such ridiculousness. Ask for help. Say you don't know. You don't know. "I don't know." That's good, godly language. "Someone help me." That's good, godly language. Look. If we're honest, most of us are still trying to get hugged by our daddies anyway, right? We would be a place that takes biblical womanhood seriously.

Let me tell you where this series came from. I've taught on manhood a bunch, probably five or six times in my 12 years here, and I received an email from a happily married woman in our congregation who was in our last service here at Flower Mound. She sent me and a couple of the

other elders a long email and just said, "Hey, I so zealously believe what you're teaching about manhood. I so zealously believe our position on biblical complementarity, but our practice is off.

I wanted you just to lovingly hear from me that in my conversations with the women of this church, we don't know how to use our gifts here. We don't know where our onramps are. We don't know how to be used by God to the ends you're calling us to use them, especially if we're single women, those married without kids. We're just confused, Matt, on what it looks like to serve God in our giftings and abilities here at The Village Church."

I think the men at this church are confused about that also because there is kind of a, "Bless your heart. I'll tell you later," kind of laissez-faire attitude when it comes from the men to the women in this church. Really, I felt the weight of her email. She's not a complainer, a godly woman not seeking to tear anything down, honestly just honoring the leadership at The Village by saying, "Will you consider this, brothers?" I engaged our elders and said, "We need to have a robust conversation not on complementarity but on complementarian practice at The Village Church."

That along with several other things led to this series. Women, just as the mouthpiece of our elder board, our desire is that you would flourish here, that you would flourish in your giftings, that you would flourish in how God wired you and designed you, that you would hear and feel from us that we believe you are indispensable and necessary for us to be all God has called us to be and that you would give yourselves over to the making of disciples.

Married women, that you would honor your husbands and respect them, that you would order and help them with the home for the growing up children who love the Lord. Single women, that you wouldn't be waiting around for some moron to invite you out on Valentine's Day but that you would give yourself over to the making of disciples. Regardless of your age, there are younger women here. There are younger women who need help. Help them.

You will fill your space with something. You will fill it by having your lives wrung out to pour into a young woman, or you will fill it with *The Bachelor*, but you will fill it. I'm not hating on TV right now. I have one. Seriously. Single women, look at your calendar. How are your days and evenings filled? What is it you do with your time? We need you. We need you.

5. *We would be deeply and visibly for each other.* One of the great concerns I have and one of the places of consistent prayer as the pastor of this church is it has gotten ridiculously large. We have

been averaging close to 13,000 people at The Village Church for the last couple of months. What happens in an environment like that is you can come in and sit down... You have multiple services, multiple locations.

You can come in and sit down, and you can just kind of listen and then get up and leave. When that happens, you become far more a consumer than anything else. You become far more of a sit down, critique, and judge. If I'm going to be honest with you, you are really buying into the evil of our age that is leading you toward self-entitlement and not into the wringing out of your life for something greater than you.

Despite the fact that we're so large and are all over the place, we all live close. We're all in the area to some point. I have some brothers up here from Jersey. They have like a 400-hour drive home after this. By and large, this is our home. We shop in the same shops. We go the same restaurants. Right? By and large, this is true about us. If they're watching in Plano, that's true about them. If they're watching in Fort Worth, that's true about them.

Just talking with us here, we're here. This is where we are. What if we were marked by profound gratitude for what God was doing in us? How does that work? Well, let me just lay some really simple things. If you have an infant, and you brought your infant to church, and you dropped them off over in Little Village (I've said for 12 years, and I'm never going to stop saying it), we don't babysit. It's not what we do.

Right now, if you brought your 2-week-old child here, there is someone holding that child, and they are actively praying that God would open their hearts to believe early so that they would have no memory of what it is like to not love, follow, and trust Jesus Christ. That's happening right now. We're praying and trusting that that takes root, and God hears, and he responds to that.

If you have a first through fifth grader, and you've dropped them off, they are hearing not moralistic deism, not, "God hates liars, and don't steal." They're hearing, "This is what God is like. This is who God is. This is why God can be trusted. Here is why, regardless of what is going on in your home, regardless of your fears, regardless of your anxieties, God can be trusted. Here's who he is." That's what is happening right now.

They're volunteers. They are giving up their Sunday morning to serve you, to love you, to pray over your children. Men got up and got dressed in parkas to park us. They didn't get paid. They're doing

that because they love the Lord, and they want to serve you. On and on I could go. It takes over a thousand volunteers to make The Village Church work. Our worship team is all volunteers.

This group who led us today here at Flower Mound got here yesterday at 2:00 in the afternoon and were here until past 9:00 last night. They got here very early this morning, and they're not leaving here until 1:00. Why do they do it? They love the Lord, and they long to serve you. Not even to mention your home group leaders and the ones who host your home groups and the people who will be leading these training classes we're rolling out today. On and on I could go. All around you are evidences of grace.

What if we became a people who just said, "Thank you," for that all the time? "Well, I think they know." Well, a sure way to see if they know is to say that. What if our church was marked by this? "Hey, I've seen God working in your life. It has encouraged me. Brother, I just wanted you to hear that from me. Sister, I just saw how you handled that situation, and I thought it was brilliant and beautiful. The Lord is really at work in your life."

What if we were just obnoxious like that about gratitude and praise? Why wouldn't we be marked that way? Hasn't the Lord blessed us like this? What if The Village Church began to feel monumentally smaller simply for how we were paying attention for no other purpose except to praise God at work in others? We would be for one another. The last thing I would say is that on this, being visibly for one another, I think the way we approach weakness is not just by calling it out, although I'm all about church discipline. It has saved many of us from the ditch.

What if our first play on weakness is an invitation into our lives in the hope of training in discipleship rather than just a confrontation over sin? I'll paint the picture. If you're farther along in your journey, have a great relationship with your wife, established Christ as the King of your home, reading the Word of God, and you come across some young buck who is struggling, your first place shouldn't be, "This kid is a moron," even if he is.

Rather, "Hey, man. It's good to meet you. Why don't you bring your wife and come over to dinner at my house? We just really want you to have dinner with us. We would love to get to know you." After dinner is made, you can go, "All right, brother. Here's the deal. Mama cooked, so we're cleaning. Why don't you grab those plates and meet me in the kitchen. No, no, this is discipleship, bro. Grab those plates and meet me in the kitchen." Right?

As you wash those things, you have a conversation about what it looks like to honor his wife, what it looks like to serve her, why we do this as men, why this is God's call on our lives, to lead and love this way, rather than just, "Hey, you're doing a crummy job of leading your wife. Truth in love here. She's supposed to be like a well-watered vine. She looks like a cactus in the desert, bro." We would be for one another. This is my last point. For those of you who are usually here, you're like, "Please." All right.

*6. How we interact with each other as husbands and wives and men and women would be a beacon of hope in a depraved and broken world.* Right now in church planting, all the rage is the cities, the urban centers. That feels like it should have theme music, right? The urban centers. It sounds like a *Star Wars* episode. In the end, in these urban centers, the idea is that it is the cities that set culture. Instead of being downstream and going, "Who keeps throwing all this trash in the river?" you're upstream and are putting stuff in.

I don't have anything with planting churches in the city. In fact, we fund quite a few church plants in the city. One of our biggest partners is right in the heart of Philadelphia. We're all about that. Yet the idea that probably isn't there but you can pick up on at times is that life in the suburbs is awesome. Life here... In fact, I would argue this. Life in the suburbs is far darker than life in the cities, I think, because in the cities, it's wide open. In the suburbs, it's behind the veneer of having it all together.

In the cities, it's just blatant, but in the 'burbs, it's, "How are you?" "I'm fine. This is my spouse. These are our children." Right? In the suburbs, it's hidden behind pretty pictures and new restaurants and new outdoor malls and new places to shop and a billion things to busy ourselves with. After being here for coming up on 13 years, the type of marital strife, the type of sexual perversion and deviance, the physical violence that is all around us would cause almost all of our pastors to lose heart if it weren't for the Holy Spirit.

I just could do hours on how broken marriages are in this community. It's just devastating. The sexual perversion that is here. Highland Village doesn't need a massive police force, okay. I don't think they need an assault team and a SWAT helicopter. They might have both of those, but ultimately, really they spend a crazy amount of time showing up at houses where men have beaten up their wives, pulling over drunk drivers, arresting teenagers who were given \$300 allowances with no real dial-in on what is happening with that money.

You have these crazy conversations with parents where they don't understand where the kids got the drugs. Even the common absurdity of, "Well, they're going to get drunk and high somewhere. They might as well do it as my house. As long as they're doing it here." Don't be shocked or astonished. All those things are so common as to nearly be weekly. The veneer is, "Marriage is great. Kids are great. Life is great. Have you been to Modmarket yet? What time do you go to the spin class?" It's behind all that garbage.

What if, by the grace of God, having heard the things we've heard, we would strive to be this type of man in this community where if we had something to say about our wives, it was positive? What if in this community, we wouldn't enter into the depraved conversations of lost men? What if women in our covenant community of faith, when they got with girls who were complaining about their husbands, had nothing but praise to say about how their husbands are trying to lead?

Look. There is always something to complain about, always. There will never be a day in your life when there is not something you wish wasn't happening differently. You will always want your husband to be doing more than he is. He will always want you to be more than you are. Yet, what if our expertise wasn't what's lacking but rather what is good, a gift, and if that spewed out of our lives? What if we were ferociously faithful? Like turn the channel when the commercial came on faithful. What if we did that?

Do you know how countercultural that is? "I'm not watching this commercial." Do you know how countercultural that is? That's like revolution. What if we were that type of people? What if we took holiness seriously? What if, because of the work of God in this place, mangled marriages could feel like they could come in and find the hope of Jesus here? What if those who have walked in the false promise that promiscuity brings about full, rich life and that sexual experience is this thing that, once attained, would satisfy the soul?

What if we showed how foolish that actually is and that the way God designed it is better in our own handling of such things? See, the ridiculous, pervasive lie that has been bombarding all of us is that sex is not only our identity but is constant. Everybody but us is having sex 14 times a week. Right? That is kind of what is being presented to us, and it's absurd. It's a lie. It's ridiculous. What if we saw, what if we lived in such a way that the world saw that we value each other's souls, that we've been shaped by the gospel, and that there is a better way?

Remember when we said when we were talking about complementarianism that the idea might be able to be attacked, but the reality can never be attacked. You might be able to go, "That's a ridiculous idea," until you step into one of our homes and see a man who is having his life wrung out for the glory of God and the good of his family, and you see a wife flourishing under that, and you see children who feel safe, dads and moms engaging the heart, making much of the name and renown of Christ.

You can caricature what the Bible has shown us is the beautiful design, but to see it and enter into it, even though it will be imperfectly executed, it would be really hard to point to it and say it was ridiculous. Might we strive to this end. Let me encourage you just in this way. If during this series and maybe even during today you have become more aware that there is a short circuit in you...

Men, you're having a very difficult time. Maybe you have this lust issue. Maybe you have this anger issue. Listen to me. Don't hide that. We're here. Come struggle with us. Walk into Recovery on Wednesday night. No one will gasp at your sin. I can promise you that. I know a lot of people in this room who have been pulled out of muck and mire that might make you gasp, but we will not gasp at you.

Ladies, if you can't seem to help not trusting and venom in your words, the tearing down of other women, and the utter destruction of any man, come. Let us help you. "A bunch of men..." No, there are ladies there. Relax. In time, by the grace of the Lord, you'll learn to trust some of us again. Let's just not do this. Let's not just stay where we are. Let's walk, step forward, lean into this. The Lord has not called us to what he will not provide the Spirit's power for.

Might we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Might we hold fast to the Word of God as the inherent words of God himself, ordering and leading us into the fullest possible life. Might we take biblical manhood and womanhood seriously. Might we elevate it, celebrate it, rejoice in it.

Might we be a community of faith that is visibly and tangibly for one another. In our interactions as husbands and wives, as male and female, single or taken, might we be a bright gospel light in a culture that is growing increasingly dark concerning all of these things. May God be our help. Let's pray.

Father, help us. I think that by and large, the majority of us would want to walk in these things. Yet, we have cried tears before about these things. We have confessed sins before. We have sworn we were going to do better before only to fall back into dark routines and patterns. We're convinced we can't be that disciplined and we can't walk in that kind of victory.

Father, help us. Help us be weary enough of ourselves that we're willing to step into acts of obedience one day at a time, one family devotional at a time, one prayer with our wives at a time, one biting our tongue at a time, one calm, build-out of how we're going to lead and love in our home at a time. We need your grace. We need to trust and believe that you are ever present, that you are for us, not against us, and you are leading us into life. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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