

A Beautiful Design (Part 6) – Incomplete

Matt Chandler – October 19, 2014

[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*, what makes a woman a *woman*. The message, the plan, keeps changing. But 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? All right. If you have your Bibles, grab them. Open to Genesis, chapter 2. If you don't have a Bible, there should be a hardback black one somewhere around you. If you don't own one, that's our gift to you. Starting in August, we wanted to kind of enter the fray of what I personally perceive to be a bit of madness in regard to the topic of mankind, its role in and on the earth, and really how we define ourselves as male and female.

Really although there were a slew of illustrations I used early on, even in the last couple of weeks, there have been new illustrations presented to us that reveal we're just not thinking well as human beings. Let me give you two of them before we enter into what should be for us a hinge week in this series as we start to move away from, "What is a man?" and move into, "What is a woman?" taught by a man, which is going to be hard for me. I can just let the Bible be the Bible, so that's good news.

The first bit of just kind of showing you that something is broken in our thinking is a couple of weeks ago, a nurse in Spain contracted Ebola. You know this is going around. In fact, it's quite the scare. In fact, Dallas is on the map, right? This nurse in Spain contracted Ebola. They put her husband in quarantine, and they euthanized her dog. The fact that they euthanized her dog created an uproar in Spain.

I mean, they near rioted. They marched all because this dog, Excalibur, was put down because he was carrying the plague. It is a fundamental misunderstanding of how mankind is vastly different than the rest of the creative order when we will riot over putting down a dog carrying a virus that has a mortality rate of beyond 50 percent. We are not equal with dogs. Now we do have dominion, which means they should be cared for and never abused, but they are not our equal.

Just common sense dictates we know this. The default is to maybe look at Spain and go, "Crazy Europeans with your fashion and your love for animals. Progressive weirdoes!" But then it just

happened in Dallas, and we didn't even euthanize that dog. We just quarantined the dog, and there has been near a million dollars raised to take care of the loneliness of this poor puppy that is used to running wild out, and the thing that's probably carrying this plague.

Now we're raising a million dollars so it can apparently play PlayStation or something while it waits to see whether or not it's carrying the virus. Trust me, I'm not an animal hater. I have a dog. His name is Gus, an Australian shepherd. He is awesome. I like him. He is not in any of our family photos, but I like him. We feed him. We spend money. He even has toys.

Now he doesn't have clothes, but he has toys. Clothes are a line I just can't bring myself to cross, all right? I just can't! I can't cross that line. I'm not saying it's right or wrong. I'm just saying it's not right. You literally are dealing with something that runs contrary to basic intellect when there is this type of outrage, not over Christians being slaughtered in Iraq, not over all sorts of oppression and madness we see all around us, but over a dog carrying a disease that could kill half this room.

That's the first instance that we don't quite understand how we fit into God's design for human flourishing. The second just on this kind of manhood/womanhood front was the hubbub down in Houston over the last couple of weeks. I don't know if you're paying attention to this, but the mayor of Houston put out an anti-discrimination law, which, as Christians, we should very much be against any form of discrimination.

Yet in her bill, it is proposed that to tell a biological male who identifies as a female that he cannot go into the women's restroom is illegal and an act of discrimination. A 40-year-old biological male who just says, "I'm not a male; I'm a female" is allowed to go into women's restrooms, and to say he cannot is an act of discrimination, punishable by law. Look at me. Listen. That's crazy. It's just crazy!

Now if this brother is struggling with identity issues, then let's serve him. Let's walk alongside of him. Let's care for him, but he doesn't get to go to the bathroom with my daughter. He doesn't get to do that. That's crazy! I don't know. It's like we've let something out of the box here, and it's driving us. We've lost our minds. Some sort of revolution began that we cannot control, and it's making us behave in a way that goes contrary to every aspect of historic logic and intellect. We're just confused.

We said starting in August we're going to enter the fray. We're going to enter into the madness and try to make sense of it. We said a good creator God created us in his image, in the *imago Dei*, as male

and female equal in dignity, value, and worth. Being made in the image of God elevates us above all the other creative order so that we are to exercise dominion over creation, which means we don't abuse and we don't burn to the ground, but where mankind is being mankind, where we are engaged as image bearers, everything should thrive, including animals.

We actually turned from there, and really we moved toward manhood and what it means to be a man. We stated clearly that biology alone does not make one a man, remember? Having a penis makes one a *male* but does not make one a *man*, right? I have an 8-year-old son. Does anyone want to vote that he is a man? I live with him. He is not. He is a boy, and he acts like a boy, and he dresses like a boy, and he treats ladies like a boy. He says things that boys say. He is not a man; he is a boy.

He is biologically male, but as he behaves, as he talks, as he walks, he is a boy. If that is true, that means biology, men, makes you male but does not make you a man, which means you can be a grown-up, burly, hunting elk in the woods with a knife (not even a gun) male and still be a boy. We started to define what it means to be a man. Here's how we defined it biblically. We said the man has been given by God something we defined as *headship*. Here's what headship means.

Male headship is the unique leadership of the man in the work of establishing order for human flourishing. Let me say it again. Male headship is the unique leadership of the man (this is how God designed it) in the work of establishing order for human flourishing. I want to say this repeatedly today. All we're going to do is do the first part. In fact, the first probably 70 percent of this sermon is review over manhood.

Then we're going to let the door swing and move us toward womanhood where we'll start next week and do womanhood, womanhood, womanhood, and one last sermon on *Together for the Gospel*. Then we'll be in Advent. Right? Crazy! What we said about men in this call of headship is that even if you're not a believer, you cannot deny that where men are present and men are being the type of men who have historically been exalted as real men, mankind flourishes.

Where men step into the space God created them to fill, the home flourishes. Children flourish. Economies flourish. In fact, if you want to study it economically, study what happens in those communities in which men refuse to be husbands and fathers. Study what happens in communities where men are unwilling to sacrificially engage. Study it! I'm not talking "Christianese." I'm saying economically study, sociologically study, what happens when males stay boys and don't grow into men. Things fall apart.

Everything suffers where men refuse to be men and, instead, are boys who shave. This is how God designed it to be. When secular economists, when secular sociologists, present facts that line up to this, they're simply lining up with God's good design. They're not discovering anything new. As Christians, we should go, "Yeah, of course! Look what the Bible says here! The Bible says this would happen. In fact, it's filled with stories of this exact same thing happening."

The man is to exercise headship, but how he goes about that is equally important. We said the man is given two jobs in the Scriptures. He is placed in the garden. He is commanded to work it and keep it. He is commanded to cultivate, to create order in which human flourishing can occur. We used two examples of where that plays out. We looked at the home and the church. We looked at Ephesians 5. Here's what we saw.

A man is to exercise headship through sacrificial love. A man exercises this role of unique leadership that leads to human flourishing via sacrificial love. Again, let's consider. If a man is loving his wife with a type of sacrificial love where his driving interest built on the gospel in his devotion to God is seeing that his wife is protected, his wife is flourishing, she is growing in her giftedness, she is exercising her gift, and she feels valued and cherished, that marriage has a pretty big shot at making it, right?

Where he is a taker and not a giver, chances are it's not going to go so well. Where Dad is present and sacrificial, willing to have his life wrung out for the good of his family, kids feel safe. They flourish. Men practice headship via sacrificial love. Men practice headship via the setting of spiritual direction in the home. They create this spiritual climate of our homes. Men, the weight falls on you to set the spiritual climate of your home. It has been given to you. It's not been given to your wife. It has been given to you.

By not setting the spiritual climate...listen to me...you're setting a spiritual climate. By not entering that space and centering your home on Jesus, on the Word, on the truth of God's grace, you are setting a climate that is contrary to it. To refuse to set up a spiritual climate is to set up a spiritual climate. This is design. You have no choice but to bring into the ethos of your home the way God is seen, considered, and loved or not loved.

Now, widows, single moms, let me say this to you. Where the ideal is lacking, grace always abounds. Some of the godliest men I know came from homes where Daddy either wasn't there or, when he

was, we wish he wasn't. Eventually, I want to preach a sermon on, what appears to be in the Scriptures, God's deep affection for the prayers of mamas, tell you how often in Scripture mamas in tears bow before God and plead for the lives of their sons and daughters. He hears, and he responds. Where the ideal is lacking, grace abounds.

Men, this does not take any weight off of your shoulders in regard to setting up this spiritual climate. Your competency has nothing to do with your responsibility. Are you tracking with me? If you feel incompetent, that doesn't mean, "Well, I don't know how to do it, so I don't have to do it." It doesn't work that way! It certainly doesn't work that way at your work, does it? "Well, I don't know how. I'm sorry!" You learn, right? You learn, and you put that résumé together.

We press in. We learn how. If you're like, "Chandler, when you're talking about going after my wife's heart, when you're talking about family devotions, man, I don't know how to do that. I don't have any background in that," okay. Few men do. Few men do! Here's how we try to serve you, men. When you pick up your children today, we're going to hand you a sheet of paper with your kid. They're going to have colored some things. They're going to have a little lesson.

What's going to be on that list is a memory verse you guys can memorize together, and there will be a family devotional. All you have to do is read it. You don't have to be Dr. Seuss, all right? Just read it. I'm trying to help! Then you need to get out of your head that it's going to be awesome. Get it out of your head. It's not going to be awesome. It's going to be awful. What I mean by that is if you think they're all going to just sit there with their Bibles open, going, "Train me, Father," it doesn't go that way in my...

I've caught my wife on her phone! I'm like, "So what did Gideon do? Lauren, what are you doing?" "Huh? What?" I'm probably going to get in trouble for that. Okay. I'm speaking the truth. That's what I get paid for. I'm out of control, and I can't afford to be, so let's dial back in. In the end, they absorb more than we think they absorb. They're hearing more than we think they hear. We just must do it.

"I don't know how to pray for my wife." I'm not trying to be condescending. "Honey, how can I pray for you?" She'll answer you. Then you can just pray with her at that time how she answered you. She is like, "Well, I'm really kind of stressed out." Listen to me. Fellows, this is not the time to fix things. "You know, I just feel like our kids are *this*. It's just stressing me out *here*." That's not the

time to go, "Well, let me tell you why you shouldn't feel stressed. Well, you know what I would do... I would structure it like *this*."

Stop. She is saying, "Pray for me on these things." So stop and pray. Here's why this is so important in regard to setting spiritual climate. Do you want to know why that's so hard to enter in? Well, why is that so difficult for men? Well, I want to try to open it up to help you see and understand, because there are spiritual realities at stake here and at play here that are massive. It is ironic, if not shameful, that we'll rush out and see the movie *Fury* because we love the idea of war and yet refuse to go into one for the sake of our wives and children.

It's a type of wicked passivity that punts on male responsibility, that emasculates men and keeps them as boys. Get in the fight. It's awkward to pray with your wife. It's awkward to go after the souls of your children. It's awkward to talk about spiritual things because we know they see our hypocrisy. Even our hypocrisy, if owned, confessed, and repented of, serves as a model of the gospel in our homes. It reinforces what we say about Jesus, which is why failure isn't to be feared but rather confessed and laid down.

Then you have the provision of physical care. I don't think male headship means we give our children and wife everything they want. That would be foolish. It just means we are hard workers, and we've been designed by God for hard work. Brother, if you married Mama Warbucks... Right? You're like, "I don't have to work. She is worth a trillion dollars." First, get her tithing here. All right? We need that. Then secondly, really regardless of how much Mama makes, God has designed you to work and war. He has not designed you for comfort.

The more you give yourself over to comfort... I've said this for 12 years now: a bored man is a dangerous man. You show me a brother who has given himself over to pornography. You show me a brother who has given himself over to lustfulness. You show me a brother who has given himself over to rage. I'll show you a brother who should have been working, who should have been going to bed tired.

Fellows, God has designed us to be a bit tired, not in trying to earn our salvation but trying to fill what God has called us to. Then not only are we to work it, but the Bible then says the man is to exercise headship by keeping it. What we talked about is this reality. By design, men are stronger than women...physically stronger than women. Now you might have some story of this friend of

yours who was in an accident who is married to a body builder. That's different than what I'm saying.

That's not design. They weren't *designed* that way. It was a situational series of circumstances that led to that. By and large, men have in their veins the dominate hormone testosterone. That creates lean muscle mass. It makes us strong and, at times, aggressive. Women have been given the predominant hormone estrogen. It does not produce lean muscle mass. It does not produce aggression.

We know in the history of mankind males have always been the warrior class. It is only in the last 50 years of progress that we have dared consider sending our wives and mothers and sisters to the front lines to be raped and murdered. That is a brand new idea of progress in the Western world, and it's absurd. In our guts, we know the boy goes down, and the girl goes free. Again, you don't have to be a Christian here to understand this.

If you're lying in your bed at night... Husband and wife. You're lying in your bed, and you hear glass break,. no man goes, "Baby, I'll be under the bed. Go check that out." No man does that! No man goes, "Check it out, boo. I'm going to be under the bed." No, we're in Texas. You're like... Night optics scope. "I'll be back, baby. If you hear shots, just get down." You're trying to decide which weapon to take with you. "All right. Machete. I don't know what I'm dealing with."

We know we go down. We check it out. We put ourselves at risk. We don't send our wives to do that. The boy goes down, and the girl goes free. Again, even secular people agree with this. I used the example that week of the three 20-something males who were shot and killed in Aurora, Colorado, throwing their girlfriends down on the floor. *Girlfriends*. Not moms. Not sisters. Not wives. Because that carries a different weight than just girlfriend.

Yet these three young men grabbed their girlfriends, threw them on the ground, and laid on top of their bodies while a crazy man popped off canisters of tear gas and, with an assault rifle, started randomly killing people in that theater. All three of them were shot. Two of the three girls were wounded as bullets passed through those bodies and penetrated them. Across all lines, they were applauded. You didn't find one feminist on *CNN* going, "They had the right to die just like those men did. I can't believe those pigs took from those girls the right to die in that theater."

No, because we know in our guts the boy goes down, and the girl goes free. The very same year, a cruise ship off the coast of Italy capsized. Over 40 people died. It was widely reported that men were shoving over women and children to get to the life rafts. It was universally condemned. Those men were called cowards by secular people, not Christians. Again, we know this. We've just lost our minds. We have lost our minds in the name of progress.

It is not progress to send our women to the front lines to die. It is not progress for a man to stay in bed and make his wife search the house. That's not progress. It's not progress for a young 25-year-old man to sit in the theater and shove his girlfriend down and run out the door to save his own life. That's not progress. It's regression. It's Dark Age madness.

The Bible would say, "No, no, no. The man goes down; the girl goes free. He is a protector. It's his role." That's why God gave him his strength. That's why God made his shoulders broader. It's why God put that testosterone in him that can be switched on. He is to work it, and he is to keep it.

Then we looked at the fact that almost all men have punted on these responsibilities. Instead of working it and keeping it, instead of sacrificial love, instead of setting spiritual climates, instead of physical protection and provision, instead men have given themselves over to selfish passivity or selfish aggression.

They have given themselves over to selfish passivity. "That's too hard. I don't want to do that." They've given themselves over to the couch. They've given themselves over to comfort. They don't do. They don't enter the fight. They don't engage wives and children. They punt on that responsibility. They use women for pleasure and then leave. They buy into a type of faux, weak, movie theater love that's all about sexual attraction and has no weight or strength in it at all.

They view women as something to be consumed rather than someone to be cherished. This explains the pornography epidemic. This is a punting on male headship that has led to really the dismantling of the family. Let me tell you this. Where the family disintegrates, so does the country. Where the family disintegrates, so does the country! There has been no civilization since the beginning of time that has been able to survive the disintegration of the family, and we want to roll the dice in the name of progress.

We've let something out of the box here. It's making us think in ways that are inconsistent and foolish, or we've become selfishly aggressive. We're domineering. We don't use women as much as

we instead just try to dominate them. That's the mistake men tend to make. Maybe you're here, and you're like, "Dang! I'm glad I missed those weeks."

Then we landed on what Jesus has done for us. We landed on the fact that what God has called us to will be near impossible to fulfill, and yet what God has done in Jesus Christ is he has imparted, granted, given to me the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. He has imputed Christ's perfection to me, and he has absorbed all of God's wrath toward my rebellion, and now that I've been deemed, declared perfect in God's sight, I am now free to pursue what is right and good even as I stumble and fail forward.

If we could just survey... Men, how many of you failed your wife this week in regard to these things? My hand is up as a matter of not just, "Hey, raise your hands," but like, "I have." Yeah. Anybody on your kids? Did you snap, lose patience with your kids, operate in a way that might be not defined as godly? Yeah, okay. That is probably universal outside of those of you who are lying.

If it's on me and if I have to do it, then I'm going to lose heart, because I just keep messing up. But if God has said, "No, no, no, no. Chandler, I've imputed to you my perfection. I see you as holy and blameless in my sight. Now get up. Keep moving! Keep going! Keep giving it a go in the power of my Holy Spirit. Keep pursuing. Get up! Get moving! Let's go," then I, a day at a time, a step at a time, fight the good fight of faith.

We have been redeemed, brothers, those of us who have put our faith in Jesus Christ. We don't lose heart because victory has been guaranteed. You know, we don't succeed. We just keep moving, right? In the end, success belongs to the Lord. Here in Flower Mound, we were just singing about how awesome God is, how mighty God is. We didn't sing about how awesome *we* were. We didn't say, "We're mighty! We're mighty! We're mighty!" We didn't do that.

We said, "He is mighty! He is holy! He is awesome! He does this." We can get up, men, and keep going. Don't marvel at Rocky Balboa. Be him. Get up! We can move and keep fighting, keep pushing forward. God honors that under his grace, under his righteousness. There is now no condemnation for us as we fail, for Christ has done what we could not do, weak as we are in the flesh. This frees us up to run, men.

Where men will enter this space, families will thrive. Where families thrive, churches thrive. Where families and churches thrive, communities thrive. Where communities thrive, states thrive. Where

states thrive... You see where I'm going with this. What I want to do now is I want to kind of swing open the door, let the series hinge, and let us move toward womanhood. We've been discussing manhood, what it means to be a man.

We haven't touched much on what it means to be a woman or the sins, according to the Bible, that a woman struggles with. Then we haven't gotten into the redemption of the woman, although it's the same as the man. I don't want to let the cat out of the bag there, but Jesus saves us both. Right? We're going to kind of let this week be transition. Starting next week, we're going to say, "What is the purpose of the woman?"

We saw the purpose of the man was to work it and keep it. What's the purpose of the woman? We'll look again at these same texts and pull from these texts the role of the woman. Then we'll look at the hurdles of women, and then we'll look at the redemption of women. Then we have one more sermon left, *Together for the Gospel*. With that said, let's begin to consider the woman. Let's begin to kind of swing open the hinge as we turn our attention to the woman. Here we go. Genesis 2, starting in verse 18.

"Then the LORD GOD said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.' Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field.

But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

What we see happening in this text is really an interesting part of the creation narrative, because up until this point, God has looked at everything he has done, and he has either given it a good grade or

a very good grade. He makes it, and he says, "This is good." He makes it. "This is good." He makes it. "This is good." He makes it. "This is *very* good."

Then you get this kind of idyllic scene of the man in a beautiful creative spot. You have this man with honorable work set in front of him, placed in the garden, commanded to work it and keep it. You have honorable work. You have beautiful setting, and you have God going, "This isn't ideal. Your ideal is not ideal." Then he begins to step in and to complete. In fact, this is the first time we encounter something that's *not* good (man's lack of a corresponding companion). Everything else has one.

The skies without the sun, moon, and stars and even the birds are incomplete. The seas without the fish are incomplete. Without mankind and the land animals, the earth is incomplete. As a matter of fact, everything in Genesis 1 and 2 has a corresponding companion outside of God himself. God is the only one in the narrative who doesn't need *something* in order to complete him.

Into this incompleteness, God provides the man with a helpmate suitable for him. As Adam identifies the animals, he is considering his roles and his functions, and a suitable partner is not found for him. A compatible partner is not found. If we look in Genesis 2:15, it says, "**The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it,**" to exercise dominion and authority over it.

There are all sorts of animals that could help him in some aspects of dominion. An ox could help him cultivate the garden, right? A horse could help him till up a field, but none of those animals can exercise authority. The horse doesn't bark to the rest of the creative order and have them obey. He is going to need a partner alongside of him that can help him in human flourishing. The commissioning of the man and the woman to reign over the good land involves callings and tasks that only together can they achieve.

Woman becomes man's partner in every function only as such a counterpart could serve in God's beautiful design, which means if humanity will flourish, women are needed and necessary and are in no way a secondary thought to the King of Glory. What does this mean? Well, this means isolation is not the divine norm. We need one another for human flourishing, not just as husband and wife but as male and female.

I think this probably creates all kinds of questions for singles. Let me address singles here in the back half of this sermon. If you're married, then let me tell you why it's important for you to understand why we would address singles. It's important for you to get it because as a covenant community of faith that is filled with single men and women (some of those older singles, some of those younger singles), it's important we understand what the Word of God says so we might encourage those parts of our body to grow and to walk in what God had.

If you remember me talking to women as we talked to men and said it was important for women to understand men so they might encourage and expect men to be what God has called them to be, in the same way, it's important for married people to understand singleness, because if you've been married for long, you don't even remember what that's like. You don't! Man, I know! If something happened to Lauren, I wouldn't even know how to navigate.

I have single friends. I ask them all the time how it works. I don't know how it works anymore. "So you're Facebook friends, but you've never actually really sat across from them?"

"No."

"That's normal?"

"Yeah! Our first date was online."

"Help me. You pour yourself a glass of wine and then...what? You FaceTime with her? I'm just confused. I don't..." So pray Lauren lives long and I don't get thrown out into that madness anymore.

For singles, if it's not good for man to be alone, then are extended seasons of singleness sinful or wrong? Short answer: no. In fact, the Lord redeems singleness, and even the apostle Paul writing to the church at Corinth via the power of the Holy Spirit would commend singleness as being an opportunity to live with an undivided heart. Here's 1 Corinthians 7:32 through 35.

"I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit.

But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord."

Singleness is an opportunity to be undivided. Before I started dating Lauren, I was an undivided man. Here's what I mean by that. I would come home from work. I didn't have a television, and I would just study. I would try to figure out different things that led me to kind of... I wanted to read a lot of secular worldview stuff. I wanted to get a good handle and bearing on Christianity as a worldview, the sufficiency of the Scriptures, the historicity of the Scriptures. I would just dig around in that.

There was always some college guy who would call me about 9:30 and ask if we could hang out. We'd go drink a cup of coffee at 9:30 or 10:00 at night. We'd hang out till 2:00 in the morning. We would pray, and then I would go home, go to bed, get up, and start over again. Then I met Lauren. Then we dated, and then we got married. Brothers, just hear me say it now.

If you call me at 9:30 at night right now and ask me to have a cup of coffee with you, I'll say, "I don't drink coffee after 3:00, bro. Is this the type of crisis that will still be there tomorrow morning? Okay, then I will meet you at 5:00 a.m. here." Why? Because I'm a divided man...divided in good ways. I have to consider my wife. I have to consider my children. I have to work to establish an environment where love for Jesus and an understanding of the Word of God thrives.

I'm not just studying this sermon. I'm studying how to engage my wife, how to engage my children, how to establish a rhythm at home that says, "He is of utmost value." I don't get to just think about Acts 29 and planting churches. I don't get to just think about shepherding and pastoring and engaging in this city. I'm a divided man." For the single man, for the single woman, you're not divided. Let me start here. Young women, here's how I would encourage you.

I'm still going to stand my ground that *Jerry Maguire* is full of it, and you will not find a man who completes you. I think it's a good right thing to desire a husband. That's not a bad desire, but it is not okay and it is idolatrous to just sit around and wait for one like what God is waiting for is for you to find a husband and then he'll use you. No! Single women, leverage your singleness by pouring in to younger women and making disciples.

High school girls think 20-year-old girls are incredible, even if they're not. Look. They think you're cool! Leverage it. Make disciples. Don't sit around moping, "All my friends have men. I just have a cat." Stop! There are hundreds and hundreds of high school girls here. Get in the fight. There are even more junior high girls. Get in the game here. Pour yourself out into younger women for the glory of God.

Single women, there's just no reason why you shouldn't have a group of five to seven little high school girls and junior high girls at your apartment, hanging out with your girlfriends. You're like, "Oh, they're so immature." Yeah, like you were and like you probably still are. In fact, hanging out with them will reveal it.

To young single men, godly men pursue godly women for friendships in the hope that that friendship moves toward marriage, because, "**He who finds a wife finds what is good...**" Godly men pursue godly women for friendships in the hope that that friendship moves beyond friendship, because, "**He who finds a wife finds what is good...**" So many of us are being disciplined by modern-day ideologies that are foolish. Let me introduce one to you.

That you have to have it all together and have to be established before you get married is absurd. You realize that's a brand new idea. Brand new! Your grandparents certainly didn't do that, and I would wager your parents didn't. Your dad didn't go, "Do you know what? I'm going to hit *this* income level, and then I'll find a wife." That's absurd.

When Lauren and I got married, I was making \$12,000 a year...*\$12,000!* Broke! We grew up together, and the first seven years were extremely difficult because the Lord needed to cut back the thorns and thistles so good fruit could grow. Men, we don't know how selfish we are. It takes community, and it takes, many times, a woman to help us with that.

I did Marcus football chapel this past week. It was awesome. I walked into this room with it looked like 60 high school boys. It smelled like *boy*. Do you know what I'm saying? Here's what's funny. I didn't know there was that smell until I met Lauren. I didn't know boys had a smell and that it wasn't a pleasant smell. I had to be trained.

There was some dude in there just not even wearing a shirt, just his dirty... I mean, who knows the last time those shorts got washed? He was just sitting there, listening to me preach the Bible. Put your shirt on, bro. I'm hoping he joins here. I mean, I like that kind of confidence. "I don't need to

put a shirt on. Deal with it!" We don't know how selfish we are. That's why God gives us one another.

Men, you don't have to have it all together to pursue... You don't have to have a built-out plan. In fact, ladies, I'd be nervous if a brother came out with a life plan and laid it on me. "Here's the thing. We're going to get married in the spring. I have this internship I'm going to hit in the summer. Then in the fall, I'll look for a job. You and I, raising babies. It's going to be awesome. What do you think?" "Well, I think you'd better move on."

You don't have to have it all together like that. You don't! "I feel called by God to this end. I'm trying to finish this. I like you. Could we hang out more?" How crazy would that be...honesty instead of playing this weirdo game we're playing now? "Hey, I think I lost your number." "Yeah, brother, you lost it because I never gave it." Godly men pursue godly women in friendship in the hopes that it grows into more than that, because, **"He who finds a wife finds what is good..."**

God can sanctify you in a hundred different ways. Being married is the fast lane of sanctification, and it's awesome once the thorns and thistles have been cleared. Now, women, in all of this, let me say this again to you. The Lord has fashioned you, and it is God himself who presents you. God's craftsmanship is seen beautifully in you whether you have a husband or not. Your value and worth is not found in marriage but in the act of God in placing you as needed and necessary for human flourishing.

Your worth and value is not in whether or not you have a man. That's madness! Stop thinking that way. You are beautiful and lovely not by any secular definition, because the God of the universe designed you, wired you, shaped you, and he has presented you into his beautiful design as needed and necessary for human flourishing. What's the purpose? What's the role? We're going to talk at length next week about that.

Let us rejoice in this today that if men will, by the grace of God, step into manhood and they will see women as needed and necessary, not things to be consumed but rather image bearers to be treasured, then families thrive. Where families thrive, everything else thrives. Where boys refuse to step into manhood and instead are hairy-chested boys, so much is lost.

Women are consumed and abused. Women are devalued. They have no voice, their gifting is squashed, their intellect dismissed. In the beautiful design of God, the wheels start to rattle. By the grace of God, he saves us from all of that. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for an opportunity to come in today as men and women. I just confess that so much is crazy out there right now. So much is broken in how we're thinking and what we're considering. From biological males walking into girls' bathrooms to riots starting over the euthanasia of a plague-carrying pet, Father, we seek your forgiveness for punting on the role you've given us as men. I pray even today we would own it.

Even today on the way home, we would start having conversations with our wives, our children. We would begin to seek to set a climate in our home that is consistent with your good will and purposes. Father, as we begin to embark on defining womanhood, as we begin to embark on defining really where women have a tendency to struggle because of the fall and because of their own sinfulness and as we look at her redemption, Father, I pray we would marvel as all of this comes together and is wired and woven together so beautifully for your glory and our joy.

Help us as the Word of God tends to rub against us, the Word of God tends to challenge us in ways we'd rather not be challenged. Help us, Holy Spirit, in the weeks to come. I pray for men today that we might apply the things we've heard, to not just hear but apply. We need you. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.