

A Beautiful Design (Part 3) – Man's Purpose

Matt Chandler – September 21, 2014

How are we? Doing well? Excellent. If you have your Bibles, go ahead and grab them. Genesis, chapter 2, is where we're going to camp out today. While you're turning there, just a couple of things. We are in week three of our fall series entitled *A Beautiful Design*. What we're looking at is really what the Word of God has to say about origin. What are we? Purpose. Why are we here? Design. How that works.

What we've said is if there is a creator, then that creator will know about purpose and design far more than anything that is created itself. If we are creation, then there will be times we think we know what is best for us, but in reality, the Creator himself knows what's best for us. We've been looking at the design of God specifically in light of what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman.

Ultimately, the series is about how God designed manhood and womanhood to work both as singular units (men and women) and then as the kind of complimentary relationship he meant it to be in regard to our relationship with one another. For the last couple of weeks, we've established origin. What are we? I preached last week on the *imago Dei*, the elevated worth of man in dignity over and above the rest of creation.

In fact, if you were here last week, I got a text message from my mom. My mom is actually a member of this church, and she texted me, "It's good to know you won't put me down if I grow old and decrepit." I just said back, "It was just an illustration, Mom. I might actually put you down." I'm kidding. I didn't say that.

We said the *imago Dei* was this. Here's our definition. The *imago Dei* is God's investment in humanity of God-like glory and moral capacity to reign and rule the earth as his representatives. What we said is you and I as human beings have elevated worth, regardless of what we bring to society, regardless of whether or not what we bring to the table is helpful at all.

I used the illustration of my good friend, Darrin Payne. Darrin Payne is usually at the 9:00 a.m. over here. He was at the five o'clock last night. He sits right there. He is highly autistic. He is never going to know the alphabet. He is never going to work a job. He is never going to have a paycheck. He is not going to bring anything to society and culture that is of tangible value. My boy Darrin is worth more than Secretariat.

I used Secretariat (the horse) because if you pay attention in the Bible, it appears God is kind of proud of the horse. I mean, on repeat, he like is patting himself on the back about how majestic this creature is. You look at Secretariat, the amount of cash that horse brought in in stud fees because of how he was physiologically built and because of what he accomplished. Darrin, who will never know his ABCs and will never contribute as we have determined contribution should look, is worth far more.

It's far more of a tragedy for anything bad to ever happen to Darrin than it would be for anything bad to happen to that horse, not that we want bad things to happen to the horse. Darrin is more valuable and always will be more valuable because Darrin carries within himself the God-like deposit, the *imago Dei*, made in the image of God. Therefore, male and female made in his image are distinct and equal in value and importance and worth and should be seen as such.

We began to walk through all the implications of getting the *imago Dei* wrong. That list was extensive last week of where you do not understand that people are made in the image of God, there will be all sorts of temptations to consume and use and belittle and rob them of dignity. Almost all of the massive systemic issues in the world are owing to a failure to understand the *imago Dei*. Now that we've established origin, I want to get to purpose and design.

Here's how I've built out this series. Starting this week and in the next two after this week, we're just going to talk about manhood, what it means to be a man. Not biologically, because we know biologically males have penises... Is that the first time you heard that word in church, anyone? All right. Now my 8-year-old has one, and he is not a man. Right? No one is going to look at 8-year-old Reid and know biologically he is male so he is a man. No one would say that! He is biologically male, and he is a boy.

Therefore, what it means to be a man cannot simply be biological. What it means to be *male* can simply be biological, but what it means to be a *man* cannot simply be biological. I'm going to put all

my cards on the table, because I feel like to have this kind of conversation like we need to have it, we need to know each other better than we know each other now. So let's talk. Just a couple of quick things.

When women go off to women's retreats... In fact, a friend of mine and I were talking in the foyer. When women go to women's retreats, they just get encouraged. "You guys are awesome. You can do it! All right!" Men get blown up. You go to a man thing. You're just going to hear how much you've failed and how bad you stink and why the whole world is broken because you're so worthless. That's kind of how we do it, and it's the right way to do it. With that said, two things. I want to lean into us as men, and then I want to encourage us as men.

I want to start with this. If you're a woman in here, let me tell you why the next three weeks are so important for *you*. As members of the covenant community of faith, the reason why it's so important for you to understand the next three weeks, for you to be dialed in, for you to care, for you to be paying attention, is the role you play in the beautiful design when it comes to manhood is to know what God has called us to as men so you then can, therefore, encourage that and expect that out of us.

I said last week when we were talking about the *imago Dei* that since the *imago Dei* is true, then you as a woman should view yourself as extremely valuable and should never treat yourself cheaply because you have been made in the image of God. Let me help you. If you put the bar too low, you'll find plenty of little boys who can shave who are willing to step across that little 2-inch bar you set for them. But if you will expect more of us, I believe that by and large we'll rise to the occasion.

Single ladies, if you're like, "Do you know what? I like the look of you, but the way you act, the way you carry yourself, the way you live your life, no thank you," that will send a brother off to maturation school. You can giggle all you want, but I'm telling you, ladies, you have a profound amount of power when it comes to an expectation of males being men. You put the bar on pre-pubescent ridiculousness, I promise you, you'll find a herd of morons who will come trampling toward your door.

But if you'll put the bar up and go, "No, thank you. Get out of my face. No, I'm not signing up for that," if you raise your expectations, we raise the bar on what we expect out of men, I think by and large by the grace of God, they'll rise to it. You keep it low; they'll stay low. I promise you. I promise

you sin has bent us in that direction. That's why this is important for women, that you might encourage and that you might expect.

Then the last three weeks of this series, we'll talk about women. Then the last week alone will just be a sermon I've called *Together for the Gospel* and what it means for us to do ministry together with one another. With that said, I'm going to put this on the table. I believe you cannot argue with it, regardless of whether or not you're a secular atheist, a Buddhist. Regardless of how you want to argue, here's a statement you cannot argue with.

Where men fill the purpose and design of men as the Bible has outlined it, humanity flourishes, and where men refuse to step into the space that men are called to fill, the world burns. You want to look at it economically? You want to look at it sociologically? Just do a secular study of what happens when men refuse to be husbands and refuse to be fathers. Look at what happens. Everything breaks. Everything!

When governmental, sociological, or cultural studies show that, they're just tapping into what the Bible teaches is true about men. They're not discovering some sort of, "Wow! This is new." It's always been true. When they discover the role of men and when men don't engage, the family unit breaks down. When the family unit breaks down, the culture breaks down. When the culture breaks down, you have all sorts of crime rates shooting through the roof. You have drug use that skyrockets.

All they're doing is tapping into what the Bible has already said about the design for men. I want to talk about God's design for us, why it's beautiful, and then we'll go from there. I'm going to use a word that needs to be redeemed. It has baggage. I didn't want to, when we talked about the unique design of man... That's what we're talking about. We're not talking about *mankind*. We're talking about *men*.

When I was trying to draw up a sentence on the unique responsibility of men, I wanted to, as best I could, stay away from the word *lead*. I'll tell you why. I think men *do* lead, and they do lead in a unique way. I also know women who can lead and who do lead. In fact, I've come across some women who are bosses. Do you know what I'm saying? I mean, they get stuff done. They lead. They put together teams. They help those teams function rightly, and they lead out.

So saying that a man leads as a kind of attribute of manhood that is not true about women would be incorrect. I want to introduce the word and maybe redeem the word *headship*. Doesn't that sound old school right there? Headship. Let me try to explain why I like the term. Headship, if we looked at it in the Greek, which you probably don't care about, is the Greek word *kephale*. It means where the brain is.

I'll tell you why I like that. If you're a woman already starting to feel offense, breathe. Let's talk. Here's why. The head, the brain, does not treat the body with contempt. It discerns and orders for the body's health and vitality. It receives signals from the body and orders for vitality. What male headship is... I'm going to give you the definition. When I say *headship*, here's what I mean. Here's our definition for the next three weeks.

Headship is the unique leadership of the man in the work of establishing order for human flourishing. When I say *headship*, that's what I'm talking about. The unique leadership of the man in the work of establishing order for human flourishing. Now that headship plays out in three arenas. We're going to talk about those three arenas. That headship plays out in the *home*, that headship plays out at the *church*, and that headship plays out in *predominant culture*. We'll walk through those three in our time together today.

To do that, we're going to go to Genesis, chapter 2. On origin, we spent all of our time in Genesis, chapter 1. If you're secular or a bit of a skeptic, what happens oftentimes is people want to play Genesis 1 and 2 against one another. They'll be like, "It's two different chapters. They don't even make sense. I can't believe you idiots believe this." Well, historic orthodox Christianity sees Genesis 1 and 2 as complimentary and not in any way contrary to one another.

What you see in Genesis 1 when Genesis 1... You have a general account. God created these things, and mankind was one of these things God created. In Genesis 2, it's a detailed account where man becomes kind of the centerpiece in what God is accomplishing and becomes the crown jewel of creation. We're going to do Genesis 2, because it's more specific than Genesis 1. This is exactly how Jesus saw Genesis 1 and 2. Let me prove that to you really quickly before we read.

Matthew 19, starting in verse 4, says, "[Jesus] **answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female...'**" That is Genesis 1:26. Verse 5: "**...and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the**

two shall become one flesh'?" That's Genesis 2. You see Jesus, when he teaches Genesis 1 and 2, sees them as complimenting one another and not in any way at odds with one another.

If we're going to answer the question, "What is a man? What's the purpose and design of man?" we need to go to the *specific* narrative and not the *general* narrative. In Genesis, chapter 2, starting in verse 5, you're going to see the man given two tasks. I'm going to just go ahead and spoil it, and then we'll read it lest you think I'm lying. The man was given charge to work the garden and to keep it. With that said, let's read this. Genesis 2, starting in verse 5.

"When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates." Verse 15 is huge.

"The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'"

So the task given to the man (Eve is not on the scene yet; she is coming) in light of where he has been placed by God is to work and keep Eden. If we could draw up the narrative, God has created the earth. Then off to the east, he has created Eden. Eden is orderly and put together in a way that

the unkempt part of the world is not. He takes the man, and he places him in the garden. He says, "Work and keep this, and make the rest of the world look like this."

What we see early on when it comes to the man is God has given the man the task to cultivate, to work. Before sin ever entered into the world, God designed the man to work. Look at me. This is why lazy men are so damaging to human flourishing. They haven't been designed to be lazy. They haven't been designed to master video games. That's not what they have been designed to do.

In fact, Spurgeon would say it like this. It's a great quote. I love the last sentence of this quote. "Some occupation is necessary to happiness. Lazy people would not enjoy even Eden itself. A perfect man is..." What? "...a working man." A perfect man is a working man. God has designed the man to work. We exercise and cultivate headship as we work.

Where do we exercise that headship? How does this dominion, how does this work, play out? Well, let's look at it in two places. The man cultivates, first and foremost, in his *home*. If you're single, specifically a single man, I have a whole section at the end of today's message where we'll just talk to you as single men. For now, let's talk about how headship plays itself out and how God designed it to play itself out. First, it plays itself out at home. We cultivate at home. Here's Ephesians 5, starting in verse 25.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."

Think of the implications of that. **"For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."** Headship, the authority, the dominion of the man, is exercised in the home via three ways.

The first is *sacrificial love* toward his wife. Love your wife like Christ loved the church. How is that? In that he gave his life for her. One of the ways a man exercises his headship, his unique leadership responsibility, is via the sacrificial love he walks with concerning his wife. He does not dominate or

demean her. He is for her in a type of way that's willing to sacrifice, willing to lay down his own life, willing to not sleep as much, willing to not rest in his own comfort, willing to get up and help. Sacrificial love.

The second thing we see here is the man not only has a charge for sacrificial love, but he also has a charge for *spiritual direction*. The man will set the spiritual climate of the home. Children tend to follow Daddy.

Where Daddy has created a climate that doesn't have at its center point video games and television and lounging around on the couch but has conversations around the dinner table about the goodness of God that day, where Daddy is willing to pray, where Daddy is willing to seek forgiveness, where Daddy sets the spiritual climate in the home in such a way that the air we're breathing is one of the goodness and grace of God and understanding of who he is and the work of salvation made available to us in Jesus Christ, that responsibility falls on the man.

Now an asterisk really quickly for our single mothers and for our widowers. Lord willing, I would love to do a sermon (and maybe we just will at some point) on how God hears and responds to the prayers of mamas. Throughout the Bible, it seems like God has a special ear for mamas crying out for their babies. Where the ideal is lacking, grace abounds.

Almost every godly man I now run with, the men who are loving their wives, serving their children, having their lives wrung out for the good of their wives and their children all come from homes where daddies did not teach them those things. They were by the grace of God saved, by the grace of God trained, and by the grace of God, they stumble forward.

Men, the responsibility of the spiritual climate of your home does not fall on me, does not fall on our youth pastors. It does not fall on our children's ministers. It falls on *you*. We are resourced to serve and help you, but we will not be judged by God for the spiritual climate of your home. *You* will. Sacrificial love, spiritual direction, and...

Provision. That's the third thing we see in Ephesians 5. Now when I say *provision*, there are a couple of things I don't mean. I don't mean your wife gets whatever she wants. Some of you are like, "Huh? It doesn't?" Then some of you brothers are like, "Thank you!" No, what I'm saying is if the head is the brain that receives the signals, then we need to receive the signals. With my wife, I just lay my *yes* down. Sometimes I have to say, "Not yet." With Lauren, my *yes* is down.

"You asked for it. We'll get it done if it doesn't violate what we said in the beginning we wanted to be about. Sometimes you're going to have to wait 10-15 years for us to get there. I'll have to reverse engineer that mug because you have caviar taste, and your husband happens to be in ministry. That's not a part of culture that makes seven figures. You're going to have to chill on that."

What I've just historically done when Lauren has come and said, "Hey, can we do this?" is I'll go, "Yeah...in about seven years. If you give me seven years, we'll get that." Right? Provision is just shelter, care, the strengthening of their desires and gifts in the Lord. That's what provision is. This, "Well, does the man have to be the primary breadwinner?" I think that's such a secondary question to what's going on here.

Listen. If your wife is a millionaire and excels in the business world, you're not free as a man to master hobbies. Why not? Because that's boy stuff, and you're a man. Men work. If you hit the jackpot... Mama is just from a long line of cash. To not work hard is to damage your own soul and to refuse to mirror to your sons and daughters what it actually means to be a man.

Congratulations on the cash Mama brought into the marriage. That has not freed you up to become an expert in wakeboarding, to become the best hunter this side of... You just haven't been freed up for that. Work hard. Play hard. Mama's cash has not freed you up to be lazy. You just damage your own soul when you walk in that. You belittle the image God has put in you. You haven't been designed for too much play.

Let me say this. You have sacrificial love, spiritual direction, and physical care. Men, a lack of confidence does not negate your responsibility. Let me demythologize some things. I think there are times where I'm talking about trying to love my wife or trying to serve my kids, and they're like, "Oh, Pastor Matt. Of course you do, Pastor Matt." Let's just have some real talk between us today.

There are many a days that I am not up for what God has called me to do. I come home tired and grumpy. I can snap. There are times I just don't feel like doing this again. I don't want to have family devotions. I want to go to bed. I want to crawl in bed and pray and dig around in their hearts to make sure they're okay. What about *me*? Can I sit on the couch and watch a game?

There are times I don't know what to do. I have all sorts of hormone things happening in my house right now as my daughters get older. Man, I can argue with the best of them if the conversation is

reason, but I've had a couple of things now I'm like, "Oh my gosh! I don't know what to do. I need to back out, but I don't need to back out and look like I'm afraid or I will embolden whatever this is. I will lose control of my home. Maintain eye contact. Maintain eye contact. Okay. This is what we're going to do. Cry, whatever this is. Then meet me at the dinner table, and we'll talk."

Right? I don't know what to do. Lauren sits down, and we're talking about how to handle *this* and how to navigate *this*. There are times we don't know what to do, so we're just trying stuff. I don't know who is listening when we're doing family devotions. Sometimes I think it's just Lauren and me. Whether or not revival breaks out in family devotions, the expectation of God on me is that I enter the fray. I fail all the time, but here's what's awesome.

Men, let me encourage you. Here is what's awesome. My failures and owning my failures because the gospel has freed me up to do that mirrors what it means to be a man for my wife and my children more so than my successes do. When my children get to watch me walk up to Mama after I snapped and say, "That was me, baby. I'm tired. You don't deserve that. That was totally me. Will you forgive me? Thank you, sweetheart," when my son gets to see that, when my daughters get to see that...

When I sin against my children, which is often, and I go climb in their bed and snuggle them tight and go, "That wasn't you. That was me. Dad just has all this going on, and what he did was... Man, I have to lean into Jesus. I have to let Jesus forgive me. He is going to do that. Will you forgive me?" that's such a model of the gospel and of grace that even my failures reinforce what I've been called to do if I'll own them and seek forgiveness.

Let's chat. Back to my initial statement. Can you not see that where a man does these things, a home flourishes, a wife flourishes, children flourish, humanity flourishes? Where a man is willing to enter the space of sacrificial love... "It's not all about me and what I want and what you're going to do for me, but rather I'm going to wring out my life for your good and the glory of God." A wife is going to flourish, grow in her gifts, grow in confidence, grow in an understanding of her beauty, feel safe.

Where spiritual direction is set, cultivated, honored, where the Word of God and prayer and the reality of God is the climate of the home, the children feel safe and valued and loved, not exalted to the point of idolatry but loved and safe. Where Dad works hard to provide and if Mama has cash, he just works hard to mirror the image for his sons and daughters, then a family is going to flourish. Where a man punts on any of these responsibilities or holds onto one to the neglect of the others...

In this context, here's what we do. "I provide. We've got a pool and a couple of jet skis and a boat. I take them on vacation." Forget sacrificial love. Even that kind of, "I work so hard. That's my sacrificial love." No, that's your selfish climbing a 2-foot ladder. That's what that is. That's all about you. That isn't about your family, so let's not pretend as men talking.

We don't neglect spiritual direction and sacrificial love because we provide. I say this all the time. I'm telling you, I did college ministry for 10-15 years before I became a pastor. I have met many a young women with BMWs and fashionable clothes who hated their Daddy and treated themselves cheaply because what they *didn't* have is Daddy in their life.

I have met many a young woman in just an old ghetto, beat-up, backfiring hooptie and just whatever Mom and Dad could afford to get her who had a glad confidence about her and a high expectation of how she was treated because Daddy would kiss her and crawl in bed with her and ask her about her heart and encourage her and cheer her on. Not in some weak, weird way. Not in some, "You'll have your day. One day you'll be beautiful, and everybody else will be..."

No, that's not fair to our daughters. That's not fair to our sons. Provision is not all it's cracked up to be if we're talking trinkets and toys. You see how the family unit flourishes if men are men. Where you take a man out of that and a woman is not served with sacrificial love, there is no spiritual climate set by the father, and there is no provision if things start to break down.

As this headship is practiced here, keep in mind where the ideal is lacking, grace abounds. We also see it playing itself out in the church. First Timothy 3, starting in verse 1, says this: "**The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer [or elder], he desires a noble task.**" Pay attention to this list of things that are the expectation for male eldership. "**Therefore an overseer [elder] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife...**" That's a one-woman kind of man. That's, "I have my girl. My heart is hers. My mind is hers. I'm a one-woman kind of man."

"...sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil."

Two sentences. Where an all-male eldership practices authority in the church that is harsh and uncaring, then they are outside the bounds of the beautiful design of God and outside the boundaries of Scripture. Where an all-male eldership does not create and nurture lanes for the flourishing of women in their gifts, they are outside the bounds of God's beautiful design and outside the bounds of Scripture.

Once again, male headship is the unique leadership of the man in the work of establishing order for human flourishing, and Christ is our model. That's work. We are to cultivate in the home. We are to cultivate in the church. Then that brings us to keep it. Let's talk about keeping it. I think if I'm going to get in trouble today, this will probably be the spot.

Men are by design physically stronger than women are. You can send me an email of a buddy you know who was in an accident. His wife is a bodybuilder. I'll tell you that's not design, but that's situational. By design, men's shoulders are broader. We have far more testosterone flowing through us that builds muscle mass (not in me, but muscle mass) and strength in a way that is beyond the normal female.

Because we have been designed by God to be stronger than females, in the history of the world until the recent madness that is our progressive culture, it is men who go to the front lines and die. We don't send our women there. Yeah, we don't. We know this in our guts. We know it's not given to women for combat, in all sorts of ways.

If you hear a bump in the night, men, do you go, "Baby, go check that out. I'm frightened"? Do you do that? "Hey, baby, the dog is going nuts. Get down there"? You don't! Are you serious? Surely you didn't. If you have and you're feeling shame, you should feel that shame. I'm not taking that off of you. No, *we* go down. *We* check it out. *We're* the ones who go check out the bump in the night because we are physically stronger.

In fact, even unbelievers know this to be true. Let me give you the example of how this played itself out. On July 20, 2012, in a Century movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, three young men all under the age of 30 took their *girlfriends* (not their wives, not their mothers) to a midnight showing of *The*

Dark Knight Rises. Twenty-something minutes into the movie, a man who had lost his mind popped off tear gas canisters in the theater, lifted up a semi-automatic rifle, and began to randomly shoot in the theater.

All three of these young men under the age of 30 grabbed their *girlfriends* (not wives and mothers), threw them down on the floor, and threw their bodies on top of their girlfriends. All three were shot and killed. All three of the girlfriends were wounded. They were wounded when bullets passed through their boyfriends and struck their bodies. Throughout the world, these men were heralded as heroes.

In the same year, in fact six months earlier, on an Italian cruise ship, the *Costa Concordia*, January 13, it capsized off the coast of Tuscany. Thirty-two people were killed. In fact, if you Googled it and saw the image, you'd be like, "Oh yeah. I remember that." Now there were widespread reports that when that ship capsized, men were shoving women and children down to get to the life rafts first. This was universally condemned.

Why does it matter? Do you want me to tell you why it matters? Because we all know this sentence in our gut: the boy goes down, and the girl goes free. A good friend of mine, Randy Stinson... "Good friend" is probably too strong. What? I just overspoke. I corrected myself. I'm not dogging him. I'm just saying that was probably too strong. If he were here, he'd be like, "Good friends? That's weird. I just thought we were friends." I just didn't want to have a DTR via podcast.

Dr. Stinson is, I believe, one of the vice presidents of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has a lot of children. He has adopted children. I mean, he is like a kid away from a TLC show. He has taught all his little boys concerning his daughters and women in general, "The boy goes down. The girl goes free. Say it back to me, sons. The boy goes down so that the girl can go free." He tells this story of being in his office at his house working, and he saw his son going down the hill in his little red wagon thing. He was like, "Okay, that's going to end badly."

He got up and went. He was opening up the blinds. He saw his son. It's like the wagon is like... He was like, "My son is going to die here." As he was watching his son, waiting for impact so he can go save his life, he saw this little girl on her tricycle starting to come out. He said the impact was imminent when he saw his son rock it and throw the wagon down and then begin to dump head-over-foot. Randy and his wife ran out. They got their son. They brought him in. They were trying to get the blood off of him to see if they needed to go to the hospital.

While they were wiping the blood off of him, Randy said his son looked at him and said, "The boy goes down so the girl goes free, Dad." Right? We know this is right. We *know* this is right! The boy goes down so the girl goes free. I teach my son this. Those mamas whose sons were shot and killed throwing their bodies on their girlfriends... Their dads and moms praised them for it; through an unbelievable amount of grief, they were proud of their sons. Why does it matter?

Because we've been hardwired as men to keep it, to protect it. In some sense, it's physical, and then in another sense, it's very much spiritual. As we get through this series, we're going to get into the narrative. What happens is the Serpent deceives Eve with Adam standing right there. Eve takes the apple, believing the lie of the Serpent, takes a bite of the fruit, and then hands it to her passive idiot husband, who also takes a bite.

Do you know who God blames for sin introducing itself into the cosmos? Adam. Because he had the role of spiritual headship, of covering and protection. He didn't step up. He did the spiritual equivalency of, "Go check it out, baby." He did the spiritual equivalency of, "You head to the front line and get dismembered, raped, and slaughtered, and I'll be back here." The boy goes down, and the girl goes free. That's how God designed it to work in the home, in the church, and in culture by and large.

What if you are a single man? How are we to think about this as single men? If you're a single man, you're going, "Well, I don't have a wife. Well, I'm not an elder, so how would I practice your definition of manhood if I don't have a wife and aren't an elder at the church?" Okay. A single man images headship. He doesn't have it as much as he images headship with a borrowed authority. Single men have no authority over any woman in this congregation unless they are your young daughter or you are an elder in this church.

By being male, that does not give you some intrinsic authority over any other woman. It doesn't work that way. As a single man, you image headship with borrowed authority by serving and protecting women as sisters. Let me unpack that. I have an older sister and a younger sister. Here was a frequent conversation my daddy had with me.

"Buddy, at school, you look out for your sisters. If some other guy is messing with your sisters, I want you to tell a teacher. If that teacher will not listen, I want you to punch them in their face and keep punching and keep punching and keep punching until an adult drags you off of that little boy.

When they drag you off, what I want you to do is be like, 'Get off me! Get off me!' You go back at them until they... There needs to be a healthy kind of fear of you when it comes to your sisters. You protect them."

Let me say this. I had zero authority over my sisters. Zero! I could not come home and go, "Stephanie, clean my room." Headship. That's not going to work, because my daddy would have wore me out. I'm not in the timeout generation. I did not grow up in that day when we got to go think about stuff. I was in that day where you just got beat down. There was no, "Consider your actions, mister." That just didn't exist. If I tried to exercise authority over my sisters, things would go badly, but I was charged by my earthly father to protect them, to serve them.

Single men image headship by protecting women as sisters, serving women as sisters. Then here's a second one we'll need to talk about just briefly. Single men image headship with borrowed authority by seriously pursuing godly women to marry unless one has the call or the gift of singleness. If you're a single man in any of our campuses and you're like, "I have the call of singleness. I don't think God wants me to get married. I'm going to use all the time I have to serve the Lord and to push back darkness in the world," praise God.

If you don't have that gift... I have not met but maybe one brother in 30 years of ministry who would say, "I have the gift of singleness." If you do not have the gift of singleness, then you image headship by seriously pursuing godly women in a friendship relationship in the hopes that friendship will lead to marriage in which you might partner with this woman in gospel ministry and for raising children who love and worship Christ.

To not do that is to be outside the bounds of what God has called you to in purpose and design around manhood. Headship is worked out in the home primarily, not in the apartment with a group of dudes but in a home with a wife. What's happened is our culture has disciplined our young single men in an over sexualized, over romanticized way that has led to all sorts of destruction in the marital relationship, all sorts of destruction in the family unit because we have not seen, "What I'm looking for is a dear friend who I might partner with for the glory of Christ."

That kind of marriage holds together. Can we talk about physical attraction just for a second briefly? Gravity wins. I'm out. Gravity wins! Nobody has figured out how to beat gravity. They're like, "Well, there are procedures." Only a couple of times until bad things start happening there,

right? You might go, "I can fix it." Eventually, you're drooling on yourself, and you're not sexy. It's frightening. "What *is* that?"

Gravity wins. No one beats gravity. If you're pushing all your chips onto physical attraction, you will be disappointed. Do you know your nose and ears never stop growing? Not only does gravity win, but give it enough time, and you are some circus freak-looking Dumbo, wrinkly, droopy mess. On that day, gospel partnership rooted in deep friendship is awesome.

I will say this. "Are you saying physical attraction doesn't matter?" No. What I'm telling you is in a good friendship, you'll find godliness to be sexy. Godliness is extremely sexy in a way that just physical sexiness cannot be. Physical sexiness has some aspects of mystery to it until the mystery goes away. Then once the mystery is gone away, there's no deepening of that attraction. The longer you're with someone they can't hide physical imperfections. They can't push the stuff up and hold stuff in.

All that is gone, but godliness is ever deepening. Godliness is ever deepening. It's like logs that continually get thrown on a fire as you watch your wife love and serve the Lord, as you watch her mature, as you watch her grow, as she becomes the type of iron that sharpens your life. This is where we should be pushing into. Single men, you should be pursuing godly... I grieve for some of our godly single women here, just ferociously godly women stuck around a bunch of boys.

Look. This is how I'm training my son, little 8-year-old Reid. This is how I train him. When I see him do something a man should do, man, I'm swooping in there and giving him knuckles. He holds the door for my wife. Then I'm down. I'm like, "What's up, bud? Man stuff! Good job!" When he shares with his sisters, I swoop down in there with knuckles. "Hey, great job! Man, you just acted like a man there, buddy. You're an 8-year-old man. I'm proud of you."

Then when he acts like a little boy, I want to bring that to his attention. "Well, isn't he a little boy?" Yeah, but my job is to train him out of his boy-ness. Not out of the mystery and awe of being young. Let that be there as long as his lack of cynicism will allow. But when he shoves his sister down and I go, "Hey, men don't do that," and he goes, "Well, she started it," I like to go, "Yeah. Listen. Boys shove girls. Men never shove girls. Boys hit girls. Men never hit girls."

"Well, that's not fair!"

"That's what boys say. Boys say, 'That's not fair.' Men don't say, 'That's not fair.' Men know what they've been called to. They know they've been called into something that's very difficult. They know their strength will only be found in Christ, and they'll fail often at it. We don't want fair. Buddy, we have been designed by God to war for the glory of God, the soul of our wife, the development of our children, and the glory of Christ in the world. We don't want fair; we want the fight."

Our masculinity comes out in the fight, not in peacetime but in fight. Again, it's why the lazy men are so destructive to human flourishing. They want it to be fair. It's *not* fair. You don't want fair. You haven't been designed for it. Think of the movies we like to watch. We want the fight. We want our lives to matter. We want to lay it down. We love *Saving Private Ryan*, everybody getting shot up on the beach. We want to run up on that beach with them. It's in us.

Brothers, you've been called to this. Anything less than this is outside of design and purpose. "I've just screwed up so badly, Chandler. I mean, I'm an older man. My kids are gone. They hate the Lord. You have no idea. I'm just heartbroken." Here are a couple of things. If your older children are wayward, you did the best you could with where you were. Confess that to the Lord. Confess that to your children. Then grown children make up their own minds. You lean into the gospel.

Young dad, young husband, you just need to own what you can own here for your wife, for your children. Seek forgiveness. It will be found. "Well, I don't know if my wife will forgive me." Well, you pursue her heart and sacrificially love her, and let the Lord woo her heart back. Where men will fill this gap, we flourish. Brothers, where you punt on this, where you err toward passivity, you give family, church, city, life over to destruction. Ladies, encourage us in this. Ladies, expect this of us. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for an opportunity to sit under your Word. I feel the weight of it myself. Thank you that for the thousands of times I've failed, even in my failures as I try to authentically pursue what you've called me to be, you use those failures to reinforce and to strengthen the very pursuit you would have me on.

I do pray where we're weary as men, where we're tired, that you would dial our hearts into the reality that you've called us to be at some levels tired. You've called us to be in some ways wrung out. You've called us in many ways into the difficulty of serving and sacrificially loving. These are

good calls. They're calls that fill our hearts. They're calls that grant us confidence. They're calls that really chisel away at our rough edges as we die more and more and more to self.

Help us pray today we would be filled with the pursuit of forgiveness, with the owning of where we have fallen short and with your Holy Spirit transforming our lives so we get into the car today as a different kind of husband, a different kind of daddy, a different kind of man. Help us. It's for your beautiful name I pray, amen.

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