

SESSION 1



LOVING GOD'S WOMAN BY PARTNERING WITH HER

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01

IF WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE, WE CAN'T EVEN GET OFF THE STARTING BLOCK TO LIVE OUT THIS PILLAR OF MANHOOD.

- What does it mean to love God's woman? The term love might be the most commonly confused term in our culture.

A. Is love a _____ ?

- God has called us to love His _____.

John 13:34:

“a new command that I give you, that you love one another...”

Ephesians 5:25:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...”

- So is loving God's woman a duty, like being called up for military service or a task handed down to you by your boss? Umm...Yes! But it's a lot more than that!

“*Dutiful roses are a contradiction in terms.*”

- JOHN PIPER

B. Is love a _____ ?

- Yes, you should desire God's woman! It is never _____ a duty to be her husband.

- But is desire the key? The answer is _____.
- While _____ for your wife is a good thing, is love the same as “_____” her? Couldn’t you _____ her for all the wrong reasons?

“Come on, baby, light my fire...”

- JIM MORRISON

- If love is not merely a duty or simply a desire, what is it?

C. A working definition of love... Love is _____ in _____ best _____.

Matthew 22:36-39:

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.**”

- The _____ to loving someone well is wanting the _____ for them.

This raises three questions:

1. What does acting in another’s best interests look like?

Consider what Paul says later in **Ephesians 5:28-29:**

“In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh...”

- Paul rightly assumes that men will look out for their best interests. We intuitively know this and see this all around us.
- Though it's natural and often appropriate to act in our self-interest, the gospel teaches us that Christ is our model;
Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...
- King Jesus "*gave himself up*" for his bride, the church. He is our standard regarding acting in the best interests of another.
- Jesus did not mince words when he commanded us to love and declared what it looked like:

John 15:13-14:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as **I have loved you**. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

- Simply put: love means _____.

2. Who defines the _____
of God's woman?

- Well, she is _____ woman; He designed and created her.

Genesis 2:22:

"And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he _____ into a woman and brought her to the man."

- Therefore _____ defines what is in her best interests, not you, not her, and not the culture.

3. How do we love God's woman?

- That is the point of this entire part of BetterMan Defined, so buckle up men! Let's gooooo!

Remember: If we don't know what love is, then we will never be able to give it to God's woman.

“ Marriage is a call to die [to self]... Christian marriage vows are the inception of a lifelong practice of death, giving over not only all you have but all you are. Is this a grim gallows call? Not at all! It is no more grim than dying to self and following Christ. In fact, those who lovingly die for their [spouses] are those who know the most joy, have the most fulfilling marriages, and experience the most love.” - KENT HUGHES

02

YOU BEST LOVE AND PROTECT GOD'S WOMAN WHEN YOU PARTNER WITH HER.

A. To understand the importance and nature of our _____ with our wives, we must go back to creation.

- Before man ever fell into sin he had a _____. We learn in Genesis 2 that it was not good for man to be _____.

Genesis 2:18a:

“Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone;”

- Men think that being alone and independent is a virtue, but it's not. The Bible teaches us that men face real _____ when they isolate themselves.

Proverbs 18:1:

“Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.”

- Proverbs 18:1 teaches that when we are isolated:

1. We become _____; *“he seeks his own desire...”*

- If being _____ produces selfishness, then we should be careful not to go at life _____.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way...”

2. We lack _____; *“he breaks out against all sound judgment.”*

- The book of Proverbs is all about wisdom, and we learn from it that listening to others is a pathway to wisdom.

Proverbs 12:15:

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.”

Proverbs 19:20:

“Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain wisdom in the future.”



- The Bible teaches that _____ breeds _____ and _____.

B. God provides a _____ for man's problem.

- In Genesis 2:18b, God says, *"I will make him a helper fit for him."*
- God's solution comes in the form of a _____. God makes _____ to be man's partner.

Genesis 2:21-22:

"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"

- She is God's gift that He brings to you. That means to ignore, resent, or not appreciate your wife as your partner is _____ God's design and despising His gift.

03

GOD'S PROVISION OF A PARTNER HAS THREE FACES:

A. As your partner, she is your _____.

- As your companion, this means you do _____
 - Planning for time together
 - Making decisions together



- Sharing your heart with her

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow... Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

B. As your partner, she is your _____.

- Her differences are _____, meaning God intends them to assist you. She is your _____.

The Hebrew word for “helper” (ezer) is used in the Old Testament 19 times, and 16 of those are used in reference to God. It never speaks of a second-class person but rather one who is able to come alongside you.

C. As your partner, she is your _____-_____.

1 Peter 3:7:

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

- God has gifted you with His _____ and made her His _____. She is your King’s princess.

- Every _____/_____ wants his _____/_____
_____ treated with dignity and honor.
-

04

YOUR PART OF THE PARTNERSHIP IS TO PROVIDE THE LOVING LEADERSHIP GOD HAS ASSIGNED TO YOU.

- A.** As her _____, you are her complement. You are her loving leader who _____ her.
- God has given men a _____; man is called to love and protect the woman in his life. This is called _____.
 - Male headship should reflect _____, something every man must live up to.
 - Godly leadership is never portrayed in Scripture as a means for self-satisfaction or self-exaltation. Godly leadership is always _____.
 - For example, husbands are never commanded to rule their wives, but to _____ them (Ephesians 5:25).

- Godly leadership is more a _____
than a _____; godly leadership is the
_____ to _____.

“ If headship means ‘power’ in any sense, then it is power to care, not to crush; power to serve, not to dominate; power to facilitate self-fulfillment, not to frustrate or destroy it. And in all the standard of the husband’s love is to be the cross of Christ, on which he surrendered himself even to death in his selfless love for his bride.”

- JOHN STOTT

- B.** When you fulfill your role as a godly leader, you _____ and
_____ your wife.

“ To be highly esteemed by someone you highly esteem is the greatest thing in the world.” - TIM KELLER, *THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE*, 164

- Your loving and sacrificial leadership will yield great fruit in her life. What are some of the fruits of loving leadership?
 - Your wife is _____ and cared for. (Session 2)
 - Your wife is _____ and made secure. (Session 3)
 - Your wife is _____ to _____ in love and compassion. (Session 4)
 - Your wife is _____ of wounds and given hope. (Session 5)

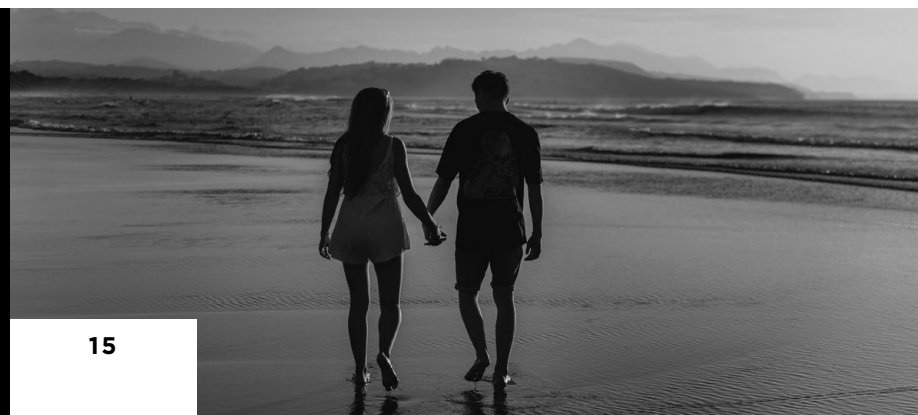
- C. When you realize that you have been blessed with a _____,
you get to rejoice.

Genesis 2:23-24:

“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.”

“ At last, my love has come along
My lonely days are over
And life is like a song”

- ETTA JAMES



DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS

1. Before this session, what was your idea/picture of love? What influences helped shape this idea?
2. Today, we learned about the “three faces” of God’s woman: that God created woman as man’s *companion*, *complement*, and *co-heir*. Have you ever thought about God’s woman in this way? How do these *faces* change your understanding today? Explain.
3. As a man you are called and created to LEAD. Where have you seen men abuse leadership—what did that look like? Where have you seen men lead well—what did that look like? How could applying what you learned today about male leadership help you? Explain.

YOUR BETTERMAN REFLECTION:

Before our next session, take a moment this week to reflect on your notes, and then answer the following question: What is one thing you can do to **bless** and **esteem** God’s woman this week? Write your answer in the space below.



MY SPIRITUAL LOVE STORY

AN INVITATION

Before coming back for Session 2, we invite you to spend some extended time this week with your table group members sharing your spiritual “love” story with one another. So today, your table leaders will help you schedule a meeting time.

At the beginning of your journey into *“Loving and Protecting God’s Woman,”* this storytelling meeting is a special opportunity to strengthen your table relationships and add depth and context to your future, weekly BetterMan discussions.

WHEN YOU MEET

- Have your spiritual storytelling meeting in a private, comfortable, undisturbed setting. Provide light refreshments. A table leader’s home is a great option for this gathering.
- Allow at least two and a half hours for this meeting.
- Your table leaders will lead you through this sharing time.
- This is a time for everyone to have the opportunity to personally tell his spiritual love story. Each person will have up to 15 minutes to share. (Table leaders will keep time and give you a “heads up” when you need to begin wrapping up your story after 14 minutes.)
- To help prepare you for sharing your spiritual story, you will be given 5 minutes at the beginning of the meeting to write down your personal thoughts and answers under the three categories listed on the following page. Even better, you can prepare to share your story in advance by writing down your answers before meeting. These written reflections will help to focus and guide you as you share your spiritual story with your table-mates.
- Table leaders will share their spiritual stories first. After everyone has shared his story, take a few minutes for the group to reflect and comment on what they’ve just heard. What stood out in these stories? Did any common themes emerge? What was most impactful?
- Enjoy this special time together!



**MY SPIRITUAL
LOVE STORY**

- Briefly share how/when you met your wife, fiancée, or girlfriend. If you haven't met "the one" yet, describe what you are looking for.

- In what ways have you grown since sharing your time and life with someone else? Mentally? Emotionally? Spiritually?

- In 2-3 sentences, write your marriage "mission" statement—how do you see your role, and what are you looking to achieve in the relationship?

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leader or attendee survey below.



Leader Survey

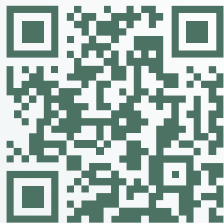


Attendee Survey



A Good Man

“What boys don't learn, men won't know.”



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— **DR. TONY EVANS** President, The Urban Alternative
Senior Pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship

Culture is chasing after the hearts of our children. Day in and day out, the world tells our children to “*be god*.” We live in a profoundly post-Christian culture—a culture where the Bible is not only inaccurate, it is impossible. Our children are coming to age in what Nietzsche called the “*wake of God's death*,” a time when “*God is dead*,” and self reigns supreme.

A Good Man stands against the tide of culture, speaking words of truth that counteract the devil's lies. Your son is wonderfully and fearfully made—this book will help you show them what that means.

Creative and winsome, *A Good Man* will help your little man know what it means to be God's man.

For the glory of the King!



DR. CHRIS HARPER

Author, speaker, and disciple-maker, Dr. Chris Harper serves as BetterMan's Chief Storyteller and CEO. Be it Saturday morning living room wrestling with his three boys, or Sunday afternoon pedicures with his daughter, Chris is always looking to point the next generation to King Jesus.



BETTERMAN