

SESSION 5



**LOVING GOD'S WOMAN BY
PRACTICING HOPE AND HEALING**

1. God is “the Great Physician”.

A. God shows us His love for us in healing us.

- He heals our bodies.
Psalm 103:2-3:
“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases”
- He heals our souls through the gospel. Jesus came to heal our broken lives.
1 Peter 2:24:
“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”
- He heals our hurts and sorrows.
Psalm 147:3:
“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

2. A real man has a unique opportunity to be the Great Physician’s agent of healing love.

A. Remember: love acts in another’s best interests.

- Because God in Christ acted in our best interests, we get to reflect that love in the lives of those God has called us to protect and care for.
1 John 4:10-12:
“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”
- Women carry different wounds than men, in part, because they have a different design and therefore different vulnerabilities.
“ Women exceed men in internalizing problems of anxiety and depression, in which problematic feelings are turned inward against the self. This includes both milder and more severe forms of depression, as well as most types of anxiety, including generalized anxiety disorder and phobias. Greater depression means that more women than men live with feelings of profound sadness and loss, serious problems with negative self-concept, and feelings of guilt, self-reproach, and self-blame.” - Sara Rosenfield and Dena Smith, A Handbook for the Study of Mental Health

B. A real man’s job is to be proactive in attending to the wounds and challenges of God’s woman.

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.”

- Two important observations from 1 Peter 3:7:
 1. She needs to be known.
 - It is essential for a husband to learn his wife and to live with her in a way that demonstrates knowledge of her. She is unique, and he needs to take the time to know that. [Revisit your interview from week 4]
 2. She has different vulnerabilities. Your wife is a sister in Christ, therefore equal to you—and she is more vulnerable because of her identification as a weaker vessel.

The Greek word for “vessel” (skeuos) is used multiple times in the New Testament to refer to the physical body. She has many strengths, but he is her protector, in part, because she is physically more vulnerable to harm.

 - This vulnerability is not limited to physical pain but can include lots of different forms of hurt in a fallen world like ours.

3. How do you heal her pain and sorrow?

A. You see and pay attention to her sorrow and pain.

- God models for us what it is to see a woman in pain and attend to her in Genesis 16. Hagar had been hurt and wounded by Sarah. When God came and ministered to her in the wilderness the following is recorded of her:

Genesis 16:13-14:
 “So she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.” Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.”
- Hagar gives God the name El Roi – “the God who sees”.
- God’s woman needs to know that she is seen in her sorrow.

B. He identifies with her sorrow and pain by learning and practicing empathy.

- The word “empathy” comes from two Greek terms:
 - em – which means “in”
 - pathos – which means to “feel”
- When we empathize we slow our lives long enough to understand and identify with a hurting person. We are willing to ask ourselves questions like:
 - How would it feel to be in their situation?
 - Why do they feel the way that they do?
 - What do I not understand about their situation that I should?
- We might not fully understand their pain, but we should come alongside and identify with them as best we can.

Proverbs 14:10:

“The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.”

- As men we need to be aware of five dangers men face as they attempt to empathize with God's woman:
 - The danger of dismissiveness. Remember to acknowledge and appreciate her pain.
 - The danger of distance. Remember that aloofness only makes her pain worse.
 - The danger of stereotyping. Remember that she is a particular woman and not "just a woman".
 - The danger of discontentment. Her pain is not about you, but you are God's man for her in these circumstances.
 - The danger of exploiting. Exploitation occurs when you shame her for her weakness or expose her to hurt from others.

Romans 15:1:

"We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves."

- If your strength does not help those who are experiencing weakness around you feel secure, protected, and equipped for their challenges then you are likely wasting what God has given you.

C. He shares in her sorrow and pain to alleviate her aloneness.

- She may need you to slow down, listen, and be with her more than you want.
- She may need practical help:
 - Find her professional help.
 - Serve her.
 - Rally others around her.
 - Pick up the slack and take on other responsibilities.

D. He brings her sorrow and pain to God by praying with her and for her.

- Prayer has always been and will always be a real man's most powerful tool.

"...the Christian leader must be in the future what he has always had to be in the past: a man of prayer; a man who has to pray, and who has to pray always." - Henri Nouwen

- She needs to see you and hear you pray for her.

E. He shows her how to have hope in God by:

- Reminding her of the character God
- Sharing the Word of God regularly with her
- Speaking words of encouragement to her
- Carrying an optimistic attitude
- Rehearsing God's faithfulness in his own life

F. He stays present, steadfast, and strong for her all the way through her sorrow and pain

Proverbs 19:22a:

"What is desired in a man is steadfast love,"

- The height of a man’s sacrifice for his wife is seen in how he lays down his life on a daily basis for the broken parts of her life.
- Never forget the standard of husbandly love is to love “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25b)

Is there a doctor in the house? Yes, It is you!

Your Table Discussion Questions

1. Men and women carry and experience wounds differently? How have you seen this play out in your context (i.e., marriage, friendship, family)?

2. In what ways can showing empathy be more powerful than showing sympathy?

3. In section E, we talked about five ways to show God’s woman the hope you have in God. Which if these five comes easily to you? Which is difficult? Discuss.

Your “BetterMan” Reflection

Never forget that the standard of husbandly love is to love “as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25b). Write down three ways you can begin to love God’s woman as Christ loved the church. Now, get to work!