The Exemplary Husband, Session 1 and 2

1. First three chapters of the book are concerned with the Gospel and how it applies to husbands.
   a. A Husband’s Understanding of His Present Condition, of God, and of Man. Why?
   b. Let me take you on a trip down memory lane. You may have heard something like this during your wedding, “Ministering in the name of the Lord Jesus, I now pronounce you husband and wife. May Christ be the Head of your home. May He be the unseen Guest at every meal, the Listener to every conversation. May Christ's love rule your hearts and lives.”
      i. So, is Jesus that central to your marriage? Your home life? Is He a fixture of your thought life?
      ii. I’m here to say He’s not. If He was, you would already be The Exemplary Husband.
   c. My goal: to encourage you to place the emphasis of your marriage where it belongs: not romance, but on Christ.
      i. What do you have to be thankful for?
         1. Job? House?
         2. Kids? Wife?
         3. Forgiveness of Sins? Redemption? Sure hope of heaven?
      ii. Now, really, what’s wrong with your life?
         1. Problems are temporary; Heaven is forever.
   d. (29) “Bob” works hard, supports family, thinks he’s above average.
      i. “Does not have a clue why his wife is so frustrated with him”
      ii. She complains he is selfish. What more could she want?
      iii. He goes to church. He provides. His wife is “lucky.”
   e. “Ralph” is trapped with a wife who is quick-tempered and disrespectful.
      i. She acts like his mother.
      ii. He actually avoids his wife because she makes him so miserable.
   f. Both of these men are missing the mark.
      i. Trust the Lord! Put off wrong/sinful thinking and put on godly thinking.
      ii. Confess sin.
      iii. Repent.
iv. Renew your mind. (Rom. 12:2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. If your thinking is like your co-workers or your unsaved family or friends, you’re not thinking rightly.
   a. You are not to be molded, shaped, squeezed into acting and thinking like “this world” does.
   b. Your wife is not “the ball and chain.”
   c. You are not “stuck” with your wife.
   d. If we’re not careful, our thinking can be just as selfish as an unsaved man’s.

v. Put off/Put on. (Eph. 4:20-24) But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

   g. Without the Gospel at the heart of our lives, there is no:
      i. Gratitude.
      ii. Conviction.
      iii. Confession.
      iv. Repentance.
      v. Sanctification.
      vi. Hope.

2. Men and Women are Different!
   a. (48) Often a wife’s primary complaint about her marriage is, “We have no relationship.”
   b. Husbands can be oblivious to this. Why?
      i. We respond to emergencies. We solve problems. And, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
      ii. We’re lazy.
   c. Your wife is not “high maintenance” just because she expects to be more than a friend with benefits.
   d. The Bible commands us to have relationships with other Christians—how much more with our wives?
i. (52) The way the Trinity relates to one another gives us our model for relationships. The basic elements seen among the Godhead should be present in a biblical relationship.
   1. Unity.
   2. Uniqueness of Personhood.
   3. Perfect communication.
   4. Involvement and cooperation.
   5. Knowledge of the other Persons.
   7. Verbal expressions of love.
   8. Visible expressions of love, goodness, blessing, and service.
   10. Utmost concern for God’s truth and glory.

ii. Visible expressions of love.
   1. Encouraging one another when discouraged.
   2. Forgiving one another.
   3. Stirring one another to love and good works.
   4. Gently admonishing one another.
   5. Firmly and lovingly rebuking one another.
   6. Bearing one another’s burdens.
   7. It is one thing to say we love our wives. It is another to practice biblical love.

e. Loving Attitude.
   i. (Col. 3:12-13) Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
   1. God’s love is never passive.
   2. God’s love is not emotional.
   3. God acts in love.
   4. This is how we are to act: compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient, forbearing, forgiving.

f. What is a Biblical relationship?
   i. “A joint participation between two distinct Christian persons in which there is involvement, Christ-like love (sacrificial, enduring, and in keeping with God’s Word), good communication,
appreciation, edification, and service—all in an attitude of respect and humility—and all for God’s glory and the benefit of the other.”

1. “Unbelieving wives do not have the capacity to relate as God relates, but by carrying out your responsibility, you can be a witness of God’s love, and bring great glory to Him.”


a. **Not Pursuing Christ first and foremost.** “Our relationship with Christ will always affect our horizontal relationships with one another. If we are not loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we are putting something or someone else in His rightful place. We will inevitably find ourselves having difficulty in our other relationships.”

b. **Pride.** (55-56) “Pride will cause us to look down on others and lord it over others rather than lovingly lead. A person who is self-exalting will also get defensive, blame-shift, rename, or ignore sin rather than admit sin and ask forgiveness. He will also be reluctant to be accountable to anyone, and will rarely see anyone as capable of giving advice or beneficial input.”

   i. Instead, put on humility (Phil. 2:1-4), admit sin (Ps. 32:5), seek counsel (Prov. 15:22), welcome accountability (Heb. 10:24-25), only make requests that are for the furtherance of the glory of God and the good of others (Rom. 12:10).

c. **Sinful Communication.** “Deceitful, unwholesome, or hurtful words, as well as the tone of voice and body language with which they are said can also be sinful. The flesh wants to excuse these sins based on the circumstances, but God’s Word does not give us any (excuses).”

   i. (Eph. 4:29) *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

      1. Put off “corrupting talk.”
      2. Put on “building up” talk, words that give grace.

d. **A Lack of Appreciation and Thankfulness.** “When we are focused on the negative aspects of a person or of a relationship, rather than on the positive, we are reluctant to relate as we should.”

   i. More frankly, we just don’t care about thinking rightly when we are zeroed in on our wives’ weaknesses and sins.

   ii. Instead. (1 Thess. 5:11) *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*
1. How much better will your wife respond to you if you are commending her, speaking well of her, and building her up?

2. Why would you talk to your wife in a way you would never speak to your co-worker or boss? Shouldn’t she believe she is the most important human being in your life?

e. **Self-Focused Expectations.** “Looking and waiting for another’s growth, time, care, or attention is always a bad idea. We must not live in expectation or put conditions on our love and care for others.”

   i. We are to love our wives primarily because obedience glorifies the Lord. Will it help our marriage? In most cases, but we can’t wait for evidence of that. We must obey.

   ii. “Why should I . . .?” is easily answered: our sovereign Lord commands it.

   iii. “But she . . .”

      1. Don’t make excuses for your disobedience. You wouldn’t accept it from your child, why do you suppose God will?
      2. Blameshifting is as old as the Garden of Eden. It never shifts responsibility. YOU are responsible for YOUR actions and attitudes.

   iv. Are you more worried about her obedience than yours?

      1. (Matt. 7:3-5) *Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

   v. If you’ve never made this mistake, you’re better than I am. But, that’s not the standard.

4. God’s Purposes for Marriage. “Marriage is good and has perfect purposes. God’s overall purpose for marriage is to bring Himself glory. This is clearly accomplished through (some specific areas).”

   a. Companionship. (Gen. 2:18) *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."*

      i. “Fit” means “comparable or corresponding to.” None of the animals were “fit” for Adam. God demonstrated there was nothing
“comparable or corresponding to” Adam, then created Eve from Adam to be a companion to him.

b. **How a Husband Should Treat His Companion.**
   i. **By Being with Her and Involving Her.**
      1. Plan to spend time with her alone!
      2. Develop common interests with her.
      3. Let her know how she can help you/work alongside you.
      4. Call her from work.
      5. Tell her about what you do.
   ii. **By Seeking to Understand Her and Help Her.**
      1. Ask what she did today and then listen.
      2. Inquire to her well-being and then pay attention.
      3. Plan a regular time to talk about her concerns and then pray/study/help her find solutions.
      4. Ask how you can pray for her.
      5. Pray with her.
      6. Assist her when she needs it.
   iii. **By appreciating her.**
      1. Thank God for her!
      2. Thank and verbalize specific qualities or deeds that you are thankful for.
      3. Speak well of her to others!
      4. Leave her a note of appreciation.
   iv. **By treating her special compared to others.**
      1. Open doors for her.
      2. Plan dates.
      3. Put her “needs” and desires above others.
      4. Show her non-sexual affection.
      5. Be sexually intimate with her, focusing most on her enjoyment.
   v. **By revealing yourself to her.**
      1. Communicate your thoughts, perspectives, and goals.
      2. Let her know how she can pray for you.

c. **How a Wife Can Assist Her Husband.** (Gen. 2:18)
   i. Every marriage is different—example, checkbook.
   ii. Strengths/weaknesses.
iii. Children are not “her job;” they are your job with which she assists.

iv. Caution: your wife is not just a “worker” to help you; always remember she is your companion.

d. How Should Your Marriage Look? “The marriage relationship is to be a characterization of Christ’s relationship to His people. Included in this picture is a snapshot of the Gospel, in that the husband’s love is to imitate Christ’s sacrificial love on the cross.”

i. (Eph. 5:25-30) *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,* 26 *that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,* 27 *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.* 28 *In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.* 29 *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,* 30 *because we are members of his body.*

ii. Husband, are you portraying Christ’s love and leadership to the Church? Or, do you perhaps see yourself in one of these roles?

1. King, lording it over his vassal, dictating and waiting to be served.
2. A hireling over sheep—leaving when the going gets tough and not willing to sacrifice.
3. A tolerant roommate—making no commitment, ignoring sin, and doing his own thing—basically sharing expenses and a roof.
4. A business partner.
5. An irresponsible steward or drifter—leaving responsibilities undone, going with the flow with no purpose or direction.
6. A preoccupied worker—too busy and distracted to fulfill marital responsibilities. You work, she takes care of the home.

e. Sexual Union. “. . . and they shall become one flesh.” (Gen. 2:24c)

i. Procreation clearly part of God’s plan. (Gen 1:27-28)

ii. Satisfaction in marriage is also part of God’s plan. (1 Cor. 7:3-5; Heb. 13:4).
f. Commitment. “When we marry, we are covenanted before God to become ‘one flesh.’ We are promising to permanently join our lives with another in the most permanent and comprehensive way possible.”
   i. “The oneness God is speaking of seems to be a total sharing of one another. It is a sharing of ideas, beliefs, joys, difficulties, triumphs, failures, possessions and bodies. The motivation of oneness must be to obey and glorify God.
   ii. Leaving and Cleaving.
      1. Leaving means “to forsake.” There is to be a clear division, not that we don’t care about parents any longer.
         a. A new primary relationship.
         b. A change of authority.
         c. An exchange of dependence. (1 Tim. 5:8—caring for one’s household)
         d. After marriage, key changes must take place. Each spouse is to be the other’s most significant person on Earth.
      2. Cleaving means “to pursue a firmly joined state.”
         a. Only our pursuit of God is to be a greater pursuit.
         b. The cleaving is to be mutual.

g. God’s Intentions for the Marriage Relationship.
   i. It is to be our primary human relationship. It is the ONLY relationship described as “one flesh.”
   ii. It is a permanent relationship. (Matt. 19:6) So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.
   iii. It is a perfecting relationship. God uses everything in our lives for our good and His glory.

5. God’s Perspective on Men and Women.
   a. The two are positionally and personally equal.
      i. Image-bearers. (Gen. 1:27)
      ii. Equal in Christ. (Gal. 3:28)
   b. Functionally unequal.
      i. The husband and wife are not equal in authority.
      ii. Both leadership and submission should flow out of a love relationship between the husband and wife.
1. (Strauch) “the husband-wife relationship is not a boss-employee, a commander-soldier, or a teacher-student relationship. It is a love relationship in which two adults become united as one. Within this union, one partner lovingly takes the lead and the other willingly and actively supports that lead.”

2. (1 Cor. 11:3) *But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*

   a. Is Christ lessened because the Father is “over” Him?

c. Husbands Must Lead. (Eph. 5:22-33)

   i. He is the head of his wife.

   ii. He is to actively (and sacrificially) love, including protecting and nourishing.

   iii. He is to purify his wife by exposing her to the Word.

   iv. He is to provide for her needs physically and spiritually.

d. Husbands Must Love (v. 25)

   i. Actively—He must show love in tangible ways, not just say it.

      1. There’s what we say and what we do.

      2. Pointing backward to individual acts doesn’t cut it; we must continually display our love for our wives.

   ii. According to Knowledge. (1 Pet. 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.*

      1. “Understanding” is “gnosis,” or “knowledge.” You have to be a student of your wife.

         a. Women are not like men! Praise the Lord!

      2. He will take the time and make the effort to know the best way to love her.

      3. “It is a lack of love for God and one’s wife that causes a husband to say ‘I don’t like to read,’ ‘It’s just not me to study,’ or ‘I can’t take the time to read or become knowledgeable.’ I venture to say that if a man were offered a million dollars to study God’s principles of marriage or attend a marriage conference, he would make a great effort to make it happen.”
4. Women are “weaker” physically and emotionally. You can beat your wife down emotionally. However, that is sinful. It is wrong. Go back to the image of Christ and the church.

iii. Sacrificially. “He must put his wife before himself and serve her, even when it means a personal sacrifice on his part.”