

God's Great Design - Man's Pitfalls

REVIEW: We are in a series all about God's great design. More specifically, God's design for us as men and women. This series has been drawn, to start with, from the opening chapters of the Bible to help us see the way in which God originally designed this world to behave.

We started by looking at the fact that God is the Creator. Along with that, we are created. Which means, if God created us, than we are not the point of the universe. Which takes many of us by surprise, because we like being the point. After that we looked at the concept of the imago dei - the image of God. Each and every one of us was created in God's image. This image of God on all of humanity's lives means quite a few things. Because of the imago dei, sexism, pornography, racism, abortion - all wrong. All ways in which the image of God gets screwed up in our society - all because we lost our base theology.

Last week we talked about how, where men fulfill their purpose and design by God, society thrives. God has called men to work out this "headship" (remember that headship is defined as the unique work of man in establishing order for humanity to thrive) - so we are called to work this out first in the home. We do this by sacrificial love - a love that says the needs of my wife, and the needs of my family are more important than what I want - especially if what I want is to be lazy, and unengaged with my family. We exercise headship in the home by providing spiritual direction. Doesn't mean you have to be Martin Luther, Augustine or Pastor Keith in your theological understanding, but it means you are always growing, and you are initiating prayer with your wife; with your kids; you are initiating conversation about growth in Christ. This also plays out in provision - providing what your family needs.

Headship also plays out in the church. Men, seeking to lead the church, to be qualified as an elder.

We also said, last week, that single men mirror headship. The only one they set the spiritual direction for in their home is themselves. However, the way they mirror headship is by treating women as sisters. Protecting them, guiding them, all as loving brothers.

TRAN: Today I want us to consider some pitfalls that are unique to us as men. These are areas that we have to fight against because ever since sin was introduced into the world, these have been a fight for us.

INTRO: Before we get started, allow me to speak to the ladies in the room. As we talk about the pitfalls for men, please, please - as a favor to your good looking preacher, please don't elbow your man when you hear his pitfall!

I. We laugh, but I promise you that doing that serves no good purpose at all

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- A. In fact ladies, this is a moment where your man may see things in a different way, and be ready to step forward and make some changes
 - B. The minute you elbow him in his side, indicating, "The preacher is talking about you honey" all you are going to do is kill off any spirit he has growing in him to take that step
 - C. Allow me, as a man, to tell you what we as men need in these moments
 - 1. We need your understanding
 - 2. We need your encouragement
 - a) Ya'll understand positive reinforcement?
 - b) When you see us doing it right, heap on the praise
 - (1) Not in a cheesy - over the top way
 - (2) But seriously, and sincerely praise us for the positive ways you see in us
 - 3. And we need your prayers
 - a) Pray that GOD opens our eyes
 - b) That God convicts us, so that change will come
- II. When sin entered the world - Genesis 2-3
- A. Turn to Genesis 2:15ff
 - 1. This is the setting of the stage
 - 2. The man and woman are in the garden - perfect, naked, unashamed
 - 3. They are at peace - which is more than the absence of war - its the world as God intended
 - B. Now chapter 3
 - 1. Read verse 1 - Stop right there!
 - a) This verse should be a slap in the face, so to speak
 - (1) We are a little too familiar or get hung up on the wrong details sometimes
 - (2) Chapter two was describing paradise, and now we have the introduction of a character that will disrupt paradise
 - b) So here is paradise!!! Oh, what's that serpent doing there?!?
 - 2. Verse 2-6
 - a) This is the first moment of human pride, human unbelief, and humans desiring their own way over God's way
 - b) They trusted the voice of the serpent rather than the voice of God
 - c) They refused to be satisfied with God alone and His provision for them, and said "We want something more"
 - (1) The base problem of all sin
 - (2) We stop trusting that God's plan and His provision is best for us, and we desire something more
 - d) We need to understand that this is the root problem - sin

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- (1) If we get the diagnosis of what went wrong with the world wrong - that it was sin
- (2) Then we mess up what went wrong with manhood (and womanhood when we get there)
- e) So if you are here and maybe you are still trying to figure this Christianity thing out, or maybe you have, we have to note something very important here, and the rest of the Bible bears this out
 - (1) At this moment - the moment man chose their way over God's way, man went from good to bad
 - (2) The image of God was marred, it was messed up - and we were changed forever
- f) Sin came in this world through one man (Adam - which Adam gets the blame, as he should)
- g) Sin is forever dealt with by one man, Jesus Christ
- 3. Verses 7-19
 - a) Notice this starts out as a reversal of chapter 2 - they WERE naked and unashamed, now they are naked and ashamed
 - b) They tried to hide this fact by making outfits made from fig leaves, and they hid from God (as if that is possible)
 - c) God deals with each character of the story in turn - and we will focus mostly on what God says to the man today
 - d) But understand that sin has just wreaked havoc on EVERYTHING
 - (1) Tim Keller explains the scope of sin well when he says that sin has brought spiritual alienation from God, emotional alienation within, social alienation from each other, and physical alienation from nature
 - (2) So in one move, man was alienated from God - that is our fundamental problem
 - (a) But men and women are alienated from each other
 - (b) People are alienated from each other which causes war, crime, family breakdowns, injustice
 - (c) Humanity is alienated from nature, causing sickness, hunger, natural disasters
 - (d) This one move by Adam and Eve had, devastating is not even strong enough, perhaps decimated is better - their one choice decimated the world for the rest of time, until God restores order once and for all
 - e) The area we want to focus in on today is what the fall did for manhood

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- (1) Last week we talked how men were designed to be responsible, to represent, to serve, to protect, to love
- (2) After the fall, the natural bent was twisted and now things like chauvinism, violence, passivity, addictions, characterize men
- (3) Sadly, even the godliest men you know are only a shadow of what true manhood was designed to be

III. How has sin affected manhood

A. In Genesis 3 we can see at least two ways in which manhood has been affected by sin

1. The overarching characteristic of these two ways is selfishness
2. But this selfishness gets worked out in two different manners
3. These, because they have become the norm for men in a world of sin, we as Christians need to fight against these natural tendencies every day

B. The first way is selfish passivity

1. To be clear, using the word passive does not mean men do nothing
 - a) If you think passive means doing literally nothing, not possible
 - b) No such thing as a passive man in that sense - because even a man that cares only for his next beer and sits in front of the TV all day is still actively pursuing what he values most
2. When we talk of selfish passivity, we are talking about men that actively pursue other things than what God designed them for or desires for them
 - a) They are actively going against all those things we talked about last week
 - b) Men are passive when they abdicate their design and responsibility before God - just like Adam
3. Examples from Adam's life
 - a) Gen. 3:6 - Adam is standing there with Eve
 - (1) He was supposed to be keeping the garden, show leadership by protecting the garden
 - (2) He wound up doing the opposite of it
 - (a) He did not lead his wife when he knew what God had said
 - (b) And he joined in with her
 - b) Gen. 3:9-10 - Adam is hiding
 - (1) He hears God coming, and he hides
 - (2) Hardly a man up for leader of the year
 - c) Gen. 3:11-12 - The blame game
 - (1) Adam passes off responsibility
 - (2) Not just to Eve "The woman"
 - (3) He tries to blame God - it's "the woman you gave me"
 - (a) Pretty bold move for a guy that is so passive

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- (4) We need to get this, because all of us, men and women, play this game
 - (a) It's not my fault - it's not my fault I ate the whole plate of cookies
 - (b) If you had not baked all these cookies, I wouldn't have eaten them all
 - i) That's a minor example - we do it with the major things too
 - ii) Looking for ways out of the responsibility that is ours
- (5) God's response to Adam is awesome - verse 17 "because you listen to the voice of your wife"
 - (a) Now, in our selfish passivity, men use this verse to justify sexism
 - (b) But that is not what it says - God is saying, "You knew better Adam! You should have been leading in this situation! You knew I told you not to eat from THAT tree, and instead of being a man and telling your wife 'no' you listened, and have changed everything." (You listened to her voice rather than MY voice)
- 4. In trying to identify with this passage, it is easy to slough it off and think, Adam was a moron - how could he disobey and bring sin crashing down on the world
 - a) The reason we feel like this is because our sin doesn't feel that bad
 - b) That is because we are getting lost in details of the story that don't apply to us, and forgetting to look long and hard at where we are in the story
 - (1) We too often stand idly by when we should engage
 - (2) We too often are passive where we should step in to help
 - (3) Because this is so pervasive, I want all of us, men and ladies to pause for a moment of prayer, and ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to see ways in which we may be passive that need to change
- 5. Examples of passivity
 - a) David would be a good example - but he is an extreme example - sleeping with another man's wife, and then trying to cover it up by having that man murdered - probably not many of us can relate
 - (1) So I want to give examples that will probably hit us between the eyes
 - b) One example: refusing to worship God
 - (1) When we refuse to honor, serve, obey and delight in God, that is passive

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- (2) Even refusing to engage in the worship service here and now - that is a selfish passivity rather than actively leading your family toward spiritual maturity
- c) Engaging in fantasy is another form of passivity
 - (1) Fantasizing about another job, another spouse, and different family
 - (2) Fantasizing about different kids - maybe your kids are grown and wayward, and you think it would be better to have a different family than do the hard work of engaging this family
- d) Being silent when words should be spoken
 - (1) Being silent when you should say something encouraging to your wife or your children
 - (2) Being silent when you should confront sin in the life of those you love (notice I said the ones you love)
 - (3) When we are silent, we are actively avoiding perceived conflict
 - (a) Or maybe we are avoiding vulnerability
- e) Making excuses or complaining
 - (1) We see Adam doing this in Genesis 3, as if God is going to say, "Hmmm, I never considered that Adam. Thanks for helping me see the light!"
 - (2) Even when we complain against our circumstances, we are complaining against the Lord - and that is being passive rather than actively pursuing the life God desires for us
- f) Procrastination/disorganization - passive - read Proverbs
- g) Hiding sin - again we see Adam doing this
 - (1) The active thing to do is bring it to light and help kill it off
- h) Busyness can be passive
 - (1) I know that seems like an oxymoron
 - (2) But think about it, if you are busying yourself to avoid other things
 - (a) Family life is rough so you stay at the office longer
 - (b) Relationship with the wife is going off kilter, so...stay at work
 - (c) Wanting to avoid that unpleasant conversation with an old friend, plan something the same night as the party you know you will see them at
 - (3) Reality is you are avoiding a priority in your life by keeping yourself busy
- i) Laziness

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- (1) Usually we don't equate sin entering the world with hitting the snooze button 10 times, but when there is responsibility that needs to be handled past that alarm - the connection is clear
- j) Leaving difficult jobs to others, leaving people in need, apathy - all of these things are forms of selfish passivity
- 6. Being passive in these manners is not just a bad habit - it is to actively live against the way in which God designed you to be
- C. The second selfishness is selfish aggression
 - 1. Genesis 3:16 - "he will rule over you"
 - a) Not going to get into all the debate that this phrase can cause, but let me say this - "rule over you" - not good
 - b) Because of sin, the whole idea of headship like we talked about degenerated into an ungodly aggression and desire to dominate rather than love and serve the way God designed us
 - 2. This should not be hard to see in the world today or throughout time
 - a) The role of women in marriage has been changed into basically a form of slavery
 - (1) In the world, nearly 1 in 3 women has faced some form of abuse
 - (2) Nearly 1 in 5 teen girls have said they were threatened with violence or the boyfriend threatened self harm when facing a break up
 - (3) Every 9 seconds a women in the US is beaten or assaulted
 - b) If by chance we have any man here given toward this sort of behavior
 - (1) Remember that God takes the protection of His daughters seriously
 - (2) He says in other parts of the Bible, as you have treated them, so you will be treated
 - (3) So whether is is verbal abuse, sexual, physical, whatever, I have a message to you from God
 - (a) Because God is gracious - repent - stop it - seek the help you need
 - c) If you are being abused - God does see, and He does love you
 - (1) If you are willing, and will be courageous, please speak up
 - (2) We don't have perfect solutions, but we will seek to reach out in love and care of Jesus Christ to get you help
 - 3. This sinful aggression is not just at home
 - a) The Bible talks about brother killing brother
 - b) The Bible talks about people mis-shepherding his people - being abusive to God's people

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- c) The prophets are filled with calls for justice for the weak and oppressed
 - 4. These have been some extreme examples - again let me give you some less extreme examples
 - a) Pornography - it is aggression - because it exploits those being laid bare for display
 - b) Thoughtless criticism
 - (1) Nitpicking, being critical
 - (2) We are not talking about constructive, I have you in mind, correction
 - (3) We are talking being critical (and don't cover that up with you are being constructive)
 - c) Withholding affection or attention
 - (1) It seems passive from the withholding, but it is aggressive because you are trying to get back at someone
 - d) Using your resources to control people
 - (1) Money, charisma, position
 - e) Mocking, demeaning other to exalt yourself, slandering or harming others reputations
 - (1) Generally retaliation in general
 - f) Even sarcasm
 - (1) Now I can be the king of sarcasm
 - (a) I have trained myself when to use it, and when to keep my mouth shut
 - (b) But I can still cross the line too
 - (2) Sarcasm can be used for good, but very quickly it can be used for evil as well
 - g) Abandoning responsibilities
 - (1) For example - your family
 - (2) That is a violent act in God's eyes
- IV. Bringing this home, where is the passive or aggressive battles in your life brothers?
- A. How does it work out in you?
 - 1. What are you most inclined to?
 - B. The point is, because of the fall into sin of humanity, our hearts, men, are inclined to selfishness coming out in passivity or aggression
 - C. Look at the result for Adam back in Genesis 3
 - 1. Vers 17, "cursed is the ground because of you..."
 - 2. The ground, that God put under man's care in chapter 2, the ground that would bring him joy and fulfillment - it is now his source of pain

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- a) Creation reversed itself because of sin
- b) Now men will suffer lifelong toil and labor - and then we die
 - (1) Instead of God breathing life into the dust that God formed from the ground
 - (2) Now, we return to the ground - paradise reversed
- D. The short answer to man's pitfalls is sin
 - 1. It plays out in different ways, but it all comes back to sin messing up everything
- E. Today has been a more depressing, convicting sermon
- F. The good news is...next week we dig into the solution - so don't lose heart, and don't miss out