

# **The Image and Glory of God Part 1**

## **Small Group Questions - Leader's Guide** ([audio here](#))<sup>†</sup>

1. What are some of the ways that men and women are different? Have you seen these differences in your children or in other children?

*Men and women receive affection differently - boys are more physical (like to wrestle) and girls tend to like to talk and cuddle. Remember Matt's example from the Last Samurai.*

2. What was man created to be? What did God task him to do in Eden?

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5-9. Man was created to be a cultivator in the Garden of Eden. He was to subdue and rule and reign. He was to keep Eden orderly and expand the order of Eden in to the surrounding untamed wilderness. He was to build, sustain & make it grow.*

3. What does it look like for men to be cultivators? Are we all cultivating something?

*We all are cultivating something. The problem is, if we aren't submitted to the Lordship of Christ, we cultivate the wrong things. Men cultivate all sorts of things: hobbies, projects, work, cars, houses, businesses. Men tend to not enter things slowly, they go all in immediately. Remember the gym illustration of the guy who was at the gym for the first time and was all decked out with gear. This is true in most things men pursue.*

4. What things are men called to cultivate? What are you cultivating?

*Wives - see Psalm 128; fruitful vine illustration*

*Children - imparting wisdom, discipline and direction.*

*Work, home, others, etc...*

*The problem is if a man isn't submitting to Christ, he cultivates the wrong thing. Men are going to cultivate something. Outside of obedience to Christ, we cultivate the wrong things. Cultivating what is right and good is unbelievably difficult. Remember the Promise Keepers illustration (it was easy in theory, but unbelievably difficult to execute). It was all theory. Band of Brothers on Normandy invasion illustration...No more bravado, weighty, hard, difficult. It is easy if you are not in the situation or if your situation naturally fits the mold (which very few do), but what about the rest of the time? Before wife and kids it is easy to lay out a plan, but then you get in to it - and you go to your default. What is your default mode of operation?*

5. What happens when you see laziness enter the picture? Is this something that you struggle with? What is your plan for helping your son not struggle with laziness?

*Men are to pour into work, home, family, physical bodies...we need something to do, something to build, if we don't have it we get into trouble. We get confused. "Where you have laziness, you have a wounded heart, that walks in sin. There is a lot self-hate in the guy who is lazy, it is easier to choose to fail than to try something and fail." How does this relate to you and raising sons? Video Games, and fantasy. He is cultivating laziness, cultivating his default.*

6. What are the consequences of sin that God exacts in Genesis 3:16-18?

*"To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field." (Genesis 3:16-18 ESV)*

*Sin has entered and has fractured the universe. Not just humanity was broken and separated from God, but all of creation was broken (subjected to futility and meaninglessness) - See Romans 8:18-39.*

a. Specifically For Women (verse 16)

*Multiply pain in child bearing. Root of problems: desire for your husband and he shall rule over you. He curses the woman physically and her mind, you're gonna struggle with your husband's rulership and the natural created order of things - you are going to view things incorrectly at times.*

b. Specifically For Men (verse 17-19)

*Men will naturally drift toward oppressing women (see verse 16). God doesn't curse the man but the ground under him. God curses creation. We are going to cultivate and all that we cultivate is going to war against us! This means that all that we are supposed to have dominion over fights against us. War! The perfect paradise of Eden has been lost. This means work, children, wives, health; there are times when all things are going to war against you.*

7. How do we see these consequences played out in our lives? Discuss your propensity to fantasize or dream about a life that worked better than yours.

*Men tend to fantasize or dream about a life that worked better than theirs. Fantasize, dream about a life that was easy and works. Dream about a woman and a life that isn't a fixer-upper. I'll just find a woman or car or house or job that won't be a lot of work. Well good luck with that. There is nothing here that's not a fixer upper (including you!). Why would God do this? We create an alter universe in our minds that says, "if I had a wife that wasn't so hard to get along with it wouldn't be this difficult, if I could get this promotion, it wouldn't be this difficult, if I could get that car, house, finances then life would not be this difficult." There is no paradise this side of heaven. We were built for paradise, but it was fractured when we sinned.*

*All of creation wars against you - it is not going to happen on this earth.*

8. Wouldn't it be better if God blessed those who follow Him by giving them a life that worked smoothly (i.e. easy marriages, successfully jobs, obedient children, healthy lives)? What is the problem with this belief?

*Shouldn't we experience marriages, child rearing, and jobs that were smooth and easy causing the rest of the world to say "If I follow Jesus, look what occurs." There are two problems with this: IDOLATRY, if you follow Jesus to get what you want then you've ventured in to the prosperity Gospel that produces a desire for the good gifts over the Giver - which is ultimate. #2: YOU WOULD NEVER GRASP AND UNDERSTAND THE GOSPEL.*

9. What do we learn when life wars against us? How is this God's love and Grace? Is this a new concept to you? Describe what this does for your perspective on life, marriage, parenting, etc.

*When creation wars against our cultivation it teaches us our deep need for God and our deep need for a savior. Our real spot in the universe and shows forth clearly the gospel to us. I need your help, I can't make this work on my own. When the world wars against us, it reveals our deep need for a savior. When wife, work, children war against us it reveals our deep need for the gospel. "I can't tell you how often I'm loving my wife the way Christ has asked me to love her, and her response is less than Biblical." We should keep no record of wrongs, but we remember stuff! We cry out to God, but she...Then God whispers back "this relationship you are describing sounds familiar as one person is lavishing grace, patience and love on the other and they aren't responding appropriately. What would I do? I would continue to show grace, patience and love. In our wives warring against us sometimes, God is showing us our relationship with Him is like; He is communicating to me the Gospel!" When our children don't believe and trust us, it is a picture of how we think our way is best when relating to God. It is showing us the Gospel. This is God's grace. God did this because He loves us. When everything fights against us, it teaches us how we fight against God so we end up seeing the gospel and being reminded of our dependence on God. It brings us to humility. Man starts to understand the Gospel while he is working...the more he works on his family, job, yard...the more he understands the gospel. Difficulties occur because God deeply loves us! The more you cultivate, the more you will understand the Gospel, the less you do it, the more confused you get about the Gospel.*

10. Paul discusses our roles in relationship to our wives in Ephesians 5:22-33. What does he use as the metaphor for marriage?

*Christ's relationship with the church.*

11. Husbands love by initiating (25-27, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”). Who initiated the relationship between you and God? What was your condition prior to God’s initiation? How does this translate in to your role as husbands?

*Jesus initiated the relationship with the church when He came to atone for our sins. He came, He lived, He died, He rose, He calls us. He initiated the relationship with us not in response to us. We were dead and unable to initiate anything - or even able to respond to His initiation apart from the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Just as Jesus initiated by loving the church so too men are called to love their wives by being the initiator in the marriage relationship.*

12. List specific ways that you can initiate loving your wife?

*Initiate in forgiveness and in conversation - even if you are not at fault. We’ve all gone to bed facing opposite walls. In our anger we compare all our strengths against her weaknesses, not her strengths against your weaknesses. You stew. You always win this battle in your mind and you remember things from the past and it builds. You are cultivating anger and destruction at this point. It is our role as men to say “I’m sorry for that, how I handled it, how I responded to it.” And then leave it. We don’t apologize to get an apology (manipulation). You have successfully laid her at the feet of Jesus. You defused her laying there and dwelling on the same things that you were dwelling upon. Men must take the initiative. Now she gets to dwell on where she failed. Own your part, and give your wife to God and let Him minister to her soul. Love Her until she is transformed. Men are called to take the initiative in reconciliation.*

13. There is a tendency to make formulas (especially in marriages) that are comprised of things that you should do in order to get a response from your wife? How is this dangerous? Is this true biblical love?

*The majority of men don’t love women, they love themselves and use women for their own selfish desires, which explains why men withdraw so quickly once their desires have been quenched. So real men don’t do this. Illustration: Many books on marriage are a field guide on how a man can get what he wants (sex, admiration, etc), they are manipulation, not biblical love. They lay out formulas, if you want this, then do this (clean up around the house and ... serve your wife and ... help with...). Biblical love is about sacrifice, not getting what you want. Try executing these formulas and not getting the result hoped for or promised and things go really bad, breeding contempt. This manipulation causes us to keep score, I did this and she won’t respond or do what I want. This is manipulation, not biblical love.*

14. Husbands provide by nourishing their wives both physically and spiritually (29). List some specific ways that you can nourish your wife spiritually and physically. Nourish almost always means what parents provide for their children in the Greek.

- a. Physically - *Primary provider of food, clothes, shelter; not necessarily the primary bread winner. Don't get caught up in the culture...work hard, but it does not mean that you have to keep up with the Jones'. Take pressure off her by ensuring that the NEEDS of the family are met.*
- b. Spiritually - ***You can only do this if you are feeding your own soul.*** *Lead out in your home...gather and pray. Work with your wife to set-up and shape what the moral boundaries of your home will be. Spiritual nourishment, family devotionals, ask about your wife's spiritual life. You are responsible for setting the spiritual tone in your home and showing your children God. You will give an account to God for how you led in this area. We should all feel the weight of this.*

15. Husbands are to cherish their wives (29, see also 1 Peter 3:7). What does Peter mean when he says “weaker vessel?” List some specific ways that you can cherish your wife spiritually and physically.

*Cherish is used only one other time in the NT...We were gentle among you ... “taking **care**” of her own children (1 Thess 2:7).*

- a. 1 Peter 3:7 - weaker vessel means: *Porcelain, fine china. You don't play catch with porcelain. Men are like a thermos, if you drop it's going to be ok, if you drop porcelain it's going to break.*
- b. Physically. *Be around...I get it...you like golf and play ball...but be around. Cherish your wife by being around her. Most women crave quality time and physical touch. But that's work so we duck it. Make them feel like you value their soul, not just what they do. Extracurricular activities are ok, but never at the cost of being around.*
- c. Spiritually. *Ask her about spiritual things, what the Lord is doing in her. Tell her what you are learning. Pray together. Initiate reading a book together or watching a video together. You Cherish her spiritually when you initiate spiritual conversations. This is unbelievable difficult for most men. You have to be engaged personally with the Lord to do this!*

16. As men, we are to cultivate our children. What does it mean to not provoke your children to anger (Ephesians 6:1)? Why is anger specifically pointed out in this text? What are some ways that we can short circuit anger in our children and in our homes?

*Anger is the most common emotion of the sinful heart when it confronts authority. Kids get angry and we can't stop that because their hearts are sinful. Anger can swallow up all other emotions. Paul is saying, there is going to be plenty of anger with the best of parenting, so make every effort, without compromising your authority or truth or holiness, to avoid provoking anger. Consciously be there for the child with authority and truth and holiness in ways that try to minimize the response of anger. Don't be too harsh in punishment. Do everything that you can to short circuit anger in them as best as you can. The second reason, Paul may focus on not provoking anger in our children is because this emotion devours almost*

*all other good emotions. It deadens the soul. It numbs the heart to joy and gratitude and hope and tenderness and compassion and kindness. So Paul knows that if a dad can help a child not be overcome by anger, he may unlock his heart to a dozen other precious emotions that make worship possible and make relationships sweet. The point is to warn fathers that there is a huge temptation to say things and do things and neglect things that will cause legitimately avoidable anger in our children.*

*Most of us are aware of the obvious things to avoid: yelling, unjust and excessive punishment, hypocrisy, verbal putdowns, etc. But even more important than avoiding the obvious aggravators, we fathers should think about what kinds of preemptive things we can do that don't just avoid anger but diminish or remove anger. Their anger or attitude is not a personal attack on you. The truth is that most of the time, we don't really want to parent.*

*APOLOGIZE, PRAY, CUT OFF THE ANGER! They know you are wrong, don't be prideful.*

17. We are also called to raise our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). What does this look like (see Psalm 78:1-8)?

*What does this look like? Ascribe awe to God, God is not the policeman. Everything that they enjoy, connect its authorship to God. Point out the day to day wonders of sunsets, trees, order and compassion to originating with God. Not God hates liars. Inspire AWE, not rules and regulations. Rules and regulations never produce glory, joy or lasting transformation.*

***i. Psalm 78:1-8***

***1. The Famous One (1-4)***

- a. The glorious deeds of the Lord = everything that is right and good and beautiful and fun and majestic.*
- b. If there is one memory that our children should have of our families and our church it is this: God was first. God was Central. There was a passion for the supremacy of God in all things*
- c. He gets all credit for all good things*

***2. Testimony (5)***

- a. This is a reference to the law, what we would call the Scriptures.*
- b. God has disclosed His character, His love and His wrath and Judgment in the Scriptures.*
- c. We must make the Scriptures a part of our home.*

***3. Teaching them Trust (5-6)***

- a. The scriptures are central, but there is teaching that walks along with that. It's not enough to read. **THEY MUST SEE YOU TRUSTING THE SCRIPTURES IN ALL THINGS. WE MUST WALK IN GLAD SUBMISSION TO THE LORD.***
- b. We must be in humble submission - no room for hypocrisy. They can't see the deep joy of obedience if we aren't walking in it. **WE MUST BE WALKING IN THIS!***
- c. We must relish the role - it's not your wife's job to train and teach your children. She is a supplement.*

18. What area spoke to you the most? What specific action(s) do you need to take in order to address what God has revealed to you?

**Recommended Resources:**

- *Sacred Marriage, What if Marriage is for Your Holiness Not Your Happiness* by
- *Love & Respect* by Emerson Eggerichs
- *What Did You Expect, Redeeming the Realities of Marriage* by Paul David Tripp
- *ESV Illustrated Family Bible*
- *The Jesus Story Book Bible, Every Story Whispers His Name* by Sally Lloyd-Jones
- *Getting to the Heart of Parenting* by Paul David Tripp

<sup>1</sup>[http://fm.thevillagechurch.net/resource\\_files/audio/](http://fm.thevillagechurch.net/resource_files/audio/)

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