

SESSION 1



**LOVING GOD'S WOMAN BY
PARTNERING WITH HER**

1. 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 duty?

- God has called us to love His woman.

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 desire?

- Yes, you should desire God's woman! It is never merely a duty to be her husband.
- But is desire the key? The answer is no.
- While desire for your wife is a good thing, is love the same as “wanting” her? Couldn't you want 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 acting in another's best interests.

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 key to loving someone well is wanting the best 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 sacrifice.

2. Who defines the best interests of God’s woman?

- Well, she is God’s woman; He designed and created her.

Genesis 2:22:

“And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”

- Therefore God 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

2. You best love and protect God’s woman when you partner with her.

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

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

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 dangers 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 selfish; “*he seeks his own desire...*”
 - If being isolated produces selfishness, then we should be careful not to go at life alone.
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 wisdom; “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 isolation breeds selfishness and foolishness.

B. God provides a solution 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 partner. God makes woman 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 rejecting God’s design and despising His gift.

3. God’s provision of a partner has three faces:

A. As your partner, she is your companion.

- As your companion, this means you do life together.
 - 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 complement.

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

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 co-heir.

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 daughter and made her His heir. She is your King’s princess.
- Every father/king wants his daughter/princess treated with dignity and honor.

4. Your part of the partnership is to provide the loving leadership God has assigned to you.

A. As her partner, you are her complement. You are her loving leader who serves her.

- God has given men a masculine mandate; man is called to love and protect the woman in his life. This is called male headship.
- Male headship should reflect godly leadership, 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 other-focused.
- For example, husbands are never commanded to rule their wives, but to love them (Ephesians 5:25).
- Godly leadership is more a responsibility than a right; godly leadership is the authority to serve.

“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 bless and esteem 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 provided and cared for. (Session 2)
- Your wife is protected and made secure. (Session 3)
- Your wife is pointed to Christ in love and compassion. (Session 4)
- Your wife is healed of wounds and given hope. (Session 5)

C. When you realize that you have been blessed with a partner, 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

Your Table 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.