



SMALL GROUPS

Life alone isn't living. We SHARE community.

Beautiful Design

Week 4 – Man's Hurdles

2/17/19

To best facilitate open and honest discussion, we suggest splitting into gender specific groups for your discussion time this week.

When we look at the world around us, we don't quite see as clear a picture of God's beautiful design as we do in Genesis 1–2. We see a world that is utterly fractured by sin. This week, we've talked about how these fractures have worked their way from a man's heart out into all the domains of his life. This usually happens in one of two ways, selfish aggression or selfish passivity. What God entrusted to men "to work and to keep" is now twisted, and man is perpetually unable to be a faithful steward without drifting toward the two ditches of passivity or aggression. * That's where the gospel comes in!

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden without shame or fear. What do you think life would be like without shame or fear?

How are your non-Christian neighbors/coworkers' outlook on masculinity different than yours? What do you think they would say is the greatest issue facing men in our culture? How would you respond?*

How does sin twist man's desire and ability to lead, love, serve, and protect as a husband?*

Passivity can take many forms. It can be doing nothing, as we saw with Adam's passivity in the Garden. However, passivity can also be **actively choosing easy over right**. It can be giving your heart over to compromise and desire, rather than choosing self-control. Here are several examples:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging in fantasy | <input type="checkbox"/> Gluttony | <input type="checkbox"/> Apathy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Lust | <input type="checkbox"/> Busyness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self indulgence | <input type="checkbox"/> Excuse-making | <input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to worship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blaming | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination | God |

We also talked about Selfish Aggression. Here are some examples:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> Slandering or harming another person's reputation so you can get ahead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thoughtless criticism | <input type="checkbox"/> Retaliation when we don't get our way |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withholding affection / attention when someone fails you | <input type="checkbox"/> Inflicting pain on others / watching them suffer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Using money, power, etc. to control | <input type="checkbox"/> Abandoning those you have responsibility for (wife, kids, employees, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mocking or belittling so you look better | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sarcasm | |

FOR MEN

Consider the list on the previous page. Which do you struggle with the most? Share examples of your own selfish passivity. What ways do you withdraw from the active pursuit of leading, loving, serving, and protecting?*

Think back to adverse times in your life. Consider even minor disagreements with your wife, family members, or even coworkers. How many of these were caused by your passivity?

Share examples of your own selfish aggression. What are ways that you abuse the duties of leading, loving, serving, and protecting?*

What do you need to start or stop doing to be more godly at work or home?

FOR WOMEN

How has your life been impacted by the sinful passivity of men?*

How has your life been impacted by the sinful aggression of men?*

Do you have someone you are bitter or resentful towards, that you need to forgive? What steps will you take towards finding healing?*

How can you encourage men to be godly?*

Is there anything you need to stop doing (or start doing) to keep from being used by Satan to discourage godly manhood?

Finish your group experience in prayer.

There are obvious cases of men's selfish aggression, such as bullying and abuse. If you are an offender in an abusive situation, God sees your actions and will always bring hidden sins into the open. Repent now. Seek forgiveness and help.

If you are a victim in an abusive situation, it is critical that you immediately notify local authorities and seek the counsel of your group leader or pastor.

Want to dive deeper? Here's some suggestions for personal study this week:

- God wanted to do a great work through a man named Abram. God called him to leave his home country and walk in a journey of obedience. Along the journey, Abram veered into the ditch of passivity. Study this passage, and look for the short-term and long term effects of his passivity in Genesis 12:10-20.
- King David's passivity caused everything to crumble around him, and also resulted in some selfish aggression. Read 2 Samuel 11-16 this week. How did David's passivity and aggression play itself out, not only in his life, but in the life of his family and those he was called to lead, love, serve, and protect?

**Taken from, "a beautiful design," by Matt Chandler*