

a beautiful design

WEEK 10

TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL

This study guide should be used the week following the sermon it supplements. If you are using the study guide in your Home Group, be sure to work through the questions on your own before you meet. If your Home Group doesn't meet one week, walk through the guide on your own so that you can stay in sync with the series. For further study, explore the Recommended Resources on our website.

RECAP: God created women to be active participants and leaders by making disciples and serving as helpmates in creation. Sin places hurdles in the way of women, as they seek to run toward these goals. The gospel calls us to fight sin and to lay aside those things that weigh us down, as we seek to be faithful to live out God's created purpose. Men and women must look to Jesus, the Founder and Perfecter of our faith. When we are united to Christ by faith, His perfection is given to us as a gift. Our sinfulness is exchanged for His righteousness. Although woman repeatedly struggles with sin, the cleansing power of the gospel erases all past, present and future failures. Woman and her purposes are redeemed through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

MAIN TEXT: Ephesians 5:15-21

SUMMARY: Men and women have been created in the image of God. By their very nature, they share a fundamental identity as equal participants in imaging God, equal responsibility to spread the glory of God and equal recipients of grace. Men and women have been created in distinct ways and entrusted with complementary purposes that come together in a beautiful way for the going forth of the gospel. The church is the place where men, women, singles and married couples come together for the gospel. It is the believer's union with Christ that binds us together and it is this union that defines our life. It is in this union that we come together for the gospel.

GETTING STARTED

In light of the entire A Beautiful Design series, what has been discussed that still stands out to you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Where have you seen gender-diverse groups of people working together throughout history? What are worldviews outside of the Christian faith that influence the way men and women partner together?
2. What are common barriers to men and women working together in the home? In the workplace? In the church? What hurdles stand in your Home Group's path to living and working together for the gospel?
3. All Christians are united in Christ by faith. How should this truth impact how men and women relate to one another within the community of faith?
4. Read John 13:34-35 and 1 Timothy 5:1-2. What is distinct about the love Christians have for one another? How effective is your group at treating each other as family? How can you improve?
5. What are a few ways that your group can partner together to declare and demonstrate the gospel?
6. In your own words, explain the purposes, hurdles and redemption of men and women.
7. What might men and women working together well at The Village Church look like?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

TIME: Create time to intentionally gather your family for an hour of family discipleship where you explore 1 Timothy 5:1-2 together. How are relationships between family members different than relationships shared between non-family members? How should Christian family relationships differ from those of unbelieving families? How can your family better love each other? How can your family better love other believers as if they were family?

MOMENTS: Capture moments this week to point out how your family can work together to accomplish something. Identify opportunities where cooperation benefits each person. Celebrate times when brothers and sisters treat each other in others-focused ways or with mutual respect and affection. Be ready to share Philippians 2:4: “Each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.”

MILESTONES: Write a family mission statement and use it to unite your family around the unified purpose of loving each other preferentially (Eph. 5:21). Along with the mission statement, consider doing a family project that everyone can contribute to and in the end is a mix of everyone’s input and effort, something like a collage or a quilt. Use it as a reminder of how your family can and will work together and what your family is all about.

NEXT STEPS

1. If you are a men’s or women’s Home Group, schedule a time where your group can hang out or serve with a group of the opposite gender. Ideas: Make dinner and eat together, go out and play a game of ultimate Frisbee together, or see a movie.
2. Consider reading one of our additional resources, like *What’s the Difference?* by John Piper, as your group continues to consider issues related to gender.
3. If you want to further explore pursuing redemption from sin with other men or women of God, consider getting involved in Recovery Groups or Steps.