

a beautiful design

WEEK 4

MAN'S HURDLES

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 designs a specific role for man to fulfill and, by living out that role, to increase human flourishing. One of the unique ways that men fulfill their responsibility to the spiritual authority entrusted to them is through male headship. This headship, demonstrated specifically in the role of church elder and husband, is the unique leadership of men in stewarding God's created order for human flourishing. As men lead, love, serve and protect those under their care, they fulfill God's commands to work and keep what the Lord has given.

MAIN TEXT: Genesis 3 (with special attention to Genesis 3:1-13, 17-19)

SUMMARY: When we look at the world around us, it doesn't seem to match up with the biblical ideal that we find in Genesis 1-2. We see a world broken by sin. This week we considered how sin has affected the heart of men. What God entrusted to men, "to work it and to keep it," is twisted by man's inability to be a faithful steward without drifting toward the abuse of authority in selfish aggression or the rejection of authority in selfish passivity. Similar to how Adam's silence in the Garden during Eve's conversation with the serpent "let sin enter," men who embrace passivity and reject what God has called them to do will let sin enter their lives.

GETTING STARTED

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Sin affects everything. How has sin affected the things you enjoy? How has it affected your family and your work?
2. How does sin twist man's desire and ability to lead, love, serve and protect in the role of elder? In the role of husband?
3. How is your non-Christian neighbor/co-worker's 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?
4. Read Genesis 3:1-13. What was Adam's involvement in the conversation with the serpent? Why does the rest of the Bible view Adam as responsible for the Fall (Rom. 5:19)? Share examples of "liability" or "accountability" in our culture and how they relate to these Scriptures.
5. Read Genesis 12:10-20. How did passivity affect Abram's actions? Why did Abram choose selfish ambition in this situation? What might have changed had he chosen to lead, love, serve and protect what God had entrusted to his care?
6. In Genesis, Cain killed his brother out of selfish aggression. Read Genesis 4:7. When offended or challenged, how do men and women demonstrate animosity in different ways?
7. Blaise Pascal said, "All men seek happiness. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves." What is the connection

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

TIME: Discuss with your family David's last words to his son, Solomon, in 1 Kings 2:1-3. What do we learn about David's priorities for Solomon? Howard Hendricks said, "Last words are lasting words." If you had one last chance to say something to each of your family members, what would you say?

MOMENTS: Leverage opportunities in the course of your day to talk to your kids about hard work and gentleness. Though these are characteristics both men and women should pursue, why might they be important for men in particular to consider and value? Be ready to share with your kids Colossians 3:23 and Proverbs 15:1. Also, look to redeem discipline opportunities this week by talking about how to struggle well against selfish aggression (Gen. 4:7).

MILESTONES: Give your kids a big project that will require lots of diligence and patience, making something that they'll see or take with them as a reminder against passivity or aggression. Afterward, reflect on how the project went. Talk about how boys and girls may respond differently to situations that challenge their endurance or their patience.

between man's pursuit of happiness and his tendency toward passivity and aggression?

In the weeks dealing with men and women particularly, it may be helpful to break up into gender-specific groups. On the other hand, groups of single men or women may consider pairing up with a group of the opposite gender. While this isn't necessary for fruitful discussion, each group's leaders should consider what method of discussion would be best for their group.

FOR MEN

1. Share examples of your own selfish passivity. What are ways that you withdraw from the active pursuit of leading, loving, serving and protecting?
2. Share examples of your own selfish aggression. What are ways that you abuse the duties of leading, loving, serving and protecting?
3. Are there any men or women to whom you need to repent or offer forgiveness when it comes to passivity and aggression?
4. Do you know a man who models hard work and gentleness well? What does he do? Where do you see Jesus model hard work and gentleness in the Scriptures?
5. What do you need to start or stop doing to be more godly at work or home?

FOR WOMEN

1. How has your life been impacted by the sinful passivity of men?
2. How has your life been impacted by the sinful aggression of men?
3. Are you holding any bitterness toward men in these areas? Is there any repentance or reconciliation that needs to take place in your life with a certain man?
4. How have you seen hard work, compassion and gentleness modeled well by men? Where do you see Jesus model hard work and gentleness in the Scriptures?
5. How can you encourage men to be godly?

NEXT STEPS

- **For men:** Make time to meet with another man in your group to discuss the steps you are going to take to battle selfish passivity or aggression.

- **For women:** Make time to meet with another woman in your group to discuss how you can encourage the men in your life to battle selfish passivity and aggression. Also, discuss areas in which you may need healing as a result of the aggression or passivity of men.
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 to prepare your heart for the next sermon.
- Commit to memorizing one of the following verses this week:

*If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it. **Genesis 4:7***

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... **Romans 5:12***