

a beautiful design

WEEK 9

WOMAN'S REDEMPTION

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: 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. Sin has crept into every crevice of creation and is most clearly seen in the rebellion and confusion present in humanity. God creates woman with a specific role and purpose, but when sin enters the world, everything becomes fractured. Now, because of the Fall, woman wrestles with particular sins and struggles. The intimacy she shared with God and man has now been marred by sin. Created with a unique strength to serve as helper alongside man, the woman's task has been made difficult by sin. Instead of looking to God's beautiful design to inform her of her identity, woman tends to pursue sinful control in the form of comparison and perfectionism.

MAIN TEXT: Hebrews 12:1-2

SUMMARY: 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.

GETTING STARTED

Can you think of any famous stories involving a damsel in distress?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. If you could change one thing that is broken in the world, what would you change?
2. Instead of turning to Christ, where do we often look for redemption? Is it different for men and women?
3. Read Genesis 29:30-30:2. What false promises are found in comparison and perfectionism?
4. Read Matthew 23:1-12. How does the Pharisees' desire to be admired relate to the hurdles we discussed last week?
5. Sin has broken the world around us. This means that sometimes even good things that are not necessarily sinful hold us back from pursuing joy in Christ. What are some of the good things, desires or temptations that weigh you down as you seek Christ?
6. Read Hebrews 10:14. What is the relationship between our perfection in Christ and our pursuit of holiness?
7. How is comparing ourselves to Jesus different than comparing ourselves to others? Is there a sense in which comparison is for our good?

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.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

TIME: Intentionally gather your family for a designated time of conversation about the gospel. Take turns explaining the gospel to each other using your own original words, not just repeating what you've heard before. Use your own life story to communicate why we need a Savior, who that Savior is, and what changes about us because of that salvation. Practice sharing the gospel together and read 1 Corinthians 15:1-28.

MOMENTS: Seek opportunities this week to point out to your children situations where something is purchased. By exchanging currency, which comes from labor and sacrifice of time, we receive goods and services. Help your kids understand the exchange that takes place in the gospel—Christ's life for ours. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18).

MILESTONES: If you haven't already, this would be a great week to discuss baptism with your children—what it is and why we do it as Christ followers. Salvation and baptism are huge milestones in a person's life, but we don't make it happen. Pray that you would be able to mark that milestone soon in your children's lives. If your kids are already baptized, consider how you might celebrate and remind them of it, similar to the way we remember birth with a birthday.

FOR MEN

1. Share one example of how you have seen redemption impact the heart of a woman in your life. If you're married, where have you seen your wife grow in grace?
2. How have you been or seen men be a hindrance to women who are trying to overcome sin in their lives?
3. How can you communicate the freedom of the gospel to the women in your life?
4. How does the redemption of woman affect the redemption of man? Do you see ways in which your growth is affected as a result of the growth of the women around you?
5. How should you respond to a woman who wants you to fill a need that only God can meet?

FOR WOMEN

1. Where have you seen gospel growth in your life? Give an example of how the Lord has moved you away from comparison and perfectionism and toward freedom and dependence on Him.
2. What is one area of your life where you struggle to apply the gospel to your comparisons or pursuit of perfection?
3. How has perfectionism kept you from taking risks for the sake of the gospel?
4. How does your new life in Christ impact the way you interact with men? Should the actions of a redeemed woman toward men be different than that of a worldly woman? In what ways?
5. What kinds of sin patterns emerge when a woman asks a man to fill a need that only God can meet?

NEXT STEPS

1. Ask a close friend to help you identify one "weight" that distracts you from looking to Christ for your identity. Consider ways that you can lay aside these distractions.
2. Set aside time to pray specifically for a woman in your life and then contact her in order to encourage and exhort her toward continual growth.
3. Identify a person to whom you can begin to minister. Consider the risks and make plans to connect with them in some way for the express purpose of sharing the gospel.