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*“The Father’s Highest Calling”*

GENESIS 1:27-28

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## AT A GLANCE

In this message, Pastor Brian calls men to rise to their God-given role as spiritual leaders in the home. Drawing from the creation account in Genesis, the sermon explores God’s design for family worship, the devastating consequences of Adam’s failure to guard the Garden, and the redemptive call for fathers today to lead, teach, and protect their families in faith. This is more than a challenge—it’s a call to faithfulness, humility, and legacy.

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## RECAP: WORSHIP BELONGS IN THE HOME

Turn to **GENESIS 1:27-28** this morning. Let’s begin with a brief recap of last week. From cover to cover, the bible tells us that God and Christ are worthy of our worship, forever, and continually each day. This necessarily means that worship belongs in our homes and among our families. It also explicitly tells us that men have been given this sacred responsibility. I encouraged heads of households to take one of these stones home with you and display it prominently as a testimony that if you will not worship in your homes daily, the stones will cry out.

## WE ARE RECOVERING SOMETHING LOST

As I said last week, you cannot expect someone to do what they’ve not been taught. However, this is not to say that we’re inventing something new here. The truth is family worship has been robbed from us. Family worship was a practice of the first church, the reformation church, and only relatively recently has it been stripped from the home.

Men, we have been marginalized by society & sidelined by our sin. Our families have paid the price. It’s time to take back our place as shepherds of our homes in the name of Christ and for the glory of our God!

## GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY

**So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” GENESIS 1:27-28**

Adam and Eve were created equal in many ways: equal in God’s image, equally bearing His likeness and equally representing Him on earth. They were equal in their personhood and in their importance. This means that they have equal value to God and deserve equal honor and respect. However, this does not imply equal roles and authority.

Honest exegesis of the bible may not give us a politically correct answer, but it does reveal God's design for the home. In the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 we see some very basic commands given to Adam and Eve – be fruitful and multiply...subdue the earth.

### MADE IN HIS IMAGE TO MULTIPLY HIS GLORY

Pastor Ben Lovelady notes in his devotional through Genesis that “ancient kings had the practice of erecting cast images of themselves in foreign lands which they had conquered. This measure was taken to ensure the king's presence and rule in regions beyond his reach. The statue or ‘image’ would demonstrate his dominance in foreign realms.”

God made us in His image for the same reason. Significantly, God also gave man the ability to procreate – to multiply and fill the earth; that the image of God would be multiplied! That the domain of God would be expanded across the face of the earth.

That, in the words of *Isaiah 11:9*, “...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” The call to multiply was about expanding the King's dominion over the earth for His glory.

### ADAM'S ASSIGNMENT: GUARD THE GARDEN

In Genesis 2:15-17, Adam was given the responsibility to keep the Garden of Eden, the hub of God's glory, and gradually extend that Garden out, and along with it, God's glory. He was given one command to teach his family and their offspring and every generation – “do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” If you do, God warned, “you will die.” That's a pretty serious consequence and a pretty simple principle.

### WHAT WENT WRONG?

What went wrong? As we move from Genesis 2 to Genesis 3 we see what went wrong. Enter Satan, that fallen angel who was jealous of God's glory in Heaven and sought to hinder its expansion in the earth. Satan approached Eve with a question to sow doubt in her mind – “Did God really say?”

This interaction with Satan caused her to question what her husband, Adam, taught her. “Perhaps the serpent is right...maybe this fruit is good for me.” Once she doubted God's Word, she stepped into sin. “*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate...*” Having rejected God's Word, she then rejected the God's order, usurping Adam's leadership: “*...and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*” *Genesis 3:6*

This story should drive a dagger into each of our hearts. Everything about it is wrong. Eve was wrong. Adam was wrong. Adam was with Eve while Satan was seducing and tempting her, and he didn't do anything to stop it. He failed to protect her. Adam was physically present, yet spiritually absent.

### ADAM FAILED TO GUARD THE GARDEN

We learn something about what God expected of Adam when we read of the discipline of the Lord after the fall. Something really interesting happened when God removed the couple from the Garden: God placed Cherubim with a flaming sword to “guard” the way into the Garden to prevent Adam from returning to the tree of life.

What's noteworthy is that the Hebrew word for “guard” in 3:24, “shamar,” is the very same word translated “keep” in 2:15. Thus, the angel was to guard (shamar) the Garden, keeping Adam out of it, because Adam failed to keep (shamar) the Garden while he was in it. Tragedy.

The man entrusted with guarding the glory of God in the Garden of Eden failed; and all humanity paid the price for it. Returning to Pastor Ben's devotional guide through Genesis, "Further, we get a glimpse of how the serpent should've been handled when we see the discipline leveled against it from the Lord (see Genesis 3:15). Adam should have, then and there, crushed the serpent's head the moment it spoke false things of God."

Adam was placed in the Garden to "guard" it for the glory of God – to see that he and his family lived for the glory of God and in the words of Paul to "...destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ..." 1 Corinthians 10:5

## THIS IS STILL OUR CALLING, MEN

Men, this is still our calling in the world - to not allow that great enemy of God's people, the devil, to whisper false things into your wife's ear, or your children's ears, or your grandchildren's ears. But that you would crush it the moment it is uttered. That you would do such a fine job guarding your garden that you do not have to crush it yourself, but that you would crush it by proxy through the transference of the faith to your family. This is the father's highest calling.

## WIVES SUPPORT, BUT HUSBANDS LEAD

Wives there are times when you will need to do this for your husband. You cannot begin to imagine how many times, usually on a Monday, that Kellye has had to crush Satan's head as he whispers doubts into my ears.

But, I'm wrong if I settle for letting her take the lead in this spiritual battle, like Adam did. I'm wrong if I allow her to bear the burden of leadership in this way. It's one thing for her to engage in the battle with me, and it's another for her to be fighting alone or, worse, dragging my dead weight. It's my job to get out front and initiate, not do everything by myself.

## WHERE FAITH IS TRANSFERRED

This is great in theory; I hope it fires you up and causes that place deep inside you called your warrior spirit to swell with zeal and conviction, but how does this happen for real? How do you guard your homes from the enemy? Where does the faith get transferred? For decades, the church has said, "Right here! Bring your family to us and we'll do it for you."

Don't let it do that to your family! It's not for the church to guard the garden of your family. It's to inspire and equip you to do that! Remember, that is what I hope to achieve with this series. I'm not trying to shame you. Stop feeling sorry for yourself and staring at your shoes. Look up to Christ and rise up to this high calling!

## RISE TO THE HIGH CALLING

God's design for the family is that husbands would guard the glory of God in their home with their wife's support, encouragement, and respect. That together you would create more image-bearers who seek after the glory of God and represent and advance his dominion in the world. Tell me, don't you really want to do that?

Fathers, listen: the biblical precept is that your children's hope in God is transferred from you. This is why the author of Psalm 78 says God gave His Word so that fathers would teach their children...that we would not hide them but "...tell to the coming generation...that the next generation might know them...so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." Psalm 78:4,7

No pressure. Actually, I hope that sits on your like a ton of bricks. Men, we were made to work under pressure.

## WHAT DO WE TEACH THEM?

So, what is it we should tell the coming generation? What I told you last week: *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” Deuteronomy 6:4-7*

Notice that it must first begin in the father’s heart – we must treasure Christ. We must “love the Lord [our] God with all [our] heart.” Simply knowing God’s Word is not sufficient. We must be transformed in our heart by love for God and love for His Word.

## CASUAL CONVERSATIONS AREN’T ENOUGH

Then we are to teach our own families how to follow Jesus and live for His glory. Many men want to justify themselves by saying that when they ride in the car they occasionally answer a child’s question about the bible or about God. Or they ask their child “How was church?” Oh, how we settle for peanuts when it comes to our family’s faith and our God’s glory!

While we certainly should take every opportunity to teach our children the Word of God in informal, casual ways “while we walk,” Moses also calls fathers to teach their kids “when they sit down.” The sitting position evokes images of formal instruction. It’s when a father opens his bible, reads it, and gives a proper sense of the meaning.

You do not have to be a bible scholar, but you should strive to grow in your understanding of your faith, right? Is there anything more important to you than your faith? Does your commitment to understanding God’s Word match that answer?

There was a time when the church didn’t have ready access to the scriptures. You and I have more resources at our fingertips than Martin Luther had at the University of Whittenburg; and we’ve got a table full of study bibles and devotional books that you can buy right now and start doing this tomorrow. It’s no longer a question of access to God’s Word; it’s 100% a question of our treasuring it and committing to it.

## TWO APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

### 1. Rise Up and Take Responsibility

First, men, rise up and take responsibility for yourself and your family. Paul said in *1 Corinthians 16:13*, *“Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.”* Do you truly love your family? If so, do something about your faith and stop making excuses. Commit to something real. Be watchful – guard your homes!

### 2. Remember the Gospel

Second, remember the Gospel. You’re not perfect, so don’t pretend to be. When you come across a passage of scripture that conflicts with your life or your priorities or your behaviors, confess that. If you’ve neglected to teach your kids the faith, confess that.

Your kids will see how you deal with that and it will speak louder than just about anything else you say. Your kids are under no delusion that you’re perfect. Your attempt to be seen that way is inflicting damage upon them. What they need is not a pretentiously perfect dad, but a really repentant one.

William Farley in his book *Gospel-Powered Parenting* says, “See our attempts to live the gospel expose our failings, which in turn amplifies our humility, which in turn makes us attractive to our children.”

I wish I could say that I’ve lead worship every day since Kellye asked me to consider it seven years ago, but I haven’t. And it’s not ok, but God is gracious. He’s quick to forgive our failures. I’m sure some of you folks went home Sunday fired up and led worship Sunday night, and maybe Monday. Then something happened mid-week and that’s where it stalled. Don’t feel sorry for yourself...pick yourself up and get back at it. Act like men.

#### CLOSING CHALLENGE: ACT LIKE MEN

God has not called us to be perfect, but He has called us to be faithful. To Him; to our wives; to our children. And faithfulness looks like getting back up when we fall, confessing when we fail, and leading our homes with humility and courage. Family worship isn’t just a good idea—it’s God’s design.

It’s how His glory is guarded in your home and multiplied from one generation to another. So don’t wait for the perfect moment or the perfect knowledge—start today. Open your Bible. Speak the truth. Pray with your family. Sing His praise. Guard the garden God has given you. Let’s rise to this calling—for the good of our families, and for the glory of our King.

Don’t let those stones cry out for you in your home!