

Satan's War on Gender

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Satan's war on gender. Satan's war on gender. This is incredibly difficult. We have this colossal responsibility to maintain the God-ordained gender distinctions as laid out in Genesis. That's our responsibility. We have that responsibility, that's our responsibility, yet as we hold that colossal responsibility in front of us, we also have to simultaneously as we're holding this giant responsibility to maintain the unique and God-ordained gender distinctions, we also must remember that each and every human being who is struggling with gender identity are still image bearers of a holy God and, Pastor Bill, that's not easy. That's not an easy thing at all. That means that because they are still image bearers of a holy God, they are to be treated with love and dignity and respect as human beings; that because I am not struggling with gender identity, it does not mean that I am made in the image any more than they are; that each and every one of us as human beings are equally made in the image of God.

Now, do not, do not, do not confuse that with equally bearing his glory. They're not the same. When you are living out the radical transforming power of the Gospel and are becoming a new creature in Christ, you reflect God's glory more but it doesn't mean that you're made in the image of God more. I'm drawing a very particular distinction here. You have to pay attention right now. I'm drawing a distinction between all human beings are made in the image of God without regard to their race or their ethnicity or their gender. They're all made, we would agree with that, right? That's why we have whites and blacks all worshiping the Lord together and every skin color, because we all recognize we're all made in the image of God. Yet, when we are living out our God-ordained gender as new creatures in Christ, we will reflect God's glory more than a person who isn't doing that. It doesn't mean that we should be praised or anything like that but we are distinguishing between living it out and having it as a possession.

So this idea of Satan's war on gender, we are a culture where embracing and teaching biblical manhood and womanhood is a liability and is seen as intolerant and thus socially unacceptable. That's what we presently are. A preacher was preaching on gender distinctions a few months ago, a member of Berean was there, and they said the entire sermon it was one apology after another apology; the man had to apologize for preaching about gender distinctions. It got so bad that the visitor said that afterwards a female came up to him and apologized on behalf of the preacher and said, "He's not normally like

this." That's because we almost feel bad that we were created a male and we need to just kind of, you know, this is what I have to be and almost have this caveat apology.

The United Methodist Church is in a fight as a denomination over the LGBTQI and I'm thrilled to report to you tonight that they said at least for now they're going to hold to their current stand. That's what they reported today, that they're not going to cave. And here's the interesting fact in that, now this is the United Methodist denomination, it is a large denomination and it is one of the only liberal Protestant denominations that's still trying to hold onto a biblical standard. Their present language in their church discipline book says that homosexuality is not compatible with Christianity. That's what it says and they've decided that they're going to take that matter and put it into a special committee and the only reason they didn't change, the vote was very close this year, was not because of the American bishops, it was the African brothers in Christ who came across the ocean who kept the church straight. The African brothers in Christ, the bishops from Africa kept the church straight. If it was just a US denomination, they would have already thrown in the towel.

This is a picture of the Reverend Will Green as he lies on the floor bound, you see he's bound right there, and he's suggesting there that the biblical sexuality policies are the equivalent of the binding of African Americans in the past and this is his way of making a statement. This is his protest. This is the world you and I are called to minister in. This is our world. We are becoming a culture where leaving your God-ordained gender and becoming transgender is celebrated. It's celebrated. It's celebrated. This is the world that your child is being educated. This is the public school that your son and daughter is going to. This is the world in which any, any, any suggestions that this is a boy's toy, this is a girl's toy, those things are being eliminated in the school systems. You know, for example, Target most recently decided that they would not label toys anymore by gender; that toys would no longer, no more boy's aisle and girl's aisle, we're eliminating gender. That's the world that we're living in. That's our world and somebody has to say that's not biblical. This is the new norm. This is what you can expect and I've got to tell you, anybody that is my age did not see this coming, or yours, brother. I did not think we were going to get there that fast. If we were to map this out, it's like this, men, it's like this: we were on a trajectory like that and all of a sudden it just went like that. It's nearly a vertical movement. It's nearly a vertical movement and it's our world.

I want to show you this video from Prager University. It's only four minutes long and I want you to see how even from a pragmatic perspective, not a biblical perspective, a pragmatic perspective men and women, professors, sociologists, are identifying the problems. Let's watch the video.

Marriage might have been fine for your parents or grandparents but of what value is it today? Isn't it as more and more young people seem to be saying, "just a piece of paper?" Well, it turns out that piece of paper might be the most valuable thing you will ever own.

Take the case of Doug Taulbee. At age 18, Taulbee worked a minimum wage job operating a press at a factory in Indiana and lived in his parents' basement. "I didn't have a care in the world," Taulbee says. "I didn't even have any bills."

But after marrying at 19 and having kids, Taulbee's perspective changed: "I had to step up and think about others and start taking care of them." Taulbee quit his factory job and joined the Army, where he made significantly more money and received housing and health care paid for by the military.

Whenever he saw a chance at promotion, he pursued it. It meant more money and benefits for himself and his family. Recently, in a bid to further boost his family's income, he left the Army to work as a finance manager at a car dealership. He's now pulling in six figures.

Men who see no need to marry, or who are reluctant to marry until they make more money, could benefit from Taulbee's discovery: Marriage has a transformative effect on the behavior, emotional health, and financial well-being of adults, especially men.

Men who get married work harder and more strategically, and earn more money than their single peers from similar backgrounds. Marriage also transforms men's social world; they spend less time with friends and more time with family. They go to bars less and to church more. In the words of Nobel Prize-winning economist George Akerlof, men "settle down when they get married; if they fail to get married they fail to settle down."

My own research bears out Akerlof's view. Married men work about 400 hours more per year than single men with equivalent backgrounds. A Harvard study also found that married men were much less likely than their single peers to quit their current job unless they had another one lined up.

All this translates into a substantial marriage premium. On average, married men earn almost 20% more than their single peers. That's even after controlling for differences in education, race, ethnicity, and other background factors. You can read more about this in my study "For Richer, For Poorer: How Family Structures Economic Success in America."

Why is there such a substantial marriage premium? There are at least four important reasons.

One: After marrying, men assume a new identity. Marriage is one of the last "rite[s] of passage into manhood" remaining in our society, argues

sociologist Steven Nock. He found that marriage engenders an ethic of responsibility among men, as well as a newfound sense of meaning and status in the world.

Two: Married men are motivated to maximize their income. This means having a different attitude toward their job. They work more hours, and make better work choices. Studies find that men increase their work hours after marrying and reduce their hours after divorcing. Sociologist Elizabeth Gorman concludes that married men are more likely to value higher-paying jobs than their single peers.

Three: There is evidence that employers prefer and promote men who are married. Married men are often seen as more responsible and dedicated workers and are rewarded with more opportunities to advance.

Fourth and finally, married men benefit from the advice and encouragement of their wives, who have an obvious interest in their success. There is no better motivator than your spouse.

The tragedy is that despite all the good news we keep learning about the benefits of marriage, the institution is in retreat. In 1960, 72% of all adults ages 18 and older were married. Today, it's 49%. In 1960, the average age at which men married was 23. Today it's 29. The consequences of this are negative across the income spectrum, but they are especially so for those in the lower and middle classes.

Marriage is a clear path to a better life. It always has been. And now we have plenty of data to confirm it. But if still you don't believe me, just ask Doug Taulbee and millions like him.

I'm Brad Wilcox, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Virginia, for Prager University.

Okay, Prager University. Check that out on your own time. It's got tons of good videos, educational videos. Awesome video.

The church is struggling with figuring out what it's going to do with singles. Do we have huge singles ministries? Do we promote a culture of singleness? Do we hire singles pastors? Do we integrate them into the church? What do we do with them? It's becoming larger as an entity. Is this God's plan? Is this where we need to be?

Take your Bibles and turn to Genesis 1. You say, "Why am I here? I'm already a male or I'm already married or I already have my children, any of those things." A message like this has got to be repeated. A message like this has got to be mentored. A message like this has got to be communicated to your future son-in-law, all you men that have daughters. It's got to be communicated to you that have sons. This is why I'm thrilled to

see all these young men here. I hope they stay off their electronic devices and really engage. I hope you'll discipline yourself and put the stupid thing away and connect.

Genesis 1:27 is very clear. There is no middle ground. There is nothing in between. Anything in between is rebellion against God. There is no reason for any church to be struggling with male and female. It's not optional. It's not something that's up for debate. In the beginning God created us in our image and he created them male and female. To decide that you are a male in a female's body or a female in a male's body is to say God got it wrong. And once you get God getting it wrong, where do you go from there? Where do you go from God getting it wrong? What God is that to sing to? What God is that to pray to? What God is that to believe in? If God got it wrong on your gender, how can you count on him to get it right on anything else?

It's huge. It's so fundamental that it's absurd that we're even having this discussion and yet do you understand that churches 100 years ago in America that would have been rock solid on this issue have completely thrown in the towel. The Episcopalian church is Exhibit 1 and every single church that's thrown the towel in on this issue is declining. These are declining churches. Declining. Shrinking. They're no longer existing. That's why it's a fundamental issue. That's why we're not going to just ignore it. For 2,000 years, the true Christian church, the way of Acts, has believed and accepted and taught the most fundamental truths of truths. 1. God made you, and 2. God chose your gender and it's your job and my job with my granddaughter and your son and your daughter and your granddaughter is to cause them, to encourage them, to motivate them, to embrace their gender. To embrace it. To embrace it with all their hearts. God made you a little girl. God made you a boy. You are a future man. You will be somebody's wife. That is the kind of language we must use. That kind of language is mentoring language; that kind of language is discipling language; that is teaching language and it's never too early to start teaching. Birth. As soon as you have any sense that there is cognitive thinking going on, you start this.

Suggesting that a boy should embrace his manhood is now seen as oppressive and domineering. We have another video that if we could show you, it's...what is it called, Jonathan? War on boys. You need to write that down. It's on Prager University. War on boys. It's worth five minutes of your time. War on boys. It's an excellent video. It's an excellent excellent video. It talks about a boy who takes his Pop Tart, Tom, and he chews it into a gun, he takes his Pop Tart and he nibbles on it until it's the shape of a gun and, Jeff, they suspend him from school for doing it. Seven years old. Seven years old.

There is a war on gender in America. There is a war on gender so my thought is that sexual orientation, gender identity and behavior should all be guided by Genesis 1:28. Would you look at Genesis 1:28 in particular, please. My thought is that sexual orientation and gender identity and behavior, is this acceptable behavior, is this an acceptable gender identification, is this an acceptable sexual orientation, should all be guided by Genesis 1:28. Not Romans. I'm not in Romans, that way I don't have to deal with Paul being a chauvinist, instead I'm in Genesis, the most fundamental chapter. Chapter 1, "In the beginning God created," and Genesis 1:28 says, "and God said to them,

'Be fruitful and multiply.'" Now, that's it right there. That's the first commandment listed in your Bible.

So here's the issue: will this sexual orientation contribute to procreation? Yes. It's acceptable. No. It's not acceptable. I'm trying to show you how to think. I'm trying to show you how to think biblically because you're going to be challenged on this. How does this work? How does this challenging happen? It happens when your nephew comes out of the closet. It happens when your niece comes out of the closet. It happens when your son comes out of the closet. It happens when your daughter comes out of the closet. And now all of a sudden you've got this giant dilemma because you love your daughter, you love your son, you love your niece, you love your nephew, you love your sister. So do you know what happens? You begin to question what you believe to be true. That's what happens because you love them. They're your niece, they're your nephew. Should I go to their wedding? Should I embrace their lifestyle? Will we have them over for Thanksgiving? Do we go there for Christmas? And all those issues come up. You can't just shelf them. You're not going to move to the hills of West Virginia and hide from your family. You have to deal with these things. You have to deal with them.

So then how do I think? You think according to Genesis 1:28. Underline those words in your Bible. God gave the first human beings the commandment to be fruitful and multiply so will this sexual orientation allow me to be fruitful and multiply? The answer is yes, then it's a good sexual orientation. Will this gender identity, if I have this surgery, will I still be able to do this? No, I won't. Then you can't have that surgery. Could this behavior ever result in procreation? No. Two males, it can never result in procreation. Okay, then that means that that behavior is off limits. I'm trying to be careful here because we've got a bunch of seven year olds here and all that. But, men, you've got to go down the road with me so that you can talk intelligently to your ten year old about this. And don't wait until they're 17. They've already formed their worldview by the time they're 17. You missed it. It was formed and gone. Gone. It's over at that point.

So only one sexual orientation is God-glorifying because only one has the potential for bearing fruit and filling the church, the body of Christ and the globe. Embracing my biological and birth gender is God-glorifying because it is the gender that permits me to join in union of being fruitful and filling the earth. Do you understand what we're saying here?

Alright, number 3: only one behavior or activity within the confines of holy matrimony is God-glorifying because only it can lead to being fruitful and filling the earth. So if that behavior leads to the potential of having children, then do it. Do it often. Do it to the glory of God. Embrace it. We don't have to be afraid of it. We don't have to shame it. We don't have to act like it doesn't exist. Instead, we need to say, "This is pleasing to the Lord." You can pray about it. I'm not joking. I'm being legitimate. That wasn't meant to be funny. I'm saying, "Lord, this needs to get better in our house. In the same way that you helped me with this and this, I need your help in this area." Why? Because this behavior is God-glorifying. Why is this behavior God-glorifying? Because it has the potential of leading to procreation. We are married in holy matrimony and since we're

married in holy matrimony the marriage bed is not defiled. It's undefiled and so we may enjoy this and that kind of thinking, Genesis 1:28, helps me understand why transgender is not okay.

So except in the case of the grace gift of celibacy, males are not permitted to maintain a perpetual state of singleness. You can come and argue with me about it afterwards but you got a commandment from God to be fruitful and multiply. Okay? You got that commandment and the only exception to that is if you say that the singleness that I'm embracing is so I can serve the body of Christ better. That's it. It's not optional. It cannot be because I'm not ready, I need a few more years, I've got to sow some wild oats, I've got to get this or that. And that's where we're at. Did you see the data? In 1960, the average age of marriage in America was 22 years old. Today, it's 29. Now, what that means for us as America and us as the body of Christ – please listen to me – is we are giving up an entire decade of potential procreating time. An entire decade. Pastor Bill, we're just throwing it away. This decade is for singleness. That's what this decade is for. The decade of 20 to 30 is my singleness decade and from 30 to 40, I'll begin. By the time we're 40, we're too old and so we've had one child. And I'm happy to go on record and say if there's anything that I regret more than any other decision I've made in the last 25 years, Darren, it's that we only had one son. If I had to do it all over, dads, we would have had at a bare minimum a couple more. I'm just telling you that right now. If someone had been speaking into my life the way I'm speaking into your life and given me a little bit more clarity on this to have a brother, to have a sister, to expand the size of the family, oh, to God, I wish I had a chance to do it all over again. But I just want to let you know that when I was sitting here, I didn't hear this, or if it was being said, I wasn't paying attention and I wasn't on a phone at that time either, so I don't know what happened. Was that funny?

So males are not permitted to remain in a perpetual state of singleness and I need your help because we have all kinds of single males that won't come to a men's retreat, they won't come to a men's steak-out. They don't come to events in which they're really focused on being godly men. They would rather stay home or go do something else and it's really unfortunate and praise God for all you men that are here.

So recognize that I have received a command from God to be fruitful and multiply and that this must happen within the confines of holy matrimony, demands that I make sanctifying changes to my life until I'm married. Now, that's huge. Don't just run over that. I've got a commandment to get married. Why? Because I'm supposed to be fruitful and multiply. So then I need to make personal sanctifying changes. I have young men, Darren, that say to me, "I want to marry a godly woman," and they come to church for 45 minutes a week. Do you understand what I'm saying? Did you hear what I just said? They say, they text me, their hearts desire is to marry a godly wonderful woman and they give God or his church an hour a week. Now, the woman that they want to marry, the one that they want to marry, she is here Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesdays, the Tuesday Bible study. It's unbelievable. She practically lives here. And then they're wondering, "How come I don't meet them or why aren't I coming up on their radar?" Did

you say, "Duh"? Yeah. So that's why I said personal sanctifying changes. Personal sanctifying changes.

What about remarriage? It seems to me so when I say it seems to me, that means it's my thought, right? It seems to me that when the spouse that departed has remarried and thus committed adultery, that the spouse who has remained faithful and celibate is now free to remarry. Okay, what are you talking about? I'm talking about the 40+ year olds in our congregation that need to get linked up; that need to get united.

Can I just pause for a minute and let's go back to our 22 and our 29, 22 was the average age of marriage in America in 1960, 29 is now the current age. 22/29 Do you understand that there is a difference of seven years between 29 and 22 so what we've said as a church is, let's make it harder to stay pure for seven more years. That's what we've said. That's what we have said as a church because I've got to get my Masters Degree, we've got to get a house, we need a dog, the car has got to be paid off and then we can get married. Then we can get married instead of struggling through all those things together which is really defining in a marriage. It really is defining as a marriage. That? You're getting... Over here. And then for seven years we're going to fight to be pure. And then what happens is we fall and when we fall, we feel guilty coming to preaching because we have fallen so you know what happens? We stay out. We stay out. If you can't say amen, say ouch. And we have created this culture. We've done that.

Moreover, if the remarriage would result in God-glorifying activities, then remarriage is not only permissible but I'm going to suggest it's profitable for the kingdom of God. Now, some would disagree with me and I'm okay with that but I'm just going to suggest to you that when you have a godly woman who is raising two girls by herself and there is a young man, 40 year old in the congregation who could in fact be a surrogate father to those daughters but instead he won't make the sanctifying changes necessary to his life to become a candidate for marriage, that we're missing it in the body of Christ. And I'm going to argue that the model I'm going to use is the adoption that the Father does in our case where he adopts us into his family. You remember, I was an illegitimate child before my salvation. Do you remember that? I was an illegitimate child and then through the Gospel, the Father adopted me into his family and now I can declare, "Abba, Father."

And I'm telling you right now you have no idea how many nine year olds and thirteen year olds in the congregation would love to have a dad. They would love to have a dad but we are so in love with our singleness because, let's face it, singleness is where we're at. Singleness is awesome. Nobody tells me to put my toothbrush up. Nobody tells me to take the trash out. Nobody tells me to make the bed. There isn't a sanctifying influence in my life called a wife. So I grieve the Holy Spirit and I don't have a wife, life's good. Hello? Just tell me I'm way off base. I've only been watching this for ten years. Ten years right here. For ten years in just a couple of weeks, Father's Day is ten years for me. And I see it over and over and over again.

Would you look at Genesis 2:18, please? This is what God said so argue with God, okay? God said, underline it in your Bible, God said, "It is not good that Shawn Harris should

be alone." That's what my Bible says. Does your Bible say that? My Bible says that it's not good that I'm...how many married men could say right now that there's no question your wife has been a sanctifying influence in your life? A sanctifying influence in your life. A sanctifying and if she's a sanctifying influence, then I can argue that she's a God-glorifying influence. Is that fair to infer that? That if she has a sanctifying benefit, then she has a God-glorifying benefit. And what we need to do is we need to talk about how awesome marriage is so that we don't create this subculture of, "Oh, you're gonna go get handcuffed, ball and chain." That's not helpful. That language isn't helpful. Let me give you some language, it's called clean sheets and fresh showers. Alright, there's some language for you right there, okay? There's some language for you. Do you want some language? That's some language. Yeah, good food. Yup, some of you need to go on a diet it's so good.

Do you understand that statistically married men do it more? That's a fact. That's not a Christian statistic, that's a nationwide statistic. And what's awesome about it is that when you're done, it's all God-glorifying. There is no conviction. There is no guilt. There is no shame. There is nothing to repent of. You say, "Thank you, Jesus," and you can legitimately say, "Thank you, Jesus." It's not something that you have to keep hush-hush. It's not something that you separate from your Christianity and pretend like it's not a God-ordained activity. It's exactly what God intended to be done.

The Lord said, "It is not good that a man should be alone. I will make him a helper fit for him." I hear all the time so don't try to pin this to one family or another family but I hear all the time on a regular basis in Berean Baptist Church, maybe I'm going to get in trouble for saying this, so what? Every single time our young single men get any sense that the woman might be thinking about marriage, they run away so fast it's unbelievable. It's like the most scary thing in the world to contemplate marriage. We've created a culture that is antibiblical. A healthy church has people getting married. A healthy church has babies being born. That's a healthy church. There is more than one way of measuring a healthy church. The standard Baptist way is how big is the congregation? How many people got baptized? They don't care whether they're staying disciples. They don't care whether they're out the door the next month. They don't care whether they're divorce. That doesn't matter. How many did you baptize last year? Why don't we talk about how many got married in the body of Christ? Why don't we talk about how many children were brought into godly homes in the body of Christ? Why don't we talk about how the Gospel kept a marriage together that was on the rocks? Because those are also metrics that you can measure a healthy church by.

You see the word "helper." That's where we get it, he said, "I will make him a helper, a helper fit for him." That's called a wife, not a guy. Steve is not an acceptable alternative. It's Eve. So what about this word "helper"? Traditionally the English word "helper" because it can connote so many different ideas that does not accurately convey the connotation of the Hebrew word. The Hebrew word, you remember there's one behind the English word. In the Bible, God frequently is described as a helper, the one who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Oh, that's good. The one for us that we cannot do for ourselves. How many times has my wife saved me from making a stupid decision?

Let's continue. The one who meets our needs. In this context the word seems to express the idea of indispensable companion. That's good. How many would say my wife is an indispensable companion? Do you have any idea the evidence of when she goes first how quickly he goes afterwards? Do you know that statistically it's unbelievably reversed. If she goes first, he goes afterwards. If he goes first, she can often make it for years and years afterwards. That's a fact. Are there exceptions? Of course there are exceptions. Of course. I'm talking about in generalities. Why? Because she is an indispensable asset to us. An indispensable companion. She's more concerned about your overweightness than you are. Do you know why? Because you are security to her. She knows she needs you.

So are you going to argue with God when God said it's not good that man be alone? So I want to ask: is my singleness rooted in selfishness? Is my singleness a gift to the body of Christ? Is my singleness a result of fear of commitment? Is my singleness a result of laziness? Is my singleness helping or hurting my sanctification?

I recently heard about a young man in Berean Baptist Church that would not give up his few beers a week to have a solid relationship with an amazing single young lady. I cannot imagine. I don't even know how to process that. Let's see, three beers or her? I don't even know...I guess I'm old. I don't know how to process that. I know what she has the potential of bringing and I know what that results in and there is no comparison. None. None. I don't even understand how in the world. And in this particular case, she's a godly woman that many would say, "Yes, she's 6, 7 attractive. Solid." No. No. No. I can't imagine giving up my brewskis. I don't even know how to process it.

The man gave names to all the livestock and the birds in the heaven. I'm reading in chapter 2 of Genesis. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him so the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man and while he slept, he took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh and the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. God brought the woman to the man. Don't miss this. God said, "This is what you need." How much do I need it, God? "You need it so much that I personally am going to bring her to you. Not you go find her on your own. I'm not leaving this to chance. You might screw it up. I'm going to bring her to you. Adam, this is for you." God is bringing women into the lives of our single men and they are running away. They are running away. I want you to ask one of them when you have a personal mentorship time, "Are you sure your act of running away isn't rebellion to God's plan for your life?" Are you sure your running away isn't rebellion to God's plan for your life?

The man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man and therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh." What's amazing about this is that this commandment was not for Adam. He did not have a family of origin to leave. This commandment was for us. This wasn't for Adam. Adam didn't have a family of origin to leave. He was the first family. This commandment was for us. This is us. You

are called to leave your family of origin and create a family of choice. Your family of origin is the bond family, Tom and Michelle. The family of choice is the one that you create when you get married. So you leave that on and you create this one and that's God's plan. That's not God's plan for a select few. That's God's plan for all of us with the exception of 1 Corinthians 7:7 which suggest that some, like the Apostle Paul, may be given a gift of celibacy so that means you're planting churches, you're writing Scripture, you're translating Scripture, you're a missionary, you're completely sold out for the Gospel. You're not building notional cities on stupid video games.

This command was not for Adam, he did not have a family of origin to leave. Then we get to this glorious verse, "They were naked and they were not ashamed." And, men, you know exactly what I'm talking about here. You know exactly what I'm talking about. You're in that vicious circle. You repent. You try to get out of it. You're back into it. You know you're wrong. You feel awkward. You confess it. You ask the Lord to forgive you. You claim 1 John 1:19. "I confess all my sins, Lord. Cleanse me from all unrighteousness." Then you get back into it. It's a vicious mess again. Then you're out of it. And you just hate yourself. And because we move from 22 to 29, we've created seven additional unnecessary years where we have to be fighting with this when we shouldn't have to be fighting with this, brother. We ought to just be able to embrace a God-ordained thing and get all of it satisfied between clean sheets with no guilt, no shame, or no conviction.

So I don't have time to do this but if you'd write this down in your notes and we'll just talk about it very briefly, okay, because I know what time it is, but if you'd just jot down these four P's, please. It might be helpful. You could use it as a Sunday school lesson. You could do a four week study in your Sunday school class about this. You could do a four week study in youth group. You could do a four week study in a Bible study with this. You could do a personal four week study with this. It's real simple. It's provide, protect, procreate and parent and that's what we do. That's what we as husbands do. Okay, that's us. That's our mission. Yeah, they all start with P's but they're also biblical. It's provide, we protect, we procreate, and we parent. That's what we do and if you're a grandparent, you're still doing these things. You're still doing them. You haven't lost them. If you're a young man here, you're thinking about how you're going to do them. You're getting ready. You realize I'm 19 years old. I'm not waiting ten years. I can't wait ten years. I cannot fight this purity war for another decade. It's already been miserable for the last three or four years. I can't fight it for a whole decade. I'm going to lose.

So, 1: we provide the resources the family needs to survive and hopefully thrive. Survive and hopefully thrive. I never had seen this before and that's why I just love preparing messages because you learn, Pastor Bill, as you so well know, stuff that you don't often even get to share with the whole congregation, it's just part of your personal study and this was it. I don't know, I've read it before. No doubt I've read it ten times, maybe fifteen times but the text says in verse 5 of chapter 2, "When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up - for the LORD God had not," don't two things, "no rain and there was no man to till the ground." Now, don't miss this. This is good stuff. God waited on giving us the small plants until there was a man in

the garden to work the land. Do you see it? You see, we've created this culture in the church where we think somehow that work is a result of the fall and that's simply not true. Work is not a result of the fall. Work was part of God's plan for man before the fall. Before the fall. Not after the fall, before the fall.

Now, what we've done because we know that laziness and slothfulness is so sinful is we've front loaded work so that we can move our laziness to the back side and then we give it a name, it's called retirement. "Now, Pastor Sean, aren't you a hypocrite? You're retired." Yes, I did, I retired from the US Army so you are going to retire from places. There is nothing wrong with retiring from places but when you're done retiring from that place, you figure out a new place to work. You figure out a new place to work. Okay, God, you gave me this income level right here and I'm on my second retirement so now I have even more time to dedicate to the body of Christ. I'm free to go on short term mission trips all year long. I'm free to relocate to a mission field. God, you have blessed me with this level of income and two retirements, I'm not going to sit on the Lazyboy and watch Fox News all day until I die. No, no, you have called me to work. If I don't work at that or that, I'm going to work over here. Did you see that God put him there? "And the LORD God planted a garden," verse 8, "and he put the man in the garden." Now, if that isn't intentional language, I don't know what is. God put man where he needed him to work. To work. To work.

Then I want you to see, we're almost done, I'm going to wrap it up. I know what time it is. In verses 10 through 15 we see something very unique. In the garden there are things you don't need to garden. What are you talking about? You don't need gold to plant tomatoes. You don't need onyx to grow carrots. Do you know why? It was never God's plan for them to stay in that garden so he puts in the garden what they will need to survive outside the garden. Precious metals. Let's think just a little bit more, let's just take it a little bit deeper and understand that all the material needed to redeem the world, the wooden cross, the metal for the nails, was already in the garden of Eden 2,000 years before the Lord was to die. In the same garden where they sinned, the materials necessary for the cross that Christ would die on were already there. Now, what had to happen was man had to discover those materials and use them but the matter was already there. It was already there. It was already there.

We're losing this. We're losing this as a society. The trades. The work with your hands. The create things. The build things. The maintain things. The Adam things in this text, everything is throwaway. I don't fix it, I get a new one. We're not maintaining. We're not caring. We're not taking advantage. We're not taking care of things. We don't change the oil, we get someone else to do that. We don't fix things, someone else does that. We are losing part of the way we as men glorify God. The very caring and maintaining something is God-glorifying.

Last verse, verse 15, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." All you with young boys here, listen to me very closely all of you with young boys. You need to embrace the idea that it's your job to teach your sons and daughters how to build things, how to create things, how to maintain things. Jack Farmer

is currently living in the house that we lived in, Pam and I and Austin lived in for seven years. We lived there and last week we were mowing the yard right next door and none of y'all are going to understand this because you're not old enough but I looked across the privacy fence that we put up which is still standing pretty solid and then, Jeff, I saw this treehouse that Austin and I made and when you look at something, Tom, that you built, your sweat equity went into that thing and I was looking at it and from a distance I didn't want to go and bother them but, Rob, it still looked solid because we built it to last. We're losing that. We're losing that and we need to reclaim that. We need to understand that creating and building and caring and maintaining is a very God-glorifying thing. Come on, son, we're going to go and do this together. You're going to need to do this. We're going to tear this sink apart. We're going to put this new garbage disposal in together. We're going to watch the video, we're going to read the manual, we're going to do this together. Get me a wrench. I said a wrench, as he brings you a screwdriver. Am I wrong? You've got to teach them. Why? Because we were put there to work it and keep it. That's our jobs.

Let's pray.

God, we're here to provide and not only do we provide physical needs but we provide emotional security to our wives, and not only do we provide emotional security but we provide spiritual leadership, and then we protect because according to 1 Peter 3:7, she's the weaker vessel, and then we procreate because you told us after the flood, you told the three sons of Noah to be fruitful and multiply and that commandment is still standing today, and then, God, when you bless us with that little child, that boy or that girl, we understand from Deuteronomy 6 that it's our job to parent them, to teach them that there's one Lord and that we're called to obey these commandments of the one Lord all the days of our lives. So, Lord God, as we embrace our role as husbands to provide and to protect and to procreate and then finally to parent, give us the grace to do it. And Lord, we're so thankful that when we do it miserably, that your grace is sufficient to forgive us. God, I pray that you would use this message in the lives of the young men in our congregation to your honor and to your glory. Amen.