

Message Discussion Guide THE GOSPEL AND MANHOOD

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

June 15, 2008

Psalm 128

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

This message focuses on a man's heart attitudes toward his family and how the gospel impacts those attitudes. On the most practical level, disciple-making is about passing on the truths of the gospel to others such that all of their life is impacted and they begin to know and become more like Christ. Nowhere is this image clearer than in the family.

Discuss the following foundational question that must be asked in order for the disciple-making process to begin:

What truths will you pass on to your children / those you disciple?

Review the Message . . .

READ Psalm 128 as a group

Seven Truths from a Father to Son

[Note: As you reflect on these questions and the discussion that follows with your group, be sure to explain that "fatherhood" can be biological, spiritual or both. Make application from these truths with everyone in your group based on all of these aspects of fatherhood.]

1. The favor of God is found in the fear of God

Discussion...

- What is the difference between an unhealthy fear of God and a healthy fear of God?
- How might our relationships with our earthly fathers cause us to miss this truth?
- Which is the greater fear in our culture: fear of God's punishment or fear of dishonoring Him? Why?
- Do people in North American culture typically seem "tremble before God"? (The obvious answer is "no".) Discuss why this may be.

Application...

- How might we develop an appropriate fear of God accompanied by a desire to please Him?
- "Blessed is the man who fears God" – discuss how this biblical truth conflicts with our culture. Present some ways that this biblical truth can better be communicated and understood.

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2. The wisdom of God is found in the Word of God

Discussion...

- Give some definitions of wisdom being careful to remember texts like 1 Corinthians 3:18-21.
- How does this truth connect with the first truth? [Note: see Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 1:7]
- What is the only one source of wisdom? (The obvious answer is “God” or “His word”).
- Based on our actions / behavior and attitude towards God’s word, do we really believe that the ways and the Word of God are the only source for wisdom? How might a person’s actions / behaviors and attitudes change if they begin to believe this truth?

Application...

- How can a man walk in the ways of God if he does not know the Word of God?
- What steps can we take or changes can we institute in our lives to begin relying on and believing in God’s Word as the one absolute source of wisdom?

3. A wife is a treasure to be cherished

Discussion...

- How is marriage a picture of God’s blessing? [Note: You might address this question specifically to the men in your group]
- Is the “blessing” of marriage tied at all to the faithfulness of each spouse? Why or why not?
- Think of material possessions that are highly valued in our culture. How do people typically treat those possessions or anything that is highly valued (career, position, traditions, etc...)?

Application...

- What are some practical (not Hollywood romantic) ways a man can demonstrate that his wife is highly valued / cherished?
- How does the church, as the body and bride of Christ, know that she is cherished by Him? What do these answers imply about how a husband should treat his wife?

4. Children are a gift to be nurtured

Discussion...

- The illustration of shoots from a vine filling a house like young children fill a house is beautiful and messy at the same time. In either case, they can hardly go unnoticed.

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Do husbands and fathers today appropriately pay attention to their children? If not, what distracts them?

- Fathers will be examples and will lead their families one way or another. Discuss specific ways that fathers are examples and lead their families.

Application...

- How are you intentionally nurturing your children so that they will grow and be productive in God's Kingdom?
- How might a father go "overboard" in his affection to his family (in a good way)?

5-7. The life that counts...

- **Flows from the presence of God**
- **Advances the gospel of God**
- **Multiplies the glory of God**

Discussion...

- Are your friends and / or family motivated to worship God because of your presence and influence in their lives? Why or why not?
- Is your investment in your friends / family advancing the gospel or will it advance the gospel in the future? Why or Why not?
- Do our home lives primarily function in a such a way that allow us the greatest indulgence in comfort or do they function for the sake of the advancement of the gospel?

Application...

- Do those around you (especially your children) learn how to pray by observing how you prayer / talk about prayer? What steps can you take in your home to demonstrate to your family how to pray?
- Do those around you (especially your children) learn how to proclaim the gospel by observing how you proclaim the gospel? What steps can you take in your home to demonstrate to your family how to share the gospel?
- How might we pass the gospel on to future generations and future society in general even though we may never meet them?

David closed the message by giving some additional "secrets" he received from his father's wisdom and example. Close your time together by reminding the men in your group of these truths and then pray specifically for the men in your group.

- God is glorified in the man who loves and serves his family.
- The life that counts is not concerned with seeing things in this life.
- The life that counts is consumed with seeing things in the next life.