

## Be a Man!

Serve Like a Man – September 25/26



**Texts:** Ephesians 5:28 – 33; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10

**Gather:** Take time to catch up and share what has been going on since you were last together. While catching up ask, “How did loving like Jesus go last week?” Do you have any answers to prayer to report?

**Pray:** As you begin your focus time together to learn more about serving, ask God to reveal potential barriers to serving that you need His help to remove. If it fits, pray for the men in your group that God would give them eyes to see their unique calling to keep all of creation safe. Ask Him to give the women eyes to see and celebrate the special qualities of the men in their lives and their calling to serve.

**Icebreaker:** What was your least favorite chore as a child?

**Focus:** Men who serve like Jesus will do so willingly in an initiatory manner.

**Introduction: Ephesians 5:28-33** – Jesus served with all He had because we were and are His priority. He cares for us as He cares for himself and there is nothing between us and Him. He left His Father – His family. He came to Earth to serve the people who would be His new family following His death and resurrection. This only happened because of His love for us – the value He placed on us because we were created by His and our Father – was revealed in His service of us – giving us all we needed to be united with Him for eternity. This is a miracle and a mystery.

The Apostle Paul teaches men about their call to bring stability and safety to God’s creation. He calls men to serve the Ephesian culture in practical ways – to feed and care for those around them. We use this text to understand the unique role and giftedness that men have as they serve. In this passage, Paul calls men to a love that is displayed in practical ways. He also points out that it is natural for a man to have an instinctive desire to love one’s self and that this love can be transferred to the care of others.

Paul calls on men to prioritize their care giving. Verse 31 is a unique instruction to men. God knows that men need clear priorities when considering service. Men are to leave their family of origin – this does not mean to neglect them but to choose to prioritize their immediate family over their family of origin and friends when serving. God knows there is limited time and energy to serve.

**Galatians 5:13** – We are free – free from having to earn our forgiveness and eternal life. Forgiven for all eternity for sins committed in the past and any sin we haven’t yet committed. There is nothing we can do to cause Jesus to “unsave” us. How will we use that freedom? To be selfish and self-serving? We have an unbelievable opportunity to serve and love one another without insecurity or fear. This results in an ability to love from a well fed by the stream of living water coming from Jesus. And an ability to serve by sharing what we have been given – unconditional love that results in an ability to meet the needs of those around us.

**1 Peter 4:10** – We don’t own our abilities. All of our talents were placed in us when we were created before time began. God knew what unique role each of us would play in the day-to-day redemption of all creation. Use your unique roles, gifts, abilities, past experiences, and present understanding of God’s love as it relates to your story of salvation to serve. You and I don’t own our self or our abilities. They are gifts to be given. Give all you are away and serve so that others might know Jesus.

**Study:**

1. Why does Paul write that if a man “loves his wife” it is proof that he “loves himself?” (Ephesians 5:28)
2. What are the natural ways a man cares for himself and how do those actions become loving service toward others? (Ephesians 5:28)
3. How far away should a man live from his family before he gets married? Why might this be loving service to his wife? (Ephesians 5:31)<sup>i</sup>
4. In general, men are wired to use lists to move through day to day life. Notice how God reveals this in the way He has Paul write. 1) Care for yourself. 2) Care for your wife. 3) Leave your family of origin. 4) Begin a new family. 5) Serve your new family. It is a gift of God that he gives us the ability to bring order as we serve. This order brings a sense of stability and safety – this is great service. If you were going to make an orderly list of how you will serve your family better, what would be on it?

**Call to Action:**

1. Think – Read Galatians 5:13. How are Christians called to be free?
2. Love –What would be the effect in your family or community if you habitually served them as loving proof that one who loves himself will love his wife (others)? How do you think you can train your sons and daughters to lovingly serve those around them?
3. Serve – Men, when you do something to serve yourself, do something to serve the women in your life next. How does serving become a logical result of the freedom we have?
4. Live – As the week goes on, ask yourself, “Do I feel more valuable at the times I serve others or when I serve myself?” Re-read Galatians 5:13. How will you then live knowing that you are free?

**Sharing and Prayer:** Share prayer requests, both from this discussion and from other areas of life.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Closing Prayer:** Have someone pray this prayer for the group. “Jesus, reveal to each of us the value you have placed in us and the gifts we have to steward and use as we serve. Cause the men in this group to hear Your affirmation and Your call to serve – to care for the women in their lives by serving them and caring for them. May men find the joy you have designed uniquely for them as they provide and protect those you have given them to lead and love.”

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<sup>i</sup> If you or someone in your group needs support while working through marriage and family issues, Ridge Point has a partnership with *Winning at Home* a Christian counseling provider. Please call our *Care & Support* office 616.395.4126 x424.