



The Story Church Discipleship Groups | Spring 2021

Introduction:

Christians believe salvation is all about God's grace, right? No amount of good works can get a person into heaven; only trusting in Jesus can do that. So what's the point of living a good life after deciding you believe in Jesus? Why should Christians subject themselves to discomfort, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline if simply believing in Jesus is enough to punch their tickets to heaven? Part of trusting Jesus means allowing him to shape our lives - not just in eternity - but in the here and now. In this series, we'll explore the ways God's saving grace can transform the believer's character in this life. From your love life to your priorities to your personality, God calls out and equips believers to live lives that are shaped by the cross of Jesus Christ.

Session 2: Cross-Shaped Masculinity

[WATCH THE SERMON HERE](#)

Discussion Questions:

How would you define "character"?

Why is it important for Christians to talk about developing character?

Read Genesis 2:15, 18, 20-25

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'

for she was taken out of man.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

What was God’s first observation about the man? What does this tell you about the importance of relationships and community in a man’s life?

Have you noticed any negative stereotypes or low expectations of masculinity in our secular culture (media, academia, entertainment, or social sciences)? If so, jot down an example or two here.

Why do you think boys and young men are falling behind in school and graduating from college at a lower rate than women?

What was Eric’s point in comparing “female hysteria” to “toxic masculinity”?

Read Matthew 5:38-42

You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you that you must not oppose those who want to hurt you. If people slap you on your right cheek, you must turn the left cheek to them as well. When they wish to haul you to court and take your shirt, let them have your coat too. When they force you to go one mile, go with them two. Give to those who ask, and don’t refuse those who wish to borrow from you.

Summarize some of the ways Christians have misinterpreted these teachings of Jesus over the years.

What did Jesus actually mean with “Turn the other cheek,” “Give them the shirt off your back,” and “Go the second mile”? How is this different from the “doormat philosophy” we often associate with Jesus?

How should this new understanding of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 5 shape our vision for masculinity today?

What does Christian masculinity look like?

What should be the #1 priority for Christian parents who are raising boys today?

If you’re a man, list a few practical ways you intend to change in order to become more like Jesus.

If you’re a woman, what are some practical things you can do differently to support or encourage your brothers in Christ as they seek to follow Jesus more closely?