

Podcast 224

Let's pray and we'll continue with our series on biblical husbanding.

Father, thank you for another morning with a fresh, I don't know if I want to say dose or abundance, but there's new loving kindnesses this morning according to Lamentations and I thank you that your grace is new every morning to us, and I pray that we'll all, as Scott and I here and all that are listening that will experience and taste your fresh pouring out of goodness to us this way. In Jesus's name. Amen.

Last night I was out for a walk. It was not too bad. It was in the 40s and I was warm and it was just wonderful. I hardly wanted to come in. I was out for almost 40 minutes and it was quiet and it was dark and it was still, and sometimes the morning there's too much to distract me. Everything is pretty and the birds are singing and people are waiting for their school buses and all that. But I was realizing that, first of all, I was thinking about the fact that I do have more time now than I did when I had four children in the home and I was trying to get the business up and running, et cetera. However, if I had a do over, I would have taken at least some time to go for a walk and to get my heart connected with God in a way. I think I could have been a much better dad and a much better husband if I had addressed my own needs, so doing it now, better late than never.

And the second thing I thought of when I was doing it. I thought, I wonder why I do it, because I still have lots of things I could be doing. I've got lists of things. I'm actually getting a little frantic. I'm planning some winter men's retreats and I got lots on my plate and I'm a little bit behind in marketing them and we're having a conference in January or February, but I thought, why do I spend so much time in God's word and taking 40 minutes to go out and seek God? I'm convinced right down deep in my heart of hearts, right down in my whatever makes Steve Steve that the better my connection with heaven, the better my connection is going to be with my wife and my kids.

I watched Hacksaw Ridge for the first time. My takeaway was at the very end when they had the interviews with his captain and himself, and the captain talked about how when you have a conviction, nobody can take that away from you. And so as I was walking last night, I was moved by that movie by the way. And I start thinking, what are my convictions? What are the things that I am unwilling to let go that govern me? What deep down, and I think that's what scripture talks about when it says in your heart, and my conviction is what I just shared. That my connection with heaven determines my connection with everything else, and that's why based on that conviction I'm willing to invest the time and the energy to seek God.

Biblical husbanding, and even though there's several commands which we've touched on through this, like love your wives as Christ loved the church, and don't be harsh with them in Colossians and we're going to talk in a succeeding episode about dwell with your wife in an understanding way. What colors my whole view of loving my wife is John 15:9 where it says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you," and three verses later he says, "As I have loved you," Jesus speaking, "Love one another," which I believe is the basis for what Paul says. "Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church."

We've been focused on how has Jesus loved us? Another way that he loves us is, found in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." As I think about that verse, what I think about is Jesus was approachable. He says, "Come unto

me you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." This is one of the sweetest scriptures where you see Jesus kind of sitting on a bench and he's saying, "I know you're heavy laden. I know you've got burdens that are too hard to carry for you. Come to me and I'll help carry them."

Not only is he approachable, He bears our burdens, This speaks to me about being approachable and be able to bear somebody else's burdens. To do this I first have to go to God and give him my burdens. I have to get up at a reasonable hour and go to bed at a reasonable hour and get sleep so that I'm not prickly. When I don't get enough sleep I'm not a happy boy to be around. I don't want to be continually sighing and telling my family I'm too tired or this is not a good time. I want to have some margin. This is a new thing I'm working on, this whole idea of margin, because I usually fill up my days and I want to have a little margins so I can be approachable and bear my wife's burdens.

Scott: You get the sense a lot of times. I do anyway, watching people who are big spiritual people who do lots in the church. They're busy. I mean, I know a guy who's been in ministry for decades now and he's one of my favorite people to hang out with when I get a chance, but he's never available. It just seems like that's the way it is for truly godly people and I've always wondered if that's not sinful, or at least less than what God would have for us. Like busy-ness isn't next to godliness.

Steve: That could be the title of a book. Busy-ness is not next to godliness. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Most of us carry heavy burdens and heavy yokes. I believe if we have a heavy yoke it's because of stuff that we have added to our schedule that God didn't put there in the first place. He said his yoke is doable. Hey, I created you, I designed you, I know the work that I've set apart for just you to do, and you can do this and you still have time for your wife and your kids. Because work is not the first priority and then your wife and your kids fill in the gaps. Your wife and your kids are the first thing, and the work is the next thing, and if we're balanced, the whole package is doable. If its not doable, it's because of what we've added to our calendar.

Scott: I have noticed that there are people who think godliness means you have to be scheduled to the hilt all the time and I don't think that's true.

Steve: I have lived that way for a long time and I still struggle because it is impressive when you can tell people what you done, what you're doing, how much is on your plate. I'm not going to judge anybody else. I'll just speak for myself. I lived for a generation believing that my performance and what I did is what made God like me. I'd never admit that theologically, but I think deep down I believed this.

Last night even when I was out walking, I said to God, "I used to think that if you had time with God you'd be talking about what's next on the calendar and how can I bear more fruit? Blah, blah, blah." However last night I was just enjoying being with my dad. I said, "Boy, this is really sweet." I really didn't want to come in the house. I wanted to take another circuit

around my neighborhood. I realized I'm finally learning to just take a deep breath and rest in the Lord and be still and know that He is God.

I recognize that I have ascetic tendencies. When I was in seminary I wanted to give away all my belongings and take up my cross and follow him. I wanted to go to the nth degree, and He's had to work really very patiently and consistently saying, "Steve, I've got this." I'm trying just to do the things that he gives me to do and try not to add to it. By the time I die, maybe I'll have figured this out.

Scott: I think we as the church tend to burn people out who are willing to do that. The people who are willing to take on everything. We'll burn you out, man. We'll use you up and make you busier than you could possibly be, and then you're pulling your hair out after 10 years of that. That's where a lot of pastors and missionaries end up.

Steve: The whole idea of setting boundaries and setting apart time for just you to seek God and set apart time for your wife your family. Fortunately I had the family piece, but I never comprehended the piece of my how important my role in the family was, I look back now and realize the toll that being tired, stretched, and busy took on my family.

Learning how painful my improper lifestyle affected my wife and my kids is the biggest reason that I slow down and take the time that I need to rest in the Lord. My day is falling into a rhythm of God's word in the morning the evening for my walks, If I'm not going to be able to wait on God in the evening, I try to take it some other time in the day. I know that I'm a nicer guy to be around when I carve out time with God. I have also noticed that when I'm in a good place with God they want to be around me more . My vertical relationship is the key to how I relate to God and others.

The next point builds on this truth. There are certain things that only Jesus can do and only the Spirit can do, which we can't do. Jesus can take away our sins. Only Jesus can reveal the Father. "No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." (Luke 10:22)

Even though I am limited in what I can do, I still want to be a bridge. I want to love my sons unconditionally. I want to love my wife unconditionally. I want to give my family a taste of God's unconditional love. I didn't know if that's the right way to put it, but I want to give them a glimpse or a taste of the Father. I want them to see the Father in me. I want them to see that I've spent time with Jesus and hope this will attract them to Jesus.

Another way I can influence my family is found in John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Coupled with this passage is Acts 1:1 which has this phrase, "all that Jesus began to do and teach." These two verses tell us that Jesus was absolutely consistent. His walk and his talk were identical. His life perfectly lined up with the truth. That's something I aspire to. I want to model the word of God. I want to be as consistent as possible. I want my walk to match my talk. But I know that's not going to happen because we're not perfect. We're not God.

But I still aspire to this lifestyle for I believe that the more I can live out my faith consistently day to day in front of my family, and the more I can love my wife as Christ loved the church, it's going to encourage and impact them.

When I am not consistent in my faith and drop the ball, I need to be very open with my family and admit my failure. I need to say something like, "I'm struggling and I don't know how to do this, and I apologize for where I've sinned," Because even though I am the husband and father, I am always going to be a co-learner as well. I have the same issues they do. I struggle with my flesh. I'm human, and I'm going to make mistakes. Jesus was the only person who was perfectly consistent, and I'm trying to be more and more consistent, like my Savior.

If I pretend to be perfectly consistent and my family, who lives with me 24/7, knows I'm not consistent, then I'm a hypocrite. Nothing discourages young people as much as hypocrisy. Scripture says "don't exasperate your children." Children are exasperated when parents pretend, which is hard to do when you live under the same roof. I need to model the same faith in my home that I have when I'm behind the pulpit. If we don't acknowledge the fact that our walk doesn't match our talk, then I believe we discourage our family.

Life is a journey and we are being gradually transformed into his image. Ultimately we will be fully transformed when we see Him. Only then will our walk and our talk be the same. That being said, I am convinced that one of the best things we can do to influence our children is to live out God's word in front of them, not just talk about it. Talking is important, but living is equally as important.

Another verse that is meaningful is found in Hebrews 4, "We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God. Let us hold fast our confession. We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Jesus is a compassionate high priest, and another verse which is similar to that is in John 2. "Jesus on his part did not entrust Himself to them because He knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for He Himself knew what was in man." And another verse mentions that we are clay,

This is a problem for each of us because we are clay and we are human and not naturally compassionate like Jesus. Remember that guy in the Bible who owed 10,000 talents, and in the parable he begged the person he owed the money to to forgive him and to release him so he wouldn't have to be going to prison. Then when he is forgiven his debt he walks outside and sees someone that owes him about a hundred bucks. I forget the exact amounts, but it was a huge disparity. This guy couldn't pay him, and he had him thrown into prison. Some people witnessed this whole affair and reported it and the fellow was toast.

What I learn from this is I need to remember that I am clay. That I am a sinner who has been forgiven. I have weaknesses, and I don't want to forget that my wife has weaknesses, as do my children. If Jesus was a compassionate and high priest, I need to be a compassionate leader in my home Since Jesus knew what was in man, I need to remember what's in me and in my family as well.

I remember what my spiritual father used to say, "Be easy on everybody else, but tough on yourself." However my tendency is to do the opposite. My tendency is to give myself all kinds of grace and then apply the law strictly to everybody else.

When I recall my own battles and failures I am much more willing to extend compassion and forgive other their sins. I read a little saying that said if we knew everybody's story, we'd have no trouble loving everybody. We all have stuff and we all have baggage and we all make mistakes. May God help us to be like Jesus who was a compassionate high priest and who was able to sympathize with our weaknesses. For he has been tempted in every point just like us. The difference between us and Jesus is that He never yield to temptation.

Scott: Some days I can be really gracious with myself and other days really down on myself. Then I can be really gracious with my family some days and really harsh other days. I'm all over the place.

Steve: I understand for sometimes I am tough on myself. I need to learn to give myself grace too. It is encouraging to remember that He knows our frame. He knows my frame and He knows my wife's frame and He knows my kids' frame. Knowing what He knows, He is a compassionate high priest. Psalm 103 "He knows how weak we are. He remembers we are only dust." Amen. Let's close in prayer.

Father, thank you for guiding us during this podcast and I thank you for these specific things we can do. Help us to keep our eyes on Jesus, be rooted in him, and be accessible and meek and lowly in heart and bear the burdens of our wife and help us to understand her humanity, that she's not perfect, and help us to learn these things because you know these things and this is the way that you have become a compassionate high priest and an approachable high priest and a meek high priest, and I pray that you help us to embody these characteristics as well. I know we're becoming this because we're being transformed into your image, and save us from discouragement and condemnation and help us to approach you for help right now. In Jesus's name, amen.