

GENTLE-MAN

STUDY GUIDE



DR. JOHN CROTT

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HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

Study Guide

The study guide provides a place for students to expand their knowledge and understanding as they are challenged by the content of this curriculum. This can become a valuable tool when they need personal encouragement or equipping to help others. The guide presents five questions for each episode and space to record their answers and take additional notes during discussion.

The student's copy without answers is found at the end of this guide starting at page 30. The lessons with answers should act as a teacher's or facilitator's guide. Print out several copies of the second section for all students and the teacher can just print one copy for himself of the entire guide.

Videos and Questions

Each lesson has several questions the students should answer after watching the videos. Then engage the students in discussion using the teacher's guide with answers.

Conclusion

Use whatever time remains to answer questions, make announcements, and close in prayer.

DISCUSSION TIPS

The strength of this curriculum depends on the engagement of the students with the ideas presented. Use the following discussion tips to help you lead fruitful discussion:

- Discussion is effective when a majority of students are involved. Manage students as necessary to draw out those who are quieter and keep the more vocal from dominating the conversation.
- Create an environment where students feel safe to share their thoughts and experiences without judgment or ridicule.
- While you need to be aware of your time, do not cut short a discussion that seems especially engaging to the students. Invest your time where the students respond best.
- Have a plan but be flexible enough to allow the students to guide the discussion. In this way you will learn what aspects they are most interested in.
- Use the students' answers to the questions, especially if they changed their answers, to launch discussion.
- Use the main ideas provided as prompts for discussion. Ask whether students agree with certain statements in the video. Encourage thoughtful explanations.
- Ask questions that require thoughtful answers.
- Avoid leading questions; the goal of discussion is not to receive correct answers but to lead students to think about their answers

Sample Schedule

Below is a sample schedule based on one and a half hours of class time. Exact timing will vary with segment lengths and success of discussion.

6:00–6:10	Open, introduction, and prayer
6:10–6:35	Watch video lesson, encourage students to think about and answer the questions while watching
6:35–6:55	Have students complete answering all questions on their own
6:55–7:20	Discuss each question as a class
7:20–7:30	Wrap-up, answer questions, make announcements, close in prayer

EPISODE 1

◆ Men of the Book

What is a man? How should a man behave? There are many voices in this world clamoring for our attention and telling us what we should do or say or feel, and so many of them are contradictory. The Christian man does not need to be overwhelmed by the noise. Because God created mankind and established the distinction between male and female, we can go to His Word to find what it truly means to be a godly man. Not only does the Bible hold the key to answering this question, but it holds the key to our success as men and leaders. We must first and foremost be men of the Book.

1. What character traits do you think of as “manly”? What factors have influenced your expectations?

Discuss answers, encouraging participants to recognize and evaluate their preconceptions. People may have views of masculinity that are influenced by culture, entertainment, media, family members, experience, tradition, the Bible, etc.

2. Why is a balance between zeal and compassion so important? How have you seen the negative impact of either extreme?

The Bible exhorts the Christian to speak the truth in love, to correct with gentleness. We ought to maintain our zeal and passion for truth, but we must also elevate our graciousness. It should be the truth, not our manner, that is offensive.

3. How does knowing Jesus called himself gentle shift your thinking about the trait?

Discuss answers. Gentleness is often seen as weakness or a feminine trait. However, Jesus demonstrated gentleness and even called himself gentle (Matthew 11:28-30). This should cause us to shift our perception of gentleness, because Jesus was not weak and is the standard of biblical masculinity.

4. What role does the Bible play in the life of the believer?

The Bible is the very Word of God, the means through which He has chosen to reveal Himself to us. The Bible reveals God and His ways. Meditating on Scripture, then, leads us to obedience. The Bible is vital to the believer, both for salvation and sanctification.

5. Read Psalm 1:1-6

a. What two types of men are described in this Psalm?

Psalm 1 contrasts the righteous man (or blessed man) with the wicked.

b. What are the two things that describe the blessed man?

He does not spend time with the wicked, and he delights in and meditates on the law of the Lord.

c. What consequence does each type of man face?

The blessed man will prosper like a tree that gets plenty of water and bears much fruit. The wicked man, in contrast, will not be able to stand before God when they face his judgment. They will be driven away like chaff; they will perish.

d. What parallel exists between the blessed man in Psalm 1 and God’s exhortation to Joshua in Joshua 1:8-9?

God called Joshua to meditate on the Book of the Law and to not let it depart from his mouth. The blessed man in Psalm 1 likewise delights in the law of the Lord and meditates on it continually.

e. What does the “Book of the Law” or the “law of the Lord” refer to in the context of these passages? What might we take it to include as we apply these concepts to our own context?

In the context of the Old Testament, the law of the Lord refers to the revelation God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. In Jewish history, the law came to refer to the collection of Moses’ writings (i.e., the first five books of our Bibles). However, as we apply the wisdom from these verses to our own lives, we can read those phrases as “Word of God,” meaning all the canon of Scripture.

f. How does this passage reinforce the desire to be a man of the Book?

We all want to be strong and courageous leaders, like Joshua was. Psalm 1 reinforces this

devotion to God's Word, as the blessed man delights in it and meditates on it. This man thrives and flourishes. The man who wishes to prosper rather than perish will strive to be a man of the Book.

EPISODE 2

◆ Men of Conviction

A man of conviction is confident in what he believes, and he faithfully acts out those convictions. More precisely, a godly man is a man of biblical convictions. We must be men of the Book to become men of biblical conviction. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and sufficient authority for our lives. We must have a working knowledge of the Bible—we must know what it says and how to put it into practice. We must start by being a good reader of the Word.

1. What are the four terms Dr. Crotts used to describe the Bible?

The Bible is inspired—it is the very words of God. The Bible is inerrant—it has no errors or contradictions. The Bible is sufficient—it provides all we need for salvation and to live godly lives. The Bible is authoritative—as God's Word it has the right and power to command us.

2. In what ways have you struggled to be a reader of the Word? What practical tips or motivation have you received from this episode?

Discuss answers. Struggles may include busy schedules, failing to see relevance to everyday life, difficulty in understanding the text, etc. Understanding that the Bible is inspired, inerrant, sufficient, and authoritative should provide motivation in the face of any of these struggles. It is the Word of God, so I should make time to read it, not to mention desire to read it. It is sufficient and authoritative, meaning it is relevant to every area of my life. Tips for becoming a reader may include reading to grasp the storyline of the Bible, reading a given passage in various English versions, asking questions, summarizing the passage, etc.

3. What favorite tips or resources do you use when reading the Bible?

Discuss answers. Helpful practices could include using a reading plan or devotional as a guide, highlighting or underlining things of notice, keeping a journal, reading the same passage multiple times, discussing with a friend or elder, listing practical take-aways, using study resources (e.g., study Bibles, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, atlases, etc.), memorizing a verse from the passage, etc.

4. Why is reading the Bible so important for biblical manhood?

Reading the Bible is rudimentary—it is how we know what a biblical man looks like. Just as Joshua's key to success was the know and meditate on the Book of the Law, so being men of the Book (i.e., the Bible) is the key to success. The truth revealed in Scripture must shape the way we think, the way we act, and the way we lead.

5. Read Matthew 7:24-27

a. Who is speaking in this passage?

Jesus is speaking to his disciples and the crowds following Him. This is toward the end of what is often called the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

b. What are the two contrasting images used in this illustration?

A wise man builds his house on the firm foundation of rock, and his house withstands the storm. In contrast, the foolish man chooses the shifting foundation of sand to build his house on, and his house falls when the storm hits.

c. The wise man in the illustration represents people who do what two things?

The person who hears God's words and does them is like the wise man in the illustration.

d. How do we know that it is not enough to hear or know God's Word?

The foolish man also heard the words of Jesus, but he did not do them. This demonstrates that it is not enough to hear the Word of God or even to know the contents of the Bible well. We must be doers of the Word.

e. What words of God do you need to apply to your life to be a true man of conviction, like the wise man in Jesus' illustration?

Discuss practical examples of biblical teachings that are often heard but not applied. Encourage participants to reflect on this question throughout the week and each day as they read the Word.

EPISODE 3

◆ Men of Stewardship

As men, we are the head of our households. But we are not the ultimate authority. A true gentle man must have a sense of stewardship. It is God who owns our families; we are just managing the families He has entrusted to us. And He has entrusted us with more than simple physical provision. We are called to be spiritual leaders. We must manage our households well because we are accountable to God as stewards of the precious lives He entrusted to us.

1. What is the sense of stewardship that a man should have? How does this shift your understanding of a man's role in his family?

A man should feel a sense of stewardship when it comes to leading his family because it is ultimately God's family, not his. Rather, God has entrusted that family into his care. Discuss the impact of this understanding, as well as the illustration of the family store. Some may feel a greater weight of responsibility and accountability. Others may find encouragement and relief in recognizing that God is the ultimate provider and protector of the family.

2. How do you need to change the way decisions are made in your family?

Discuss answers. Some may have left the decision making to others, some may tend to exhibit an authoritarian approach, others may make excuses or shift blame when things don't go as planned, etc. The biblical man will make wise and informed decisions after seeking the input of others, and he will take responsibility for any consequences of that decision.

3. Have you ever had the opinion (or acted like) that your responsibility was fulfilled by bringing home the paycheck? How might you approach things differently in light of this episode?

Spiritual leadership is more than bringing home a paycheck. It is important to provide for your family, but that is the baseline, not the fulfillment. In this temporal world, it is easy to behave as if providing for basic needs is the main responsibility, but the man is called to lead his family spiritually. This requires tending their spiritual and emotional well-being as well as physical.

4. What part of managing your family has been the most challenging for you? How will this episode help you to improve in that area?

Discuss answers, encouraging open and honest conversation. Use the opportunity to reinforce the shift in perspective that Dr. Crotts is facilitating. As appropriate, guide discussion to specific examples and practical applications.

5. Read 1 Corinthians 11:3

a. Who wrote this letter and to whom was it written? In what context do we find this verse?

This letter was written by Paul to the believers in Corinth. This verse is taken from a section where Paul is talking about the practice of praying with heads covered or uncovered. His practical teaching in this section is informed by his theological understanding.

b. What 4-part relationship is described here?

God is the head of Christ, who is the head of man, who is the head of his wife.

c. How does this verse demonstrate the stewardship granted to the husband?

The man is not the ultimate head; rather he submits to God. As the ultimate head, God has entrusted the headship of the wife—and by extension the family—to the man.

d. How does the relationship drawn between God and Jesus demonstrate that headship in this sense is not superiority?

Because all Scripture is inspired and inerrant, we know that this passage must align with all other biblical teachings. Thus, we recognize that God is triune—three persons in one being. Jesus is, therefore, God. So, Jesus is not inferior to God the Father, but He submits to the headship of the Father. In the same way, the wife is not inferior to the husband, but she is to submit to his headship.

EPISODE 4

◆ Men Who Lead Spiritually

Spiritual leadership can seem mysterious and intimidating. But being a spiritual leader in one's own home is not as difficult as many think. The first step to being a spiritual leader is to be walking with God. How can we lead others if we are not on the right path ourselves? Next, we must assume the responsibility of being the spiritual leader in our homes. And then we teach the Bible to our families, leading them in family worship and to be involved in a local church.

1. How does being a man of the Word relate to fulfilling the role of spiritual leader for your family?

The man is called to be the spiritual leader of his family. To do this, he must first cultivate his own walk with the Lord. He must know the Word if he is to teach the Word to his family. He must live by the Word if he is to train his family to apply the truths of the Word to their own lives.

2. How has this episode framed spiritual leadership in a way that seems more attainable than before?

Discuss answers. Spiritual leadership may sometimes seem mysterious or intimidating, but by defining the success of such leadership in terms of consistency, Dr. Crotts has set an attainable goal. Spiritual leadership may simply mean reading a few verses together at dinner time and prioritizing involvement at church. Setting this tone will inevitably lead to teachable moments.

3. Why is church involvement so important to spiritual leadership?

It is important to prioritize church involvement because it helps set the tone for the family. It also exposes the family to truth in new ways, allowing other teachers to impact their lives. Most importantly, it is vital for the man to be sitting under the teaching of the Word, serving in the church, and growing in his own walk with the Lord. As he does that, he will become a stronger spiritual leader.

4. Though church involvement is important, how can a man guard against relinquishing his responsibility to the church?

It can be easy to see taking the family to church as the fulfillment of the responsibility to lead spiritually. But the church is not the spiritual leader of the family; the man is. One way to guard against this danger is to be equally intentional and consistent with family worship. Another way is to engage family members in conversation about what they have heard at church. When asked a question about something learned at church, the man should assume the responsibility to find an answer. The man should also be using the time at church to grow in his own walk, modeling true faithfulness for his family to see and follow. The man must lead his family to church, but he should also lead them while they are there and when they return home again.

5. Read Ephesians 4:11–16

a. Who wrote this letter, and to whom was it written?

Paul wrote the letter of Ephesians to the Christians in Ephesus.

b. What is the purpose of the various giftings God gave to those in the church?

God gave these people gifts for the purpose of equipping the saints for ministry and for building up the body of Christ.

c. What is the goal of “mature manhood”?

The mature Christian is growing “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

In simple terms, the Christian’s goal is to grow to be more like Jesus.

d. What is the danger for a Christian who is not being equipped, who is not yet a mature man?

The immature Christian is like a child that is tossed around by every idea and scheme that they hear. They are not discerning, recognizing truth from lies and errors.

e. Who is the body? Who is the head?

Christians make up the body of Christ, but it is Christ Himself who is the head.

f. Why is it important for every member to be working properly? How does this apply to the importance of leading your family to be involved in your church?

Every member is vital to the body. Christ is the head, but every joint with which it is equipped is important for holding the body together. It is when every part is working properly that the body grows. This is why church involvement is so important to your spiritual leadership plan. A community of believers has been intentionally designed so that you will be equipped for the ministry and grow into mature manhood. But you are not the only one who benefits from involvement with the church. You (and your family members) are also a part of the body. And when you are involved and working properly, the body grows and builds itself up in love.

EPISODE 5

◆ Men of Purity

Sexual immorality is a plague in our culture, and Christian men are not exempt from its lure. It is a battle that every man fights. The Bible clearly condemns sexual immorality and commands purity of the heart. Sexual immorality is a serious sin, and it has a ripple effect on those around you. The gentle man can find victory in the fight for sexual purity by saturating himself in the gospel and prayer, surrounding himself with godly influences and accountability measures, and using his time productively.

1. How do you need to reorient your thinking about the seriousness of sexual impurity?

It is easy to believe the lies of the enemy: you're not hurting anyone, everyone has a little pet sin, no one will know, it's not that big a deal, etc. But the Bible makes it clear that sexual immorality (starting at the level of the heart and mind) is a very serious offense. And harboring immorality in your heart will have a ripple effect on those around you.

2. How does remembering the gospel challenge and encourage you in the fight for sexual purity?

Discuss answers. The gospel should encourage us because in the work of Christ we find forgiveness and freedom from our bondage to sin. The gospel also challenges us because we are reminded of the cost of that forgiveness. The grace found in the gospel should spur us to mortify the sins of the flesh.

3. Why might counting blessings and looking for opportunities to serve help in the fight for purity?

The sin of sexual immorality is rooted in selfishness and discontent. Focusing on the blessings God has given you or devoting your efforts to serving others are the opposite of selfishness. These actions redirect your thoughts, attitudes, and actions to productive outlets, putting you in a position of humility, gratitude, and contentment.

4. What will you do differently in your fight for sexual purity after watching this episode?

Discuss answers. As appropriate, guide participants to develop specific, achievable plans. Encourage intentional confession and accountability among trusted brothers. Consider leading a time of prayer.

5. Read Psalm 119:9-16

a. What is the key to purity?

The young man seeking purity must guard his way according to God's Word. The key to purity is a knowledge of, love for, and obedience to the Word of God.

b. What actions does the psalmist do and what attitudes does he display?

The psalmist seeks God, stores up the Word, declares God's rules, meditates on God's precepts, and focuses (fixes his eyes) on God's ways. He delights in God's testimonies and statutes.

c. How does such focus on God and His Word equip a young man to keep his way pure?

The psalmist is intentional and active in his pursuit of God. He focuses his attention on knowing God, learning and loving His Word, and living in obedience to God. If his energies are entirely focused on godly pursuits, he is limiting his exposure to opportunities for temptation. Not only is he keeping busy, but the things he busies himself with are righteous pursuits. The more he stores God's Word in his heart, the more he meditates on it, declares it, and delights in it, the more equipped he is to stand firm when the temptation comes.

EPISODE 6

◆ Men Who Lead with Grace

The gentle man is called to lead with the attitude of Jesus, who dealt graciously with others. Gracious leadership will demonstrate sacrificial love, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Most of us will not be asked to literally die for our wives, but we still demonstrate sacrificial love as we put our wives and family's needs above our own. A gracious leader will show tenderness, understanding, and honor to those under his authority, not lording his position over them, but serving them sacrificially.

1. How does the illustration of playing football with kids in the park or handling fine China dishes help you to think about how you interact with others?

Discuss answers. Illustrations can be helpful as we orient our perspectives. Though gentleness and graciousness are not often thought of as masculine traits, these illustrations remind us that care and restraint are necessary in certain circumstances. Often, the level of care we take with something correlates to how much we value it.

2. What does it mean to love your wife sacrificially? How have you failed or succeeded in this regard?

Men are called to love their wives as Christ loved the church—a love demonstrated by his death on the cross. For most people, loving sacrificially will not look like literally dying for your wife. Rather, sacrificial love is lived out day by day as the man serves his wife, setting aside his own desires to meet her needs. Encourage specific examples of loving sacrificially. Then ask for examples of choosing to live selfishly instead of sacrificially. Emphasize that sacrifice doesn't always have to be monumental.

3. How well do you know your wife? Do you know her better now than when you were first married? What can you do to better live in an understanding way?

Discuss answers. There is a sense in which living in the close quarters of marriage requires you to know your wife better than when you first wed. But just rubbing elbows daily is not the same as striving to live in an understanding way. Not only do we need to understand our wives, but we also need to live in light of that understanding. If you know the best time to talk to your wife is late in the evenings after the kids are in bed, you would not be living in an understanding way if you consistently start important conversations in the morning or while she's cooking dinner. Encourage participants to consider how they ought to be more intentional in understanding their wives and living with them in an understanding way.

4. How does the command to honor your wife serve as a safeguard against abusing the position of headship?

The man is the head of the household, but that position is one of responsibility more than power. In commanding the husband to honor his wife, God reminds husbands that they are not despots. Rather they are stewards, entrusted with the care of God's treasured creation. A man cannot simultaneously honor his wife and abuse his position of authority.

5. Read Ephesians 5:22–33

a. Who was this passage written by, and to whom?

Ephesians was written by Paul to the saints in Ephesus.

b. What is the broader context in which we find this passage?

In chapters 2 and 3, Paul laid out spiritual truths about salvation by faith and the mystery of the gospel. In chapters 4 and 5, Paul draws practical application from those truths. A true understanding of the gospel leads to walking in a manner worthy of that calling, putting off the old man in favor of the new man, and walking in love as imitators of Christ. We find this passage directly following and flowing from this instruction to walk worthy, put off the old self, to walk in love, and to submit to each other out of reverence to Christ. Through the following examples, Paul emphasizes that we honor and respect others because of our devotion to Christ.

c. What are wives called to do?

Wives are called to submit to their husbands as to the Lord, and to respect her husband.

d. What are husbands called to do?

Husbands are called to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He must love her as he loves himself.

e. How did Christ love the church?

He gave Himself for her. The picture here is not dominated by death, though His sacrifice did require His death on the cross. Rather, the focus here is the tender care in which He prepares and prizes His church. The picture is of setting her apart as holy, cleansing her carefully and completely, and presenting her as a most cherished possession.

f. What truth from Genesis underlines the teaching that the husband who loves his wife loves himself?

Paul cites Genesis 2:24 to show that God designed marriage as a union between a man and a woman. In fact, they become one flesh. This is the foundation for the teaching Paul gives here. Because they are one flesh, loving his wife is loving himself.

EPISODE 7

◆ Men Who Speak with Grace

If we are to be gracious leaders, we must learn to communicate graciously. Gracious communication is marked by pleasantness, kindness, and the desire to be a blessing to others. This doesn't exclude teaching and correcting, but we must teach and correct with kindness and gentleness. We must extend the same grace to others that Jesus extended to us. And when we recognize that God is at work and He is the one who changes hearts, we ought to speak humbly and gently.

1. Do you know anyone characterized as gracious? How would you describe that person?

When we think of graciousness, we often think of the sweet grandmotherly figure who works in the nursery and treats everyone as family. But that is not the only picture of graciousness in the church. Encourage discussion, taking specific note of men who are gracious. Compare the descriptions of the examples to Dr. Crotts' definition of graciousness.

2. Why should the Christian man be so serious about becoming gracious?

The Christian man should strive to be gracious because Jesus was gracious. If we strive to be like Christ, which is the goal of our sanctification, then we will grow in graciousness. The Christian man should also be motivated by the gospel and his appreciation for the forgiveness and grace applied to him through the cross of Jesus. Since we have received such grace, we can do nothing less than extend it to others.

3. How does recognizing that God is at work help the biblical man to be gracious?

When we recognize that God is at work, we are reminded that we are not aware of everything and not everything is under our control. This leads to humility, which in turn should tenderize our speech. We should not be quick to speak into a situation in our own arrogance but rather stop to consider what God might be doing. This insight, and the humility it brings, leads the biblical man to be gracious in his speech.

4. What frees the godly man to be kind, not needing to use profanity or raised voices to make his point?

Many people use raised voices, harsh words, or even profanity to try to strengthen their point. They think their intensity will communicate the seriousness of what they are trying to convey. However, the biblical man understands that he does not need to employ these tactics because it is not his intensity that will bring change to his family. It is God who changes hearts. The godly man, then, communicates kindly and graciously, relying on God to work in the hearts of his family.

5. Read Colossians 3:12-17

a. What is Paul teaching the Colossians in this chapter?

Paul is teaching the saints at Colossae the "put off/put on" principle. If someone has truly been redeemed—raised with Christ—then that person ought to seek the things that are above. In the process of sanctification, the Christian puts to death the old self with its earthly desires and practices and pursues righteousness instead. The chapter wraps up with some practical applications as we relate to one another.

b. How does Paul describe his listeners in verse 12? What motivation can be drawn from this description?

Paul identifies these believers as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Paul points to the identity of the believer and the work of God as the motivation for pursuing the godly qualities he goes on to list. Because we are chosen by God, adopted into His family, we should put on these attitudes and behaviors. Because we are holy—set apart by God to be righteous—we should strive to live holy lives. If we truly understand that we are beloved by God to the point that He sent His only Son to die for our sins and to declare us righteous, then we should desire to pursue these qualities.

c. What qualities or attitudes should a Christian pursue? Which of these is most difficult for you?

Christians should show compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love.

d. According to verse 16, what equips and empowers the Christian to exhibit these qualities?

It is the Word of Christ that equips and empowers the believer. Saturation in His Word leads to worship and gratefulness. Notice that this love and harmony in the body does not exclude teaching and admonishing. But teaching and admonition should be done in wisdom, characterized by love that binds the body together in harmony.

e. How does this passage exhort the godly man to be gracious?

This passage is not addressed solely to men, but neither are men an exception to this instruction. Paul begins the passage with a reminder of the gospel (see Colossians 3:1-4) and reminds the reader that it is because of God's love for us that we now put on these godly qualities. These are not to be seen as feminine or weak qualities; they are godly qualities. The godly man is called to be gracious—marked by kindness and a desire to help or be a blessing to others.

EPISODE 8

◆ Men Who Listen with Grace

The gentle man is a gracious leader who communicates and listens graciously. Gracious listening comes from valuing people properly. Our pride leads us to think of ourselves first or to see others as inferior. But when we value people as God values them, humility guides us to become a servant. When we listen better, we understand people better. When we listen carefully, we insulate ourselves from rash responses and give ourselves time to think before we speak. Gracious listening will make us better spiritual leaders.

1. If someone tried to rank the order of people you valued by the way you treat them, where would your wife and children fall in that list?

Many of us take for granted the ones who ought to be precious to us. If we truly value our families, we should be motivated to treat them with graciousness and humility. Each person is God's creation, made in His own image. Christians are adopted as His sons and daughters and made co-heirs with Christ, who gave His very life for them. Properly valuing people will help us to deal graciously with them.

2. How does listening lead to graciousness?

Being a good listener can increase your graciousness because it places you in a position of humility and respect for others. It helps you to understand what others are thinking or feeling. It may provide insight about how God is working. It gives you time to think before you respond. Listening helps you to understand the other person and/or their position. Listening communicates that you value the person, and it equips you to engage more effectively.

3. How does the third strategy—thinking of practical outcomes of a conversation—cause you to think differently about how you engage with others?

Most people are not so intentional prior to starting conversations. Thinking in terms of outcomes can help us to orient what we need to say or how we ought to convey it. Taking the time to think about the outcome forces us to be intentional, to cultivate graciousness, and to approach a conversation more interested in the other person than in what needs to be said.

4. How important is it to be constantly reminding ourselves of our own need for the gospel?

A correct view of ourselves is at the root of our attitude toward others. When we realize how sinful we are and how helpless we are apart from Christ, we ought not be capable of arrogance. When we are reminded of the cost of the cross and the grace that was applied to us, we should be motivated to live graciously. When we see ourselves in light of the gospel, we are in a better position to deal biblically with others.

5. Read James 3:9-12

a. What is "it" in verse 9?

The "it" in this verse refers to the tongue. These verses are part of a larger treatise dealing with the power—and danger—of the tongue. James has been speaking about the harm that can come from an unbridled tongue, as well as the difficulty in taming the tongue.

b. What hypocrisy does James address in verses 9 and 10?

James calls out the hypocrisy of blessing God and yet cursing people made in God's image. With the same tongue, we proclaim honor and glory to God and yet speak harshly to or about people whom God has created.

c. How would properly valuing people help to correct this hypocrisy?

James points out the contradiction by identifying people as being made in the image of God. If we truly saw people as God's valued creations, crafted in the likeness of the one we worship, we would not be so quick to cut down.

d. What admonition is James giving through the illustrations in verses 11 and 12?

James reminds his readers that a spring pours forth water from a single source, and thus fresh and salt water cannot both come from the same source. Additionally, fruit is

produced by plants according to their kinds. The implication is that a Christian ought to produce Christ-like attitudes and behaviors. We must not speak unrighteously, but graciously, with the same honor and respect we would show to God.

EPISODE 9

◆ Men of Gracious Hearts

A truly gentle man, a godly man, is driven by a gracious heart. We must cultivate graciousness at the level of the heart by preparing ourselves for a conversation, thinking before we speak, and considering if, what, when, and how something should be said. During a conversation, we should speak humbly and graciously and remember that everything—words, tone, expression, body language—communicates. Ultimately, the best way to cultivate a gracious heart is to spend time with gracious people, starting with Jesus.

1. What kind of questions should you ask yourself before speaking?

Dr. Crotts gave several examples of pre-debate questions, such as: "Am I in the right mind set?"; "Who am I talking to?"; "Is this the best time and place to have this conversation?"; and "What needs to be said and how does it need to be said?" Encourage additional ideas and discuss how these questions can be helpful for speaking graciously.

2. How often do you use words and phrases that could be considered gracious "helper" words? How could these helpers have benefited you in previous conversations that went poorly?

Using gracious helper words may be a new concept for many, but it can be a valuable strategy. Use real examples of exchanges that went poorly to examine how helper words and phrases could have been applied in that situation. Brainstorm additional helper words and phrases.

3. Have you ever considered how you communicate beyond words? How can you take more care in your non-verbal communication?

We all recognize that body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice all play a part in communication. But we do not often intentionally employ those non-verbal cues. Encourage men to seek insight from their wives or other men regarding ways they may be unintentionally communicating anger, harshness, or disinterest. Discuss ways to become more aware of non-verbal tendencies and to be more careful and intentional in what is being communicated.

4. Who is the most gracious man you know? How can you spend time with him?

Discuss answers. Encourage participants to identify someone gracious they can learn from and think about practical ways to spend time with that person in various contexts. Allow conversation about things that have been learned in this way and exhort participants to be intentional about seeking a gracious man to spend time with.

5. Read Romans 12:9-18

a. What grammatical pattern do you notice in these verses and how does that help us understand the passage?

All of these sentences are imperative statements. They all begin with verbs and are spoken like a command or instruction. The implied subject is "you." Recognizing this pattern helps us to see this passage as a list of instructions or commands that we ought to pursue. This is not a theological treatise, but a practical list of applications (Note: Paul has expounded the theological treatise in preceding chapters and now turns to the application of such theology.)

b. How do the instructions in this passage relate to cultivating a gracious heart?

Discuss answers, encouraging participants to identify connections between graciousness and practical attitudes and actions. Showing love, outdoing one another in showing honor, contributing to the needs of the saints, showing hospitality, blessing enemies, living in harmony, being humble, and living peaceably—these correlate directly with the principles and strategies Dr. Crotts has been outlining.

c. In which of these areas is it most difficult for you to be gracious?

Discuss answers and, as appropriate, work toward practical goals for growing in those areas. Ultimately, cultivating a gracious heart requires a correct view of God and His Word, a humble view of self, and appropriately valuing other image-bearers.

EPISODE 10

◆ Men Who Follow Jesus

Jesus is our perfect example of gracious leadership. Jesus cared for others, spoke gently, led humbly, and loved sacrificially. Though He was a gentle man, Jesus did not shy away from speaking strongly and clearly when the situation warranted. He taught, rebuked, and corrected. But even in these He demonstrated graciousness. His desire was that they would come to repentance and others would not be led astray. He was serving them even in His rebuke. In fact, it is because of His graciousness toward sinners that we can learn to be gentle, godly men.

1. How does Jesus' example demonstrate that clarity and rebuke can be done graciously?

There are occasions where Jesus spoke with strong words and rebuked with authority. Even during these times, however, Jesus was being perfectly gracious because He was seeking the good of those He was rebuking, as well as the benefit of others being led astray. Jesus was never being harsh as it relates to selfishness or a desire to "win" at the expense of others. Jesus spoke truth in love, and in certain circumstances, that required clarity and rebuke.

2. Which of Jesus' teachings or interactions do you find most instructive regarding graciousness?

Discuss answers. Jesus is, of course, our perfect example. We ought to look to him to understand true graciousness in various circumstances. Some may be most impacted by the kind and compassionate displays of graciousness as Jesus interacted with the hurt and the outcast. Some may be more challenged by the gracious way that Jesus taught, corrected, or even rebuked.

3. How should the graciousness of Jesus be an encouragement to us when we "blow it"?

Jesus' perfect graciousness is on display in several biblical accounts, such as the healing of the leper, the conversation with the rich young ruler, or going to Zacchaeus' house. These interactions of Jesus should encourage us because when we mess up, we know we can run to Jesus for forgiveness and compassion. He will not just bash me for my failures; He will be gracious toward me.

4. How was Jesus' work on the cross the ultimate demonstration of His graciousness?

Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty we deserve for our sin. This is, by definition, an act of grace. Graciousness seeks the benefit of the other person; harshness is selfish. Jesus showed grace toward harsh people like us. The cross reminds us of Jesus' graciousness toward us, providing forgiveness and restoration. And the cross should therefore motivate us to show graciousness toward others.

5. Read Philippians 2:1-11

a. What does Paul want from the Philippians in verse 2?

He wants them to be united in the love and mind of Christ. This is a picture of the body of Christ. Though there are many parts, we share the same goal as we grow together into the head, which is Christ.

b. What is expected from each believer in verses 3-4?

As believers, we are not to be motivated by our own desires or ambitions. We are not to be haughty, arrogant, or selfish. Rather, we are to show humility and put others before ourselves. We are to look out for each other.

c. What is the "one mind" that believers are to have, as described in verse 5-8?

The one mind of unified believers is that of Christ Jesus. We are to imitate the gracious attitude of Christ, who humbled himself to the point of death on the cross in order to provide salvation to sinners. Jesus was looking out not for his own interests, but for ours. This is the ultimate example of humility and grace.

d. How should Jesus' example motivate us to be gracious leaders?

Jesus is the perfect example for us in all things. He was a strong, courageous, and wise leader. And yet He was gracious, kind, and gentle. The two sets of traits are not in opposition to each other. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us, even while we were His

enemies. How much more should we show humility and grace to our families and in our relationships? Jesus also showed graciousness in every interaction, employing gentleness in one situation and clarity in another. But in everything, He was motivated by love for others, desiring that they would come to repentance and faith. We should seek to emulate Christ as gracious leaders.

STUDENT GUIDE

Episode 1—Men of the Book

What is a man? How should a man behave? There are many voices in this world clamoring for our attention and telling us what we should do or say or feel, and so many of them are contradictory. The Christian man does not need to be overwhelmed by the noise. Because God created mankind and established the distinction between male and female, we can go to His Word to find what it truly means to be a godly man. Not only does the Bible hold the key to answering this question, but it holds the key to our success as men and leaders. We must first and foremost be men of the Book.

- 1. What character traits do you think of as “manly”? What factors have influenced your expectations?**

- 2. Why is a balance between zeal and compassion so important? How have you seen the negative impact of either extreme?**

- 3. How does knowing Jesus called himself gentle shift your thinking about the trait?**

- 4. What role does the Bible play in the life of the believer?**

- 5. Read Psalm 1:1-6**
 - a. What two types of men are described in this psalm?**

 - b. What are the two things that describe the blessed man?**

 - c. What consequence does each type of man face?**

 - d. What parallel exists between the blessed man in Psalm 1 and God’s exhortation to Joshua in Joshua 1:8-9?**

 - e. What does the “Book of the Law” or the “law of the Lord” refer to in the context of these passages? What might we take it to include as we apply these concepts to our own context?**

 - f. How does this passage reinforce the desire to be a man of the Book?**

Episode 2—Men of Conviction

A man of conviction is confident in what he believes, and he faithfully acts out those convictions. More precisely, a godly man is a man of biblical convictions. We must be men of the Book to become men of biblical conviction. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and sufficient authority for our lives. We must have a working knowledge of the Bible—we must know what it says and how to put it into practice. We must start by being a good reader of the Word.

- 1. What are the four terms Dr. Crotts used to describe the Bible?**

- 2. In what ways have you struggled to be a reader of the Word? What practical tips or motivation have you received from this episode?**

- 3. What favorite tips or resources do you use when reading the Bible?**

- 4. Why is reading the Bible so important for biblical manhood?**

- 5. Read Matthew 7:24-27**
 - a. Who is speaking in this passage?**

 - b. What are the two contrasting images used in this illustration?**

 - c. The wise man in the illustration represents people who do what two things?**

 - d. How do we know that it is not enough to hear or know God's Word?**

 - e. What words of God do you need to apply to your life to be a true man of conviction, like the wise man in Jesus' illustration?**

Episode 3—Men of Stewardship

As men, we are the head of our households. But we are not the ultimate authority. A true gentle man must have a sense of stewardship. It is God who owns our families; we are just managing the families He has entrusted to us. And He has entrusted us with more than simple physical provision. We are called to be spiritual leaders. We must manage our households well because we are accountable to God as stewards of the precious lives He entrusted to us.

- 1. What is the sense of stewardship that a man should have? How does this shift your understanding of a man's role in his family?**

- 2. How do you need to change the way decisions are made in your family?**

- 3. Have you ever had the opinion (or acted like) that your responsibility was fulfilled by bringing home the paycheck? How might you approach things differently in light of this episode?**

- 4. What part of managing your family has been the most challenging for you? How will this episode help you to improve in that area?**

- 5. Read 1 Corinthians 11:3**
 - a. Who wrote this letter and to whom was it written? In what context do we find this verse?**

 - b. What 4-part relationship is described here?**

 - c. How does this verse demonstrate the stewardship granted to the husband?**

 - d. How does the relationship drawn between God and Jesus demonstrate that headship in this sense is not superiority?**

Episode 4—Men Who Lead Spiritually

Spiritual leadership can seem mysterious and intimidating. But being a spiritual leader in one's own home is not as difficult as many think. The first step to being a spiritual leader is to be walking with God. How can we lead others if we are not on the right path ourselves? Next, we must assume the responsibility of spiritual leader in our homes. And then we teach the Bible to our families, leading them in family worship and to be involved in a local church.

- 1. How does being a man of the Word relate to fulfilling the role of spiritual leader for your family?**

- 2. How has this episode framed spiritual leadership in a way that seems more attainable than before?**

- 3. Why is church involvement so important to spiritual leadership?**

- 4. Though church involvement is important, how can a man guard against relinquishing his responsibility to the church?**

- 5. Read Ephesians 4:11–16**
 - a. Who wrote this letter, and to whom was it written?**

 - b. What is the purpose of the various giftings God gave to those in the church?**

 - c. What is the goal of “mature manhood”?**

 - d. What is the danger for a Christian who is not being equipped, who is not yet a mature man?**

 - e. Who is the body? Who is the head?**

 - f. Why is it important for every member to be working properly? How does this apply to the importance of leading your family to be involved in your church?**

Episode 5—Men of Purity

Sexual immorality is a plague in our culture, and Christian men are not exempt from its lure. It is a battle that every man fights. The Bible clearly condemns sexual immorality and commands purity of the heart. Sexual immorality is a serious sin, and it has a ripple effect on those around you. The gentle man can find victory in the fight for sexual purity by saturating himself in the gospel and prayer, surrounding himself with godly influences and accountability measures, and using his time productively.

- 1. How do you need to reorient your thinking about the seriousness of sexual impurity?**

- 2. How does remembering the gospel challenge and encourage you in the fight for sexual purity?**

- 3. Why might counting blessings and looking for opportunities to serve help in the fight for purity?**

- 4. What will you do differently in your fight for sexual purity after watching this episode?**

- 5. Read Psalm 119:9–16**
 - a. What is the key to purity?**

 - b. What actions does the psalmist do and what attitudes does he display?**

 - c. How does such focus on God and His Word equip a young man to keep his way pure?**

Episode 6—Men Who Lead with Grace

The gentle man is called to lead with the attitude of Jesus, who dealt graciously with others. Gracious leadership will demonstrate sacrificial love, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Most of us will not be asked to literally die for our wives, but we still demonstrate sacrificial love as we put our wives and family's needs above our own. A gracious leader will show tenderness, understanding, and honor to those under his authority, not lording his position over them, but serving them sacrificially.

- 1. How does the illustration of playing football with kids in the park or handling fine China dishes help you to think about how you interact with others?**

- 2. What does it mean to love your wife sacrificially? How have you failed or succeeded in this regard?**

- 3. How well do you know your wife? Do you know her better now than when you were first married? What can you do to better live in an understanding way?**

- 4. How does the command to honor your wife serve as a safeguard against abusing the position of headship?**

- 5. Read Ephesians 5:22–33**
 - a. Who was this passage written by, and to whom?**

 - b. What is the broader context in which we find this passage?**

 - c. What are wives called to do?**

 - d. What are husbands called to do?**

 - e. How did Christ love the church?**

 - f. What truth from Genesis underlines the teaching that the husband who loves his wife loves himself?**

Episode 7—Men Who Speak with Grace

If we are to be gracious leaders, we must learn to communicate graciously. Gracious communication is marked by pleasantness, kindness, and the desire to be a blessing to others. This doesn't exclude teaching and correcting, but we must teach and correct with kindness and gentleness. We must extend the same grace to others that Jesus extended to us. And when we recognize that God is at work and He is the one who changes hearts, we ought to speak humbly and gently.

- 1. Do you know anyone characterized as gracious? How would you describe that person?**

- 2. Why should the Christian man be so serious about becoming gracious?**

- 3. How does recognizing that God is at work help the biblical man to be gracious?**

- 4. What frees the godly man to be kind, not needing to use profanity or raised voices to make his point?**

- 5. Read Colossians 3:12-17**
 - a.What is Paul teaching the Colossians in this chapter?**

 - b.How does Paul describe his listeners in verse 12? What motivation can be drawn from this description?**

 - c.What qualities or attitudes should a Christian pursue? Which of these is most difficult for you?**

 - d.According to verse 16, what equips and empowers the Christian to exhibit these qualities?**

 - e.How does this passage exhort the godly man to be gracious?**

Episode 8—Men Who Listen with Grace

The gentle man is a gracious leader who communicates and listens graciously. Gracious listening comes from valuing people properly. Our pride leads us to think of ourselves first or to see others as inferior. But when we value people as God values them, humility guides us to become a servant. When we listen better, we understand people better. When we listen carefully, we insulate ourselves from rash responses and give ourselves time to think before we speak. Gracious listening will make us better spiritual leaders.

- 1. If someone tried to rank the order of people you valued by the way you treat them, where would your wife and children fall in that list?**

- 2. How does listening lead to graciousness?**

- 3. How does the third strategy—thinking of practical outcomes of a conversation—cause you to think differently about how you engage with others?**

- 4. How important is it to be constantly reminding ourselves of our own need for the gospel?**

- 5. Read James 3:9–12**
 - a. What is “it” in verse 9?**

 - b. What hypocrisy does James address in verses 9 and 10?**

 - c. How would properly valuing people help to correct this hypocrisy?**

 - d. What admonition is James giving through the illustrations in verses 11 and 12?**

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