

The Roles of Men

Introduction	p.2
Session 1 - Men Living as God's Son	p.3
Session 2 - Men Living as God's Warrior.....	p.5
Session 3 – Men as Workers.....	p.7
Session 4 – Men as Leaders /Captains.....	p.9
Session 5 – Men as Husbands.....	p.11
Session 6 – Men as Fathers.....	p.13

Introduction

Although we sometimes view life as one-dimensional., it is not. Both men and women have many different relational responsibilities and roles. For men, we can be a son, a father, a husband, and an employee all at the same time. God designed us relationally to have many and varied roles. In each of these roles, we can learn something about ourselves and something about God. As we work to grow in each of these roles, we need to change and develop in character as well as seek God's help.

This Cedarcreek Seminar Manual was designed to explore the different roles that men have and how we might grow into those roles. In the 1st Session, the topic is our role as sons of God our Father. The 2nd Session is about being Spiritual Warriors and fighting in life to win in a positive way. The 3rd Session deals with us as employees as we tend to invest a lot of time at work. The 4th Session looks at how God has called men into being leaders and initiators. In the 5th & 6th Sessions, a man's role as a husband and father is addressed..

Session 1 – Men Living as God’s Son

Introduction

“He said to me, ‘You are my son; today I have become your Father.’” Psalm 2:7

This prophecy of Christ is true of you and I as well. God calls himself our Father (*Romans 8:15*); we are called his children (*1 John 3:1*); Christ calls us his brothers (*Hebrews 2:11*). We are truly God’s boys.

This doesn’t end when we become men on this earth. *“It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ they will be called ‘sons of the living God.’” Romans 9:26.* When we accept Christ as adults, we again become sons – sons of a great, spiritual Father.

- What does this look like for us?
- How do live as men in this world and as God’s boys at the same time?
- How does God want us to relate to Him as a Father?

1) Long to be Like Him

Every boy wants his Dad to be his hero. Unfortunately, our earthly fathers sometimes let us down. God never will.

- Do you long to be like him?
- Do you brag about him to others?
- Do you long to be with him?

“A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.” Proverbs 10:1

“My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.” Proverbs 23:15

“My soul yearns for you in the night, in the morning my spirit longs for you.” Isaiah 26:9

Application:

- Did you idolize your Dad? Why or why not?
- Are you becoming more like God?
- What would you have to do to become more like him?

2) Let Him Guide, Protect and Provide For You.

Boys need a Dad who will teach them and take care of them. God wants to do that with you your whole life. Unlike little boys, however, you can easily decide that you don’t need or want that from God. Living like God’s son means that for your *entire life* you will depend on Him to teach and guide you, to watch over and protect you, and to give you what you need when you need it.

“My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.” Proverbs 3:1

“The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the desert. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.” Deuteronomy 1:30-31

“Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself.” Psalm 80:14-15

Application:

- How much time (daily, weekly, only in rare occasions) do you spend asking God for help?
- Is it hard for you to be dependant?

3) Take Discipline

Like a little boy, you disobey and need correction. God is a good father and won't let you get away with it. For His honor and your well being, God *will* discipline you, regularly and consistently.

“Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.” Deuteronomy 8:5

“I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him...” 2 Samuel 7:14-15

“Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?” Hebrews 12:7

Application:

- How were you disciplined as a boy?
- How did you respond to it?
- What does God's discipline look like?
- How do you respond to it?

4) Enjoy Being With Each Other

God loves you. He puts a love for Himself in you. Just like a boy and his dad, part of your relationship with God is just laughing, snuggling, and being secure in His arms. As men, we might feel funny about this. **DON'T**. You are God's little boy.

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry ‘Abba’ (Daddy).” Romans 8:15

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’. So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” Galatians 4:6-7

Application:

- What is your relationship with your earthly dad like?
- Is your relationship with God similar? Why or why not?
- Do you feel comfortable and secure in God's presence?

Session 2 – Men Living as God’s Warrior

1) You Are Made By God to Fight and Win

Part of God’s plan for a man is to win. God is not afraid to fight for right. (*Revelation 19:11-21*). He calls us to fight with him. Read *Psalms 18* and *Psalms 144*.

- What did God do for David?

“He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. You give me your shield of victory...” Psalms 18:34-35

God also intends us to possess, to own and control. He commanded Adam in Genesis to ‘rule over the earth’. Read *Genesis 13:14-17*. God’s promise to Abraham was that he would possess the land.

Application:

- Do you see yourself as a warrior?
- Do you believe God’s plan is for you to win and control with him?
- What does that look like in your life?
- What are the battles you and God are in?
- What is the ‘land’ that God wants you to take and control?

2) Winning is Measured Differently From the World

We have a God given desire and call to win and possess. But, just like everything else, we must submit that desire to God – to his will, not ours.

- What does God want us to win at?

“Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.” Psalms 2:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

The world is not made up of land and governments; rather, it is made up of *people*, souls that will live forever. God hungers for each soul to repent and know him, so forever will be in his presence. (*2 Peter 3:9*). Winning the world means winning souls. But winning a soul is the beginning. We then are called to grow into disciples. Winning means that you become more like God and help others do so as well. Read *2 Peter 1:3-11*.

“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.” 1 Peter 2:11

Application:

- How active are you in sharing the gospel?
- How active are you in disciplining others?
- What would you do better if you could?
- What needs to happen for you to be more effective at winning and building souls?

3) God's Methods for Winning are Different Than the World's

The world is ruthless and selfish in its quest for success. God has a very different path to success. First, He says that success requires sacrifice. Read *Matthew 16:24-25*. Second, success requires service. Read *Matthew 20:25-28*.

Application:

- What does it mean to 'take up your cross daily'? Do you do that?
- What does it mean to 'serve, not be served'? Do you do that?

4) Dangers of Being a Warrior

The devil will twist the natural desires God puts in us. (*1 Peter 3:8-11*). There are at least two great dangers we must face as we live as God's warriors.

The first is pride – the self-centered feeling that we have accomplished on our own or for our own benefit. "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." *1 Peter 5:5*. Focusing on your own strength or honor will put you in opposition to God and in line for certain failure. The antidote for pride is found just before and after this passage. Submit to the men around you (v. 5), and submit to God (vs. 6-7)

The second danger is foolishness, or selfishness. We want to compete and win, but we spend our effort on silly, temporary, earthly things. How many times have you heard an athlete called a 'warrior'. Read *James 4:1-4*. Read *Colossians 2:20-3:4*. We must 'take every thought captive' for Christ. We must not be fools who spend our energy on games or money or hobbies or jobs or toys – only souls will last forever.

Application:

- What makes you proud?
- How easy is it for you to submit to others?
- Who is it hard for you to submit to; easy for you to submit to?
- In all honesty, what would you most like to accomplish in life?
- What are your goals and dreams for this life?

Session 3 - Men as Workers

Introduction:

As men we were created by God to work. This may look different for each one of us depending on our role as workers. We may be an employee at a local business, manager of multiple employees, or the owner of your own small business. However, in all these cases, we are workers. It is normal that as men the majority of our time and energy will be spent on our work. So it is important that we examine how to do this in a manner pleasing to God and also to put our work in its proper place in our lives.

1) Men Were Created for Work:

Read the passage in *Genesis 2:15*

“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”

- What do you do for work?
- What do you enjoy about the work you do?
- How would having the mindset that you were designed for work, not play, change the way you view your work?

Read the passage in *1 Timothy 5:8*

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

- How does this charge make you think about the work that you do?

2) The Attitude of a Worker

Read the passage in *Colossians 3:22-23*

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men...”

While we are not slaves, we do have a responsibility to obey those in authority (boss, supervisor, board members, etc.) in our workplace. It is amazing to see how the right attitude combined with obedience can, in most cases, allow more freedom in your work due to the trust that is put in you.

It is key to memorize the second part of the above scripture, *Colossians 3:23*. Simply repeating this verse over and over can totally change your attitude and makes what you’re doing more bearable and even fun!

- What is one action you can take to try working for the Lord and not for men?

3) Watching What You Say

Read the passage in *Proverbs 26:20*

“Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.”

Whether we like to admit it or not, the workplace is filled with gossip and slanderous comments.. We all know how easy it is to complain about how something is being done, or that we, “can do it better”. It is up to us to take action and change, because it’s more than likely that those who we have the thoughts about are not going to change!

- How can you handle a current situation at work where you are tempted to add wood to the fire?
- What are actions that you can take to remove yourself from the gossip and slanderous talk at your place of work?

4) Balancing Work with Personal Life

As men, you may agree that many times we are faced with two extremes. One extreme is that we let ourselves become so driven to succeed that we overwork and lose control of our time at work. Next thing you know, it’s all we think about, talk about, and do. It’s important not to misunderstand this. Success is definitely a quality that God instilled in us. However, success is more than just money or recognition. Success is more so the ability to maintain a balance while performing well in all areas of life. The other extreme is laziness. It is very easy to just give in when things are tough, you don’t like what you’re doing, or it seems you’re headed for a dead end. God calls us to work at what we are doing with all our heart. We must stay focused and not let laziness come to define who we are.

Read what it says in *1 Corinthians 10:23*

“Everything is permissible”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible”—but not everything is constructive.

Read what it says in *Proverbs 10:4*

“Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth”

- How have you been, or are you, headed toward one of the extremes talked about above?
- Here are some of the words used to describe, “Diligent”: constant in effort to accomplish something, attentive and persistent in doing anything, painstaking, untiring, tireless, and unremitting.
- What is one thing in your work life that is going to require you to be diligent?
- How can you apply diligence in that area?
- What action steps or safeguards can you personally put in place to help you avoid falling into becoming a workaholic or slacker?

Prayer

Break into pairs and share the one thing you really want to take away from this discussion. Pray for each other that God would grant you the ability to focus on this and really see it change over time.

Session 4 - Men as Leaders / Captains

Introduction:

Men tend to be very competitive by nature. Guys love sports and can turn any activity into a friendly game to see who comes out the winner. This tendency can be channeled for good as it calls us to excel, to focus and pour our full energies into something, to work hard and to overcome hardships. It can also be destructive when it drives us to the point of ruining friendships, using people and becoming proudly self-focused and absorbed in order to achieve success in some endeavor.

This session will focus on God's call to men to lead. We will look at God's charge at the beginning of Creation. We will look at one Old Testament man's struggle with leadership. Then we will discuss what the New Testament shows to be the qualities of a leader.

1) God's Charge to Men to Lead:

Why do we as men tend to be so competitive? What is behind this drive? We believe that this competitiveness is God calling men to lead out in their families, in their churches and in society. God has given men the mantle of and responsibility to lead. This runs contrary to some of the teaching and ideas of modern society. Men, we can not be intimidated by our society but must fulfill one of our God-given purposes!

Read *Genesis 1:26-31*

- What is God's commission in creating man?
- How do the following commands flesh out this leadership: be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it, and rule over it?
- Do you view yourself as a leader? Why or why not?

2) Man Shirks His Responsibility:

Ironically, man's competitiveness does not always direct itself into healthy, productive leadership. Men tend to shirk their leadership responsibility and become passive when it involves asserting themselves in the arenas of home life, church leadership and civic duty. Too often, we direct our competitive urge by simply playing or watching sports.

Read *Genesis 3:1-19*

- Why did the serpent approach Eve and not Adam?
- Where was Adam in the interchange between Eve and the serpent?
- Why do you think Adam was so passive in this whole event?
- What does God's judgment in verses 17-19 say about men and leadership?
- In what areas of life have you been passive when you should be leading out?

3) Gideon – One Man's Challenge With Leadership:

Many men don't lead out or take initiative because they feel so inadequate as leaders. We can tend to think of leadership as someone who is an exceptional gifted individual who can command crowds of people. Leadership is influence. Influence over people comes from the core of being a person of honor and integrity. These are qualities all men should develop. God can develop any man into a good leader.

Read *Judges 6:11-18*

- How did Gideon view himself?
- How did God view him?
- What was God’s promise that enabled him to carry out the God’s given role of leadership of His people?
- What changes in your thinking do you need to make to view yourself as a leader?

4) Jesus Takes on Leadership:

Other men relish taking on leadership positions but with wrong motives. Some guys love being “up front” because it makes them feel powerful and important. They love to exercise authority over other people and make decisions for personal gain. Genuine leadership is primarily a responsibility and a lot of hard work. When men pursue it for the wrong reasons, they forfeit the true calling of God to lead.

Read *Luke 22:24-27*

- Why do you think the disciples got into a discussion about who was the greatest?
- How does the world tend to view leadership?
- How did Jesus correct this misunderstanding of leadership?
- Why is servanthood so important in leadership?
- How do you exercise servanthood and authority at the same time in leading people?

5) Marriage and Leading in the Home:

One of the most difficult areas men find to lead out in is in the home with their wives and family. To leading in the home means that we willingly lay down our selfish desires and self-interests. We are to concern ourselves with the needs, desires and interests of our wives and children. We also need to set the spiritual pace by pursuing God personally in our lives and by involving our families in a local church.

Read *Ephesians 5:22-30*

- What does this passage reveal about husbands leading as head of their homes?
- How is this leadership expressed?
- With what attitude toward leadership have you lead in your home?

6) Leading in the Church:

God also calls men to give leadership direction and service to the affairs of the church. In the U.S., approximately 60% of those attending church are women. Men have too often abdicated their responsibility to lead out in spiritual matters. This has to change!

Read *Acts 6:1-7 & 1 Timothy 3:1*

- How did men in the early church help out their leaders?
- What stood out about these men?
- What are the requirements for a person to be appointed as a pastor? What can you learn about your leadership in your various spheres of influence from these requirements?

Application:

- What is one area of your life that you are currently shirking your responsibility to lead?
- What can you do to change this situation?

Session 5 – Men as Husbands

1) Building Oneness and Unity

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

What does it even mean to be *united*, let alone being *one flesh*? Clearly the Lord made a point to establish these two things as extremely important. The truth is that Christian men everywhere are being pulled in many directions when it comes down to being a husband. The world tells us that we are in fact not one flesh but two individuals, many commercials even challenge husbands and wives to do what best serves them as a separate entity, whether it be opening up a secret savings account, purchasing that item that would just make a person feel complete, or looking to seek comfort and love elsewhere. This is clearly countering what the Lord truly desires.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 and Philipians 2:2

- What do these passages say about the relationship between husband and wife?
- In your own life, what good/poor examples have you seen of unity and oneness?
- In ***Ecclesiastes 4:12*** it says, “***A chord of three strands is not quickly broken.***” What are the three strands and why does this bring strength?

2) Having a Single Focus toward Your Wife

It is not uncommon to see a married man walking down the street turn his head in the direction of a woman walking by. We have all seen commercials where a husband is slapped by his wife for turning his attention towards another woman in the room. Often this is seen as comical and even an acceptable standard. The truth is this is not the standard that the Lord has set for husbands. He has called husbands to a much higher standard and has set guidelines for having a single focus towards their wives.

Read Proverbs 5:15-19, and Song of Songs 4:10-11

- How do the passages direct husbands with their focus, and why is this important?
- In ***Proverbs 5:18*** the Lord tells husbands to, “***...rejoice in the wife of your youth.***” What are ways in which a husband can show his wife that he rejoices in her?
- What things can pull a husband’s focus away from his wife? What can we do to protect ourselves from such things?
- How can this area affect children and, specifically, younger men?

3) Love by Leading

One area that husbands often struggle with in marriage is in understanding his role. Leadership is something that men struggle with for many reasons, whether it is because of laziness, selfishness, fear, or just a lack of understanding what healthy, loving leadership is. The Lord calls men to leadership as husbands and he describes specific ways in which husbands must love their wives by leading.

Read Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:7, and 1 Corinthians 11:3

- How do these passages describe a husband’s role in marriage?
- What are some good/poor examples of loving through leadership that you have witnessed or been a part of?

- What does loving leadership look like?
- How can we challenge men to grow in their roles as husbands, and how can we encourage young men to prepare for this period of their life?
- How can husbands present their wives as radiant churches?
- How can you grow in showing love to your wife?

4) No Sex Outside Of Your Marriage

It is no secret that a specific area that men struggle with is lust. We have all heard the ignorant statement, “Well, it is okay that I look, I just can’t touch.” Sometimes this statement is even said right in front of one’s wife. Temptation often stares men in the face every time they turn on the T.V. or go on the internet. Society tells men that they are not men unless they look and gawk, whistle and stare. Society is wrong! The Lord tells men that lust is not okay, it should not be the standard, and that husbands need to protect themselves from it.

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, and 7:3-5, Hebrews 13:4, Matthew 5:27-28, and Proverbs 5:20-21, and 6:23-29

- How do these passages challenge men in the area of lust?
- What is the difference between how society describes what sex should be and what the Lord describes sex should be?
- How can men protect themselves from struggling with lust?
- What is God’s desire for sex in marriage?
- How does this relate to a husband’s role in marriage?

5) Be Men of Honor & Integrity

Finally, husbands need to be men of honor. By fulfilling our marital roles and seeking a greater intimate relationship with the Lord, we begin to grow as men of honor. When husbands are men of honor and integrity they are better suited to love their wives and be better leaders.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Proverbs 10:9, 17:24, 17:27, Titus 2:2, 6-8, and James 1:19-22

- What do these verses say about being men of honor and integrity?
- Why is this important to our wives?
- How does this tie into fulfilling our roles as husbands?
- How does being men of honor and integrity help with loving through leadership?
- What can you do to grow in honor and integrity?

Men, if we pursue these things with passion and consistency we will unite ourselves with our wives and become the men the Lord desires us to be as husbands. By seeking the Lord first and putting our relationship with him before anything else, we put ourselves in a position for the Lord to help us grow into husbands of leadership, love, honor, and respect.

Pray and consider the following questions:

- If your wife was asked what type of husband you are, what would she say?
- How do you work on growing in oneness and unity?
- What is the next step for you to improve on being a husband?
- How can you grow closer to both the Lord and your wife?

Session 6 – Men as Fathers

Introduction:

As a father, *what legacy do I really want to leave my children?* With the limited time we are given together, what is it that they really need to know, or more importantly, see. As a dad I have heard and understood the statement: *“more is caught than taught.”* In other words, I cannot expect my kids to be something that I am not. In fathering, more than any other area I think, there is no place for hypocrisy. What our children see from us must be real and valuable, if it is to be real valuable to them.

Read Malachi 4:5-6:

“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

Isn't it interesting that when the day of the Lord comes, one of the first things the Lord will do is get the family in order. And he starts with us dads. Only once the hearts of the fathers are turned toward their children first, will the children's hearts then be turned to their fathers. In a practical sense, exactly what does it look like and sound like for a dad to turn his heart toward his children? Let's look at some of these.

1) A Dad of Prayer:

Every child will benefit from a dad whose prayer life is visible and authentic. So much about what our children learn about having a Heavenly Father starts with what they learn from their earthly father. Jesus prayed and talked with his Father continuously. Our kids should see us do the same, both for them and with them. This needs to be modeled.

Read Jeremiah 33:3.

- What does it say about the things God will tell us?
- As a dad do we need to know about all things all on our own?

This models a need and dependence on our Heavenly Father for all things in life. This models humility and dependence on God.

2) A Dad of Purpose:

The Bible tells us that there is a time for everything under the sun. School is important, housework is essential, recreation is beneficial, but we must remember the words *“beware of the barrenness of a busy life.”* Our children need the legacy of a dad whose life is directed by a clear purpose. We were created for God's purpose and pleasure. Jesus defines these as loving God and loving others. This will not and cannot happen simply by chance, but must be lived out intentionally. How we spend our time dads will say a lot. Here's a good practical test to take:

Ask yourself: Am I a thermometer or a thermostat in the home? A **thermometer** simply reacts to the environment it is in and reacts accordingly. If the atmosphere is cold, it too will be cold. If it is hot, it will measure hot as well. But a **thermostat** is different. It acts as a climate control device. If it is too cold, a thermostat can be used to warm things up, or vice versa.

Dads, do you see yourself as a climate control in your home? We have a God-given responsibility to set the control to “grace-filled” and “just-right” in our homes with our marriages and children.

- Are you taking the spiritual lead dad?
- Are you a thermometer or a thermostat?

3) A Dad of Patience:

One of the best ways to be a thermostat is to demonstrate godly patience. *James 1:2-4* says: **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ²because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”**

- What is the purpose of trials according to James?

Trials help us to know that God’s presence and training is right there with us during various difficult times. When our children see us growing in patience instead of fighting God or others, it is a great example for them to follow.

4) A Dad of Play:

We live in a busy world. But we should never be too busy to play with and enjoy our children. In *Psalms 127:3* it says that our kids are a gift or reward from God. When we make it a priority to spend time playing or just being with them it shows that we see them as valuable. What is truly important to us, we will make time for. Our children need to see us dads playing and laughing and hugging and loving them daily. There are things in the world, our jobs, our social lives that we need to “fit into” our schedules and day-timers. Our children should not be one of them but should, along with our wives, be a daily priority.

5) A Dad of Praise:

“Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.” Proverbs 3:27

There are three types of people who need praise and encouragement: men, women and children. As dads we hold the important role of the power of our words, especially with our wives and children. One of the best things a dad can do for his kids is love and praise their mom. One of the best tools God gives us to encourage our children is to praise them. To praise them is to come along side and build them up. Our words and actions are very powerful and influential with those we live with, and this is one of the best ways we can set the thermostat in our homes.

Application:

Review the key areas:

Prayer - Purpose - Patience - Play - Praise

- Which areas of these are you strongest in?
- What area are you weakest in?
- Pray about the two areas you feel most led to work on and share with a few others.