

Northwest University

Dying to Love: Equipping Young Men to Become Counter-Cultural Husbands

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study examining how cultural perspectives on the role of men as husbands influence the attitudes of 18-26 year old men at Newlife Church in Kitsap County. Newlife Church is identified as one of the fastest growing churches in the United States despite being located in one of this country's least religious metropolitan areas. This study explores the attitudes, beliefs, and expectations that young men of Newlife Church have about the role of men as husbands.

The study is driven by five research questions: 1) How does Scripture define the role of a man as a husband? 2) How do young men of Newlife Church describe the role of a man as a husband? 3) How do young men of Newlife Church describe a successful marriage? 4) How are young men being prepared for their role as husbands? 5) How can Newlife Church better equip young men to be counter-cultural husbands?

Data was gathered through three focus group discussions. Each focus group was composed of 18-26 year old single men who regularly attend or have previously attended a Newlife Church gathering. A total of eighteen young men participated in the study. Collected data was analyzed to identify common words, big ideas, and emerging themes.

As a result of the research, four implications emerged: 1) Young men of Newlife Church are relentlessly exposed to cultural examples and media messaging that are relationally dangerous and counter to God's plan for a husband in marriage. 2) An effective and sustainable small group ministry can serve as a key starting point for training young men to become counter-cultural husbands. 3) Newlife Church lacks a strategy to develop and sustain any type of ministry that trains young men to be biblical husbands. 4) Young men at Newlife Church will be able to stand strong for Christ only when they know better what they already know.

Information learned during the research will be used to develop an infrastructure for small group ministry that will biblically challenge cultural perspectives, train young men to lead successful marriages, and equip them to take the mission of Jesus to Kitsap County.

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CHAPTER 1

Statement of Problem

A thorough study of religion can give us all sorts of insights into areas of life that are not going too well.

-- Alain de Botton, *Atheism 2.0*

The condition of men as husbands is not good. In the 2011 Great Male Survey conducted by AskMen.com, 70,000 men were asked, “Which of the following characteristics best defines a ‘real man’ in 2011?”¹ Of the respondents, just 48 percent stated that “being a good father, and/or husband who takes care of his family” defines a “real man.” Former Education Secretary William Bennett recently observed that American males do not know who they are supposed to be. Bennett notes, “We are raising a lot of great boys into men in this society...but we’re not raising enough.”² According to Bennett, culture bombards our young men with a “dizzying array of confusing signals” from the glorification of “hood culture” to acceptance of violence against women.³ Such perspectives on the overall condition of men in our society are consistent with the findings of University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox who determined that “headship has been reorganized along expressive lines, emptying the concept of virtually all of its authoritative character.”⁴ We are beginning to see an entire generation of husbands who lack the character to lead.

¹ AskMen.com, “The Great Male Survey 2011 Edition,” http://www.askmen.com/specials/great_male_survey/ (accessed February 29, 2012).

² Peter J. Smith, “Bill Bennett: America has a ‘Man Problem,’” *LifeSiteNews.com*, June 7, 2011, <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/bill-bennett-america-has-a-man-problem> (accessed February 20, 2012).

³ Smith, 1.

⁴ W. Bradford Wilcox, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 173.

Sweeping cultural change of the last 100 years has had significant implications for young men as they prepare to become husbands who hope to love their wives for a lifetime. Universal truth has given way to individual perspective, and the reliability of human perception now yields to the primacy of experience.⁵ In the postmodern cultural context, being open minded, tolerant, and diverse is intentionally misinterpreted to mean that there is no real truth, that all perspectives are equally acceptable, that all paths lead to salvation, and that ultimate happiness is attained by pursuing comfort and convenience.⁶ But this postmodern formula for happiness is not translating into more successful marriages. Society is moving away from the traditional role of a man as a husband in a biblical marriage. Left in its wake are men who have no external expectation, and therefore no internal desire, to lead. This loss of centeredness has become one of the chief characteristics of our contemporary situation.⁷ Modern day husbands find the responsibility of leadership as difficult to understand as it is to accept. Instead of stepping up to lead, husbands are stepping away.

The institution of marriage in America is not well. About 46 percent of all marriages end in divorce.⁸ This figure is even higher if one counts permanent separations that do not end in divorce. Approximately 48% of marriages that occurred in the 1970's dissolved within 25 years.⁹ In Kitsap County there are nearly 6,000 female householders (6.1 percent) who have children

⁵ Earl Creps, "Disciplemaking in a Postmodern World," *Assemblies of God USA Enrichment Journal* (Fall 2002), http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200204/200204_052_discipling.cfm (accessed November 30, 2011).

⁶ Mark Driscoll, "Pain and Progress" (sermon, Mars Hill Church, Seattle, WA, March 18th, 2007).

⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 20.

⁸ R. Schoen and V. Canudas-Romo, "Timing Effects on Divorce: 20th Century Experience in the United States," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68 (2006): 749–758.

⁹ Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, "Marriage and Divorce: Changes and their Driving Forces," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21 (2007): 30.

less than 18 years of age and have no husband present.¹⁰ For couples that last, happiness seems to be slipping away. Since 1973, the General Social Survey has periodically asked representative samples of married Americans to rate their marriages as either “very happy,” “pretty happy,” or “not too happy.” The percentage of both men and women reporting “very happy” has declined moderately – from 69.6 to 63.2 for men and 66.2 to 59.7 for women - over the past 35 years.¹¹

At the same time, Americans have become less likely to marry. This is reflected in a decline of more than 50 percent from 1970 to 2009 in the annual number of marriages per 1,000 unmarried adult women.¹² Among young mothers in the Mosaic generation (that is, mothers who are currently ages 18 to 22), four out of five are not married.¹³ Changes in medical technology, (introduction of the birth control pill), changes to the legal structure of marriage (the ‘no-fault’ divorce), and changes in wage structures which have closed the gender wage gap, have altered the perceived gains of marriage.¹⁴ Western culture is turning away from marriage as the sole dyadic structure for long term commitment and is seeing non-marital cohabitation become a modern day social institution.¹⁵

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, “2010 Census: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics for Kitsap County, Washington,” <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/530351k.html> (accessed January 14th, 2012).

¹¹ W. Bradford Wilcox, Elizabeth Marquardt, David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, eds., National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia and the Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values, *The State of Our Unions: When Marriage Disappears - The New Middle America*, (2010). <http://stateofourunions.org/> (accessed October 6th, 2011), 65.

¹² Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, Whitehead, 60.

¹³ The Barna Group, “The Spirituality of Moms Outpaces that of Dads,” (May 2007). <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/104-the-spirituality-of-moms-outpaces-that-of-dads> (accessed October 31st, 2011).

¹⁴ Stevenson and Wolfers, 42-46.

¹⁵ Jan Trost, "The Social Institution of Marriage," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 41 (2010): 507-514. <http://ehis.ebscohost.com.firma.northwestu.edu/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=23&sid=aba71e94-8dc0-45d2-b415-899d783d1cb9%40sessionmgr11&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=psych&AN=2011-07984> (accessed October 6, 2011).

Despite the apathy of men and the deteriorating institution of marriage, the *idea* of marriage maintains a central role in American life. In fact, 85% of adults in America will marry and 94% expect to marry their true love.¹⁶ A 2009 study conducted by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan determined 72.2 percent of high school senior boys and 80.5 percent of high school senior girls say having a good marriage and family life is “extremely important” to them.¹⁷ But while the notion of marriage and family remain very important to 21st century American young adults, they are demonstrating increasing approval of a range of non-marital lifestyles such as cohabitation, non-marital childbearing, and singleness which contradict these goals.¹⁸ Researcher George Barna finds that Americans have grown comfortable with divorce as a natural part of life. He notes that young people embrace the idea of serial marriage in which a person gets married two or three times seeking a different partner for each phase of their adult life.¹⁹ Over the last 35 years there has been a significant increase - from 41.2 to 55.9 for boys and 33.3 to 55.8 for girls - in the percentage of high school seniors who believe having a child without being married is an acceptable experimentation with a worthwhile lifestyle or that doing so doesn't affect anyone else.²⁰ Over this same time period there has been a decrease – from 57.3 to 57.2 for boys and 68 to 61.8 for girls – in the percentage of high school seniors who believe it is “very likely” that they will stay married to the same person for life.²¹

¹⁶ David Popenoe and Barbara Whitehead, eds., National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia and the Center for Marriage and Families at the Institute for American Values, *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America*, (2001). “<http://stateofourunions.org/> (accessed October 6th, 2011).

¹⁷ Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, Whitehead, 99.

¹⁸ Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, Whitehead, 106.

¹⁹ The Barna Group, “New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released,” (March 2008), <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released> (accessed October 31st, 2011), 1.

²⁰ Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, Whitehead, 102.

²¹ Wilcox, Marquardt, Popenoe, Whitehead, 100.

Young men are not equipped to overcome the challenges they will face in marriage. Relationship beliefs of young adults are influenced by expectations they have for their intimate relationships and are based on personal and observed experiences.²² A 2007 study conducted by researchers at the University of Georgia and the University of Kentucky sought to understand whether young adults and family educators share beliefs about the components of a successful marriage. Researchers found that young adults defined a successful marriage as having partners who agree on most issues.²³ Such a schematic belief, known as *romanticism*, holds that partners should be perfect, that each person has one true love, and that love can conquer any difficulties.²⁴ Another commonly held schema is that of *destiny beliefs*. Young adults who hold such views believe that once a person finds his or her true love, he or she is not likely to experience relationship troubles and will instead experience a life full of happiness.²⁵ This same research also identified emerging common definitions of a successful marriage which included: couples will be happy; couples will do what they can to succeed; couples will agree on major decisions; couples will not regret getting married; couples will show love; the marriage will be based on deep friendship; couples will not be defensive during an argument or disagreement; and most problems will not remain unsolved.²⁶ Among our young men, there is a gap between their

²² J.M. Honeycutt and J.G. Cantrill, *Cognition, Communication, and Romantic Relationships* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 10.

²³ Honeycutt and Cantrill, 223.

²⁴ S.E. Weaver and L.H. Ganong, "The Factor Structure of the Romantic Beliefs Scale for African Americans and European Americans," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 21 (2004): 171.

²⁵ C.R. Knee, H. Patrick, and C. Lonsbary, "Implicit Theories and Relationships: Orientations Toward Evaluation and Cultivation," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 7 (2003), 41.

²⁶ Wright, Simmons, and Campbell, 231.

expectations and the reality of being a husband. Worse yet, they do not seem to possess the skills and experiences necessary to successfully mitigate the gap.

Author Alain de Botton suggests that society has “secularized badly” and that in light of the many moral holes in culture we should “take a leaf” out of the religious books in order to gain insight into areas of life that are not going well.²⁷ We should, he argues, take what is useful from the religious traditions and discard the rest. But taking Jesus out of the equation is exactly what American culture has done for the last 100 years. It is not working. Men have lost their sense of purpose. Society has redefined, forgotten, and in some cases outright rejected what it means for a husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church. Instead of replacing Scripture with culture, as de Botton suggests, it is time for disciples of Christ to infuse the next wave of culture with Scripture. Such prophetic ministry is counter-cultural by nature in that it nurtures, nourishes, and evokes a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.²⁸

This project seeks to understand how cultural perspectives on the role of men as husbands are influencing the attitudes of 18-26 year old men at Newlife Church in Kitsap County. This particular age range was chosen because intimate relationships are explored more deeply between the ages of 18 – 26 as individuals prepare for mate selection.²⁹ Information learned during the research will be used to develop an infrastructure and inform a curriculum for small

²⁷ Alain de Botton, “Atheism 2.0,” (lecture, TED Talks, Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2011).

²⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 3.

²⁹ D.W. Wright, L.A. Simmons and K. Campbell, “Does a Marriage Ideal Exist? Using Q-Sort Methodology to Compare Young Adults’ and Professional Educators’ Views on Healthy Marriages,” *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal* 29, (2007): 223.

group ministry that will biblically challenge cultural trends, train young men to lead successful marriages, and equip them to take the mission of Jesus to Kitsap County.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature review examines key issues pertinent to the role of men as husbands. The review focuses on four categories: 1) Interpretation of Scripture as it relates to the relationship between a husband and a wife, 2) Christian perspectives related to marriage and the role of men as husbands, 3) Research related to the expectations of young men as they prepare for marriage, and 4) Efforts to equip young men to become successful husbands.

God's Plan: Created and Corrupted

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

--Genesis 1:26

God told us it would be like this. Through His work in the garden, God defined a successful marriage. Adam and Eve, the first husband and wife, were to enjoy one another, naked, without sin, for eternity.³⁰ But Eve's commission and Adam's omission caused them both to be expelled from the garden - the trajectory of their relationship altered dramatically. God told the woman that she would have an inordinate desire to oppose her husband.³¹ In the case of the man, everything he was created to cultivate would now war against him.³² God warned that "Under three things the earth trembles; under four it cannot bear up."³³ One of these identified

³⁰ Gen. 2:24-25. Unless noted otherwise, the English Standard Version is used throughout this paper.

³¹ Gen. 3:16.

³² Gen 3:17-19.

³³ Prov. 30:21.

“things” is “an unloved woman when she gets a husband.”³⁴ Indeed, unloved women are rocking the foundation of our society.

A foundational principle of God’s plan is that males and females are created in the *imago Dei*, or the image of God. God created man “...in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”³⁵ This means that like the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who are equal in importance, personhood, and deity, so too are a man and woman equal in value and dignity in creation and in redemption.³⁶ God placed the man, Adam, in the Garden of Eden to “work it and keep it.”³⁷ Adam was put in charge of the garden with a responsibility to enable the earth to bear its fruit.³⁸ God further commanded the man saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”³⁹ In receiving this command, Adam entered into a covenant relationship with God as the representative for mankind.⁴⁰ As such, Adam assumed responsibility for the consequences of breaching the covenant.⁴¹ Among today’s Christians, there is little controversy up to this point in God’s revealed plan.

³⁴ Prov. 30:23.

³⁵ Gen. 1:27.

³⁶ W. Robert Godfrey, “Headship and the Bible,” in *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship? The Equal-Regard Marriage and Its Critics*, edited by David Blankenhorn, Don Browning and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 83.

³⁷ Gen. 2:15.

³⁸ Eugene F. Roop, *Genesis*, Herald Press, 1987. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed February 18, 2012).

³⁹ Gen 2:16-17.

⁴⁰ T. Desmond Alexander, “Genesis,” in *English Standard Version Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 54.

⁴¹ Alexander, 54.

It is no coincidence that Satan didn't arrive on scene until Adam and the woman were married. When Satan arrived, in the form of a serpent, he tricked the woman by using a technique that he still uses to this day. As he tempted the woman, he ever so slightly twisted God's command. Satan asked, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"⁴² Though the woman responded rightly, Satan's hook was set. He questioned God's word and started a discussion that assumed God as untrustworthy. Sin twisted God's plan for unity between a husband and wife and corrupted God's plan for unity in His church.

God's Plan: Debated and Divided

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

-- Eph. 5:22-23

Today, those who call themselves Christian do not all agree on how God's work in creation translates into a relationship between a husband and wife in the 21st century. To some, God's plan is for an ordered, yet complementary, relationship.⁴³ In such a relationship, the husband and wife are equal with distinct roles. The husband is expected to demonstrate loving, considerate, and thoughtful leadership as the wife responds with active, intelligent, and joyful submission to her husband's authority.⁴⁴ To others, God's plan is grounded in equality of all persons without distinction in role and authority.⁴⁵ This egalitarian view of the marital

⁴² Gen. 3:1.

⁴³ Mark Driscoll and Gary Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 123.

⁴⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 467.

⁴⁵ Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, "Excerpts from *The Feminist Bogeywoman*," Christians for Biblical Equality, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/excerpts-feminist-bogeywoman> (accessed February 1, 2012).

relationship, as described by Don Browning, does not require male headship but rather follows the strict demands of Christian neighbor love in which self-sacrifice is the means for restoring broken relations to a condition of mutuality.⁴⁶

While Christians debate differences between the complementarian and egalitarian positions, most agree that what is not at stake is biblical authority, biblical morality, the integrity of the church, or the preservation of the family and civilized society.⁴⁷ Still, significant differences exist, and proponents of each position leverage mass media, the internet, and multiple forms of published literature to influence culture and promote adherence. For example, the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) is a leading advocate for the complementarian position. According to the CBMW, over 500,000 people from 34 different countries visit their website each year to access hundreds of books, articles, and audio resources.⁴⁸ Christians for Biblical Equality (CBE) is the leading advocacy organization for the egalitarian perspective. The CBE conducts annual international conferences and publishes periodicals, a blog, and a weekly newsletter. The CBE includes members from over 100 denominations and 65 countries.⁴⁹

Despite significant and at times polarizing differences in perspective, evangelicals continue to wrestle with biblical text in an effort to contextualize and apply God's plan. Oregon State University sociologist Sally Gallagher interviewed evangelical men and women across the

⁴⁶ Don Browning, "Reflections on the Debate," in *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship? The Equal-Regard Marriage and Its Critics*, edited by David Blankenhorn, Don Browning and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 128.

⁴⁷ Groothuis, 1.

⁴⁸ Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, "Why We Exist," <http://www.cbmw.org/Why-We-Exist> (accessed February 13, 2012).

⁴⁹ Christians for Biblical Equality, "Our Mission and History," <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/our-mission-and-history> (accessed February 13, 2012).

country and across denominational lines to conclude that most evangelicals are “pragmatically egalitarian.”⁵⁰ She determined that evangelicals maintain headship in the sphere of ideas, but practical decisions are made in most evangelical homes through a process of negotiation, mutual submission, and consensus.⁵¹ Egalitarian, equal-regard marriages see the central family motif become commitment and mutuality, not duty and sacrifice.⁵² Kevin Giles, a leading egalitarian voice, claims that all evangelicals are complementarians.⁵³ Giles says that some evangelicals are “hierarchical-complementarians, envisaging men standing over women while others are egalitarian-complementarians, envisaging men and women standing side by side in the world, the church and the home.”⁵⁴

One prominent complementarian, Mark Driscoll, has echoed a similar perspective in stating that the process of the woman’s creation reveals God’s plan for a woman to be at her husband’s side as an intimate equal, and not in front of him as feminism teaches or behind him as chauvinism teaches.⁵⁵ In distinguishing “hierarchical-complementarians” from “egalitarian-complementarians,” Giles’ intent is to address the issue of female leadership within the church.

⁵⁰ Sally K. Gallagher, *Evangelical Identity and Gendered Family Life*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 103.

⁵¹ Gallagher, 103.

⁵² Bonnie Miller-McLemore, “A Feminist Christian Theologian Looks (Ascance) at Headship,” in *Does Christianity Teach Male Headship? The Equal-Regard Marriage and Its Critics*, edited by David Blankenhorn, Don Browning and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 52.

⁵³ Kevin Giles, “An Examination of the Seven Pillars on Which the Case for the Permanent Subordination of Women Stands,” (lecture, The 58th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington D.C., November 15-17, 2006). In *Christians for Biblical Equality*, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/examination-seven-pillars-which-case> (accessed February 15, 2012).

⁵⁴ Giles, 10.

⁵⁵ Mark and Grace Driscoll, *Real Marriage: The Truth About Sex, Friendship and Life Together*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 37.

But his statement also reveals a key issue within complementarian circles - the distinction between “two-point” and “three-point” complementarians.

Spheres of Leadership

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

--Eph. 5:24

Complementarians, such as Robert Godfrey and Wayne Grudem, affirm that God created man and woman equal in value and personhood, and equal in bearing his image. They also believe that a man’s responsibility to lead his family and within his church is not just a matter of convenience or pragmatic arrangement, but rests on a critical theological foundation⁵⁶ reflective of God’s desire for husbands and wives to share love, communication, and mutual giving of honor to one another in their interpersonal relationship.⁵⁷ This means that a husband’s leadership responsibility neither justifies nor equates to a capricious, unchecked ultimate authority. The husband falls under the authority of God, and other forms of authority including civil government and church leadership.⁵⁸ In such a relationship complementarians believe the husband’s Christ-like leadership results in the wife’s willing submission.

But not all who call themselves “complementarian” agree on which spheres of life these differences in role and authority affect. Two-point complementarians believe that both creation and redemption indicate some distinct roles for men and women in *marriage* and in the *church*.⁵⁹ Paul’s letter to the Ephesians exhibits the fact that God’s created intention of appropriate male

⁵⁶ Godfrey, 88.

⁵⁷ Grudem, 455.

⁵⁸ Driscoll and Breshears, 124.

⁵⁹ Grudem, 16.

leadership and authority should now, in Christ, be fully affirmed, both in the *home* and in the *church* as men and women express their common humanity according to God's originally created and good hierarchical design.⁶⁰

Three-point complementarians, sometimes referred to as biblical patriarchs, look to the Bible and to ancient historical customs to affirm their controversial position. Adherents to this more traditional perspective interpret Paul's words to mean that appropriate male leadership reaches beyond *marriage* and the *church* and extends into *society*. William Einwechter asserts that God has delegated authority to men to exercise headship and to govern under His authority in the family, church, and state.⁶¹ Phil Lancaster adds that a God-honoring society will prefer male leadership in civil and other spheres as an application of and support for God's order in the formative institutions of family and church.⁶² The divinely ordained order applies to all areas of life where men are called by God to exercise authority over others – women in particular.

In a position paper posted on the Vision Forum Ministries website, Einwechter rejects Christian support for a woman in civil office stating that biblical doctrine of male headship disqualifies a woman for civil service. According to Einwechter, "God has called her to be 'a keeper at home,'⁶³ and she willingly and joyfully fulfills her calling to the great blessing of all

⁶⁰ Bruce Ware, "Summaries of the Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions on the Role of Women in the Home and in Christian Ministry," The Council on Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, (2011), <http://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Articles/Summaries-of-the-Egalitarian-and-Complementarian-Positions> (accessed November 6, 2011).

⁶¹ William Einwechter, "The Patriarchy Paradigm," Vision Forum Ministries, posted June 23, 2010, http://www.visionforumministries.org/issues/family/the_patriarchy_paradigm_1.aspx (accessed December 4, 2011).

⁶² Phil Lancaster, "Biblical Patriarchy," Vision Forum Ministries, posted May 3, 2006, www.visionforumministries.org/home/about/biblical_patriarchy.aspx (accessed December 3, 2011).

⁶³ Tit. 2:5.

who depend on her piety, wisdom, and homemaking skills.”⁶⁴ David Kotter, a contributor to the CBMW affirms that the Bible reserves final authority in the church for men, but notes that “this does not apply in the kingdom of this world. Therefore we must be careful to not go beyond the teaching of the Bible,”⁶⁵ and recognize that the Bible “does not prohibit them [women] from exercising leadership in secular political fields.”⁶⁶

Historically, ancient Israeli women were always under the authority and protection of the nearest male relative; in the case of a wife, this was the husband.⁶⁷ The role of the husband then is to preside over his entire household as the head and ruler, and the role of the wife is to serve in a steward-like capacity under her husband in the management of the household.⁶⁸ Susan Hunt, former Director of Women’s Ministries for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) claims that whenever a woman attempts to invert the created order, the woman becomes a “life-taker” that “sucks the life” out of the relationship between a husband and a wife.⁶⁹ Submission, she claims, “liberates”⁷⁰ women to display God’s calling on their lives.

⁶⁴ William Einwechter, “Should Christians Support a Woman for the Office of Civil Magistrate?” Vision Forum Ministries, posted July 8, 2004, www.visionforumministries.org/issues/ballot_box (accessed October 28, 2011).

⁶⁵ David Kotter, “Does Sarah Palin Present a Dilemma for Complementarians?” September 3rd, 2008. Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <http://www.cbmw.org/Blog/Posts/Does-Sarah-Palin-Present-a-Dilemma-for-Complementarians-Part-1> (accessed January 16th, 2012).

⁶⁶ Kotter, 1.

⁶⁷ Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds. *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 496.

⁶⁸ William Einwechter, “The Patriarchy Paradigm,” Vision Forum Ministries, posted June 23, 2010, http://www.visionforumministries.org/issues/family/the_patriarchy_paradigm_1.aspx (accessed December 4, 2011).

⁶⁹ Susan Hunt, “The Covenant Way,” *Tabletalk Magazine*, December 1st, 2010. <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/covenant-way>, (accessed October 28, 2011).

⁷⁰ Hunt, 1.

Such a traditional perspective is problematic in postmodern society. Men of the emerging generation tend to view life on earth as fragile, and they believe that the continued existence of humankind is dependent on a new attitude of cooperation rather than conquest.⁷¹ This may help explain at least a segment of culture's resistance to the doctrine of headship, which, as discussed above, is interpreted by some to mandate a husband ruling over his wife. But we must also consider the unintended consequences of this spirited debate. In equipping young men to be counter-cultural husbands, we are not battling equality. We are battling apathy.

Order and the Curse

To the woman he said, "...I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

-- Genesis 3:16

Important to the complementarian position is that before the fall, God established an order to the covenant of marriage and organized the family with the husband as the leader and head.⁷² Adam being created first is, complementarians argue, indicative of God's intent for Adam to lead his family.⁷³ The Apostle Paul later references the significance to this order of creation in 1 Timothy 2:13 as a foundation for the prohibition against authoritative teaching by women in the church.⁷⁴ In making this reference, Paul reveals that he does not consider this restriction to be the product of the curse to be later phased out by redemption.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Grenz, 7.

⁷² Driscoll and Breshears, 123.

⁷³ Grudem, 461.

⁷⁴ Godfrey, 85.

Allison Young counters that nothing in the creation account suggests man was ordained by God to function as the authority, or leader of the woman.⁷⁶ The consequence of sin, according to egalitarians, was destruction of equality and mutuality which resulted in patriarchy.⁷⁷ Kevin Giles argues that "...social ordering is a human construct and for this reason human beings can change it. God-prescribed social ordering is always an attempt by those holding power and privilege to maintain the *status quo* for their own benefit."⁷⁸

Grudem holds that the consequences of sin did not introduce new roles but rather introduced pain, suffering, and distortion to the roles Adam and the woman already had.⁷⁹ For example, the word "desire" as used in Genesis 3:16 means "desire to conquer."⁸⁰ This means that there will be a constant battle between the husband and the wife as the woman has inordinate desire to rule over her husband and the husband tends to exert dominating control over the woman.⁸¹ Godfrey contends that to claim male headship is a curse upon the woman that results from the fall is to "ignore the evidence of leadership before the fall and to misunderstand Genesis

⁷⁵ Douglas Moo, "What Does it Mean Not to Teach or Have Authority Over Men?" in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 185.

⁷⁶ Allison Young, "Genesis 1-3," Christians for Biblical Equality, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?=content/genesis-1-3> (accesses February 1, 2012), 1.

⁷⁷ Groothuis, 4.

⁷⁸ Kevin Giles, "An Examination of the Seven Pillars on Which the Case for the Permanent Subordination of Women Stands," (lecture, The 58th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington D.C., November 15-17, 2006). In Christians for Biblical Equality, <http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/examination-seven-pillars-which-case> (accessed February 15, 2012).

⁷⁹ Grudem, 463.

⁸⁰ Susan T. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" in *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1975):376-383.

⁸¹ Alexander, 56.

3:16.”⁸² According to Godfrey, the curse is not that “he will rule over you,” but that “your *desire* will be for your husband.” The primary reason for relationship between Adam and the woman is not to show a need for one another but rather to reflect the nature of the Godhead in that a husband and wife, like the Trinity, remain distinct individuals who become one in body, mind and spirit.⁸³ Egalitarians insist that the sequence of the creation order demonstrates the need that a man and woman have for each other and the unity of their relationship.⁸⁴

While unity flows from the Godhead, so order does too. Paul addresses this in his letter to the Corinthian church when he says, “...the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”⁸⁵ Just as the Father has authority over the Son, so the husband has authority over the wife in marriage. Our modern day interpretation of Paul’s use of the Greek word *kephale* (head) is not without controversy. For example, Gordon Fee argues that “head” as used by Paul has nothing to do with authority in marriage but instead should be interpreted as a metaphor for “source,” or more specifically, “source of life.”⁸⁶ On this point, Grudem notes that “head,” when applied to a person, always means one in authority.⁸⁷ According to Grudem, no evidence to the contrary has ever been found in ancient Greek culture.⁸⁸ David Scholer believes that attempts to further interpret the word *kephale* are useless. According to

⁸² Godfrey, 85.

⁸³ Grudem, 257.

⁸⁴ Richard S. Hess, “Equality With and Without Innocence: Genesis 1-3,” *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Heirarchy*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2005), 84.

⁸⁵ 1 Cor. 11:3.

⁸⁶ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 503.

⁸⁷ Grudem, 460.

⁸⁸ Grudem, 460.

Scholer, "...the evidence is in and has been sifted from various perspectives. It seems clear to me that the evidence shows the metaphorical meaning of *kephale* can be varied, including 'authority over,' 'preeminence,' and 'source.'"⁸⁹

Naming the "Helper"

Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

-- Gen. 2:18

God created the woman from a rib taken from Adam's side and presented the woman to Adam as a "helper."⁹⁰ Complementarians and egalitarians agree that the term "helper" should not be interpreted to convey female inferiority as biblical texts often refers to God as our helper.⁹¹ Still, Adam and the woman were assigned distinct yet complementary roles: Adam to work the land and the woman to *help* Adam in populating and subduing the earth.⁹² This, along with Adam's naming of the woman is, according to complementarians, further evidence of God's plan for the man to have authority over the woman.⁹³ Naming of the woman is thought significant because to name someone or something in ancient times implied having authority over the one named.⁹⁴ Raymond Ortlund notes that in naming the woman Adam defined and interpreted the woman not just for himself, but also for her own self-understanding.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ David H. Scholer, "The Evangelical Debate Over Biblical 'Headship'," *God's Word To Women*, 2005, <http://godstowomen.org/scholer.htm> (accessed February 3, 2012).

⁹⁰ Gen 2:22.

⁹¹ Pss. 10:14; 118:6-7; 121:1-2, 1 Sam. 7:12, Heb. 13:6.

⁹² Godfrey, 84.

⁹³ Grudem, 461.

⁹⁴ John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, (Downers Grove, IL: Varsity Press, 2000), 33.

Egalitarians like Faith Martin reject any notion that Adam’s naming of his new “helper” indicates some level of authority over her. Such a perspective, Martin argues, is androcentric and patronizing in nature.⁹⁶ Instead, by naming the woman, Adam expressed his joy at the similarity and unity he shared with her.⁹⁷ Such similarity and unity does not, egalitarians insist, deny that men and women are inherently different. Christian theologian Bonnie Miller-McLemore asserts that while Christianity has historically taught male headship, the *gospel* does not.⁹⁸ Her point parallels Browning’s which is that both Old and New Testaments *assume* the pervasive patriarchy of all ancient societies and that the Jesus movement subtly undermined this paradigm directing Christians toward a love ethic of equal regard.⁹⁹ Egalitarians seek an ideal of gender equality in all areas of life including religion and point to New Testament examples of “neighbor love” as the interpretive center of its ethic.¹⁰⁰

God’s Plan: Re-aligned and Redeemed

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

--Eph. 5:25-27

⁹⁵ Raymond Ortlund, “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 92.

⁹⁶ Faith Martin, “Review of *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*,” (presentation, Conference For Women, College Hill Reformed Presbyterian Church, Beaver Falls, PA, February 27, 1993).

⁹⁷ Young, 2.

⁹⁸ Miller-McLemore, 51.

⁹⁹ Browning, 127.

¹⁰⁰ Browning, 127.

In redemption, the Apostle Paul shows us that Jesus defines a successful marriage as one of mutual submission and love.¹⁰¹ Paul’s message to the Ephesians is as counter-cultural and controversial today as it was then – but for different reasons. Biblical text repeatedly reveals that men are responsible for loving their wives like Christ loves the church. At the same time, wives are to respectfully submit to their husbands.¹⁰² The most detailed description of this profound relationship comes from Paul in the fifth chapter of Ephesians. From his prison cell in Rome, Paul’s letter undermined the basic premise of that day’s “household codes” which were based on Greco-Roman moral writings.¹⁰³ These cultural codes did not require a husband to love his wife, but rather required only that the husband make his wife submit.¹⁰⁴

While egalitarians agree that Ephesians 5 may help men overcome their innate reluctance to bond with their wife and child, a husband’s call to sacrificial love does not equate to male headship. Instead, self-sacrifice in marriage is a means to restore loving relations of equal regard and mutuality.¹⁰⁵ Giles argues that egalitarians embrace a “fuller equality”¹⁰⁶ than that of complementarians who advocate, according to Giles, a “very empty equality.”¹⁰⁷ Giles claims

¹⁰¹Craig S. Keener, *Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 551.

¹⁰² 1 Cor. 11:2-16; 14:33-35; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:1-6.

¹⁰³ Keener, 551.

¹⁰⁴ Keener, 551.

¹⁰⁵ Browning, 133.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Giles, “The Most Important Text in the Whole Bible on the Male-Female Relationship: Genesis 1-3,” (lecture, Conference 2010 for Christians for Biblical Equality, Melbourne, Australia, June 11-14, 2010), Windows Media Player audio file, 12:25, http://www.cbe.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=64 (accessed December 5, 2011).

¹⁰⁷ Giles.

that “if we are spiritually equal”¹⁰⁸ as claimed by complementarians, then “we are socially equal.”¹⁰⁹ As such, in equal regard marriages there is a shift in responsibility and leadership that is shared among all members of the family and determined through equilateral conversation.¹¹⁰ This requires a significant investment in straightforward dialogue about the needs, demands, desires, and hopes of the family members...”¹¹¹

Paul’s call for a husband to love his wife sacrificially was counter-cultural in that day. His call for a wife to submit to her husband is equally counter-cultural in this day. Marriage is a lifelong and profound relationship between a man and a woman created by God as a portrait of the relationship between Christ and his church.¹¹² Both creation and redemption affirm that God’s plan to achieve oneness in marriage and in the church is for the husband to humbly and lovingly accept the responsibility to lead. In this relationship, the husband symbolizes Christ while the woman is symbolic of the church. This requires a husband to lead in a way that establishes an atmosphere of love—an environment in which the wife is free to grow and develop into all God wants her to be.¹¹³ Acceptance of equality in personhood and the interdependence of complementary roles are at the foundation of God’s plan for a husband and

¹⁰⁸ Giles.

¹⁰⁹ Giles.

¹¹⁰ Miller-McLemore, 52.

¹¹¹ Miller-McLemore, 52.

¹¹² Grudem., 455.

¹¹³ Richard L. Strauss, “What Every Husband Should Know,” <http://bible.org/seriespage/what-every-husband-needs-know> (accessed December 2, 2011).

wife in marriage. Therefore, a consistent responsibility laid upon men throughout the entirety of scripture is for husbands to love, protect, cherish, and provide for their wife.¹¹⁴

Equipping Young Men for Success

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

--Proverbs 1:7

Today's young men need a wake-up call. Far too many young men have been tricked into believing that their marriages will somehow be a culture-defying garden scene complete with a naked woman, lots of fruit, and no threat of attack from the enemy. This perspective is wrong and dangerous to families. Young adults need to be equipped with a realistic perspective and practical skills necessary for a sustainable, healthy, successful marriage.¹¹⁵

Because young adults seem to hold unrealistic beliefs about what constitutes a normal, healthy, "successful" marital relationship, researchers have attempted to determine whether family life education courses focused on marriage help reduce unrealistic beliefs among college students. These courses, taught by educators and marital family therapists who have extensive knowledge about relationship development and maintenance, teach couples about realistic, healthy expectations, which are termed *growth beliefs*.¹¹⁶ Growth beliefs include the ideas that satisfying relationships require effort and that healthy relationships result from solving problems and overcoming challenges as a couple. Rather than a focus on problem avoidance, like individuals with *destiny beliefs*, individuals who possess growth beliefs manage conflict

¹¹⁴ Gen. 2:23-24, Eph. 5:25-33, Col. 3:19, 1 Pet. 3:7.

¹¹⁵ Wright, Simmons, and Campbell, 234.

¹¹⁶ Wright, Simmons, and Campbell, 224.

effectively and remain hopeful that the situation will improve.¹¹⁷ This research suggests there may be an over-riding, cultural ideal of what a healthy, satisfying marriage is, and that this ideal guides individual views on marriage and creates hope that effective training programs can cause a shift in the belief systems of young adults regarding the characteristics of a successful marriage.

A review of research literature reveals that marital education is effective for many couples.¹¹⁸ A survey conducted in four states—Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and Arizona—indicated that about 40 percent of couples that married during the last two decades participated in some form of premarital education.¹¹⁹ With controls for a large number of variables correlated with both divorce and premarital education, couples that participated in any type of premarital education had a 31 percent decrease in the odds of divorce compared with other couples.¹²⁰ And among couples that did not divorce, premarital education was associated with higher marital satisfaction and less marital conflict.¹²¹ Based on these and other data, Amato and Maynard estimated that doubling the percentage of couples who receive marriage education services *prior to marriage* would reduce the divorce rate by about 7 percent. Counting couples who receive education services after marriage would result in an even larger reduction.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Wright, Simmons, and Campbell, 224.

¹¹⁸ E.B. Fawcett, A.J. Hawkins, and V.L. Blanchard, "Does Marriage Education Work? A Comprehensive Review of the Effectiveness of Marriage Education" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN, November 8, 2006).

¹¹⁹ S. Stanley, P.R. Amato, H. Markman, and C. Johnson, "Premarital Education, Marital Quality, and Marital Stability," *Journal of Family Psychology* 20 (March 2006): 120.

¹²⁰ Stanley, Amato, Markman, and Johnson, 123.

¹²¹ Stanley, Amato, Markman, and Johnson, 120.

¹²² P.R. Amato, and R. Maynard, "Decreasing Nonmarital Births and Strengthening Marriage to Reduce Poverty," *Future of Children* 17 (Fall 2007): 127.

Other research has concluded that there is a significant correlation between the application of restored biblical principles and the experience of marital satisfaction.¹²³ In a study that evaluated the effectiveness of a small group curriculum aimed at improving participant marriages, the researcher concluded that biblical-based content was effective in increasing the knowledge of biblical content and a restored understanding of Christian marriage among group members.¹²⁴ Though focused on a limited sample of church members from a single church, the researcher noted that the human desire and the cultural emphasis on fulfillment and satisfaction in marriage suggest that the research may have a broad appeal.¹²⁵ On this broad scale, the church has an opportunity to positively influence perceptions of marriage and marital satisfaction among young people.¹²⁶

Small group ministry is, of course, not the only context in which to equip young men to become counter-cultural husbands. Other contexts include pre-marital counseling, topical preaching, and mentoring relationships. Pre-marital counseling has been defined as “...a process designed to enhance and enrich premarital relationships leading to more satisfactory and stable marriages with the intended consequence being to prevent divorce.”¹²⁷ But as traditionally

¹²³ Gordon Rolf Gottfried Steinke, “Marriage: God’s Design...Destroyed...Restored...,” (DMin diss., Anderson University School of Theology, 2009), 380.

¹²⁴ Steinke, 376.

¹²⁵ Steinke, 377.

¹²⁶ Steinke, 378.

¹²⁷ Robert F. Stahmann, “Premarital Counseling: A Focus for Family Therapy,” *Journal of Family Therapy*, 22 (February 2000): 105.

practiced in churches, premarital counseling has missed the mark.¹²⁸ The problem is that counseling, preaching, and mentoring each impart information in one direction - from the counselor, pastor, or mentor to the individual. Tony Stoltzfus notes that impartation of information is an outdated mode of leader development that is more effective in creating followers than it is in creating leaders.¹²⁹

Schwartz and Theisen found, “Premarital counseling revolving around exposition of Bible passages and exploration of concepts like covenant marriage is the very sort of preparation for marriage that research is finding to be far less effective than skills-based premarital counseling.”¹³⁰ Marks’ research led him to conclude that it is more effective to train couples how to communicate and handle conflict than it is to simply tell them about communication and conflict.¹³¹ These more practical “how-to” skills can be experienced and shared in a small group environment.

In Ephesians, Paul says that we “...have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus.”¹³² It is through today’s followers of Christ that others can experience this Truth as followers did two thousand years ago. This incarnate Truth overcomes postmodern relativism,

¹²⁸ James Paul Marks, “Christian Premarital Training in the Local Church Setting: A Study of the Effectiveness of the Symbis Model in Reducing Divorce and Producing Stable and Satisfying Marital Relationships,” (DMin diss., Liberty Theological Seminary, 2007), 47.

¹²⁹ Tony Stoltzfus, *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach*, (Charleston, SC: Book Surge Publishing, 2005), viii.

¹³⁰ John Schwartz and Norman Theisen, “Pastors Talk Too Much,” *Clergy Journal* (February 2003), Vol. 79 Issue 4. 12.

¹³¹ Marks, 103.

¹³² Eph. 4:21.

agnostic cynicism, and pragmatic skepticism.¹³³ But only to the extent that we can develop self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted disciples can we hope to get the task of Jesus' mission done. As Hirsch notes, there is no other way of developing genuine transformational movements than through the critical task of disciple making.¹³⁴

To create disciples who thrive in the Truth, a curriculum-based small group ministry is of primary importance because it actively engages those who choose to participate in a learning environment.¹³⁵ Further, the small group environment is where one-on-one relationships tend to develop.¹³⁶ In other words, the small group environment is not necessarily one where intimate relationships are formed but rather an environment where friendships are formed.¹³⁷ The process of developing Godly friends is important because some of these friendships may develop into more intimate relationships that take place outside of the small group system.¹³⁸ This is how life coaching begins. This is where training moves from a one-way push of information to a two-way dialogue that transfers "how-to" skills. Small group ministry, and the personal relationship that typically result, are conducive to effective education which requires repeating a message until it becomes part of the learner's core identity.¹³⁹

¹³³ John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come As You Are Culture in the Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 193.

¹³⁴ Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 119.

¹³⁵ Steinke, 353.

¹³⁶ Steinke, 353.

¹³⁷ Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas, *Activate: An Entirely New Approach to Small Groups*, (Ventura: Regal, 2008), 19.

¹³⁸ Searcy and Thomas, 20.

¹³⁹ Steinke, 353.

The Newlife Church vision of “people becoming the church” requires every Newlife follower of Jesus to think of themselves as missionaries to their families, friends, neighborhoods, schools, and coworkers. This is what we call being “on the mission.” The role of leadership at Newlife is to equip everyone to be on the mission with Jesus to the people in their everyday life. That is what we call “people becoming the church.” Consistent with this leadership mission, it is critically important that we begin to develop and deliver training that equips young men to be counter-cultural husbands. At the core of such training should be a commitment to transform young men from being consumers – “come and see” – to being missionaries – “go and die” – outside the church.¹⁴⁰ Currently at Newlife there is no small group ministry that focuses specifically on this topic.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Driscoll, *Confessions of a Reformation Rev. Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 27.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Method/Rationale

Kitsap County and Newlife Church presented a unique environment for research aimed at creating a biblically-based curriculum for small group ministry. A recent Gallup poll concluded that the Bremerton-Silverdale (Kitsap County) metropolitan statistical area is among the top seven least religious metropolitan areas in the United States.¹⁴¹ At the same time, Newlife Church is one of the fastest growing churches in the United States.¹⁴² When this research began, Newlife Church had not yet developed a biblically-based small group curriculum that prepared young men for their future role as husbands. It was important to the success of this project that the collection, analysis, and synthesis of data rest on a research design that accounted for this diverse and dynamic environment.

A qualitative research design was used for this project because the associated research strategies help to reveal the various and subjective *interpretations* of individual experiences. Further, a qualitative approach provides methods for exploring and understanding the *meaning* individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.¹⁴³ Consistent with inductive characteristics of qualitative research there was a high level of collaboration between me and focus group participants who were able to shape an understanding of the themes that emerge

¹⁴¹ Gallup, "Provo-Orem, Utah, Is Most Religious U.S. Metro Area: The Most Religious Cities are in the South and in Utah," (March 2013). <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161543/provo-oreem-utah-religious-metro-area.aspx> (accessed February 19, 2014).

¹⁴² Outreach Magazine, "America's Fastest Growing and Largest Outreach 100 Churches 2013," (September 2013). <http://www.outreachmagazine.com/2013-outreach-100-fastest-growing-churches-america.html> (accessed February 14, 2014).

¹⁴³ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mix Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2009), 4.

from the process.¹⁴⁴ As such, this research relies on the analysis of responses to open ended questions and participant thought processes, opinions, and experiences as a means to examine how cultural perspectives related to the role of men as husbands are influencing 18-26 year old men at Newlife Church.

In addition to gaining an understanding of meanings ascribed to the role of men as husbands, an additional goal of the research is to identify major themes from the gathered information in order to inform a curriculum for effective small group ministry. Compelling themes often emerge from personal stories. This project includes narrative research - a qualitative strategy in which participants were asked to provide stories about their lives.¹⁴⁵ Employing this strategy served two purposes: First, participants felt known as their story was heard and understood. This type of “relational intelligence”¹⁴⁶ is consistent with the DNA of Newlife Church. Such “story collecting”¹⁴⁷ was familiar to focus group participants since they were all familiar with Newlife Church. Second, any instructional or redemptive views, experiences, or themes emerging from these stories will become key components of the small group ministry curriculum.

Sample

Data was gathered from multiple sources including census data and focus group discussions. Focus group discussions allowed me to listen and learn from participants who possessed opinions and experiences that I would not otherwise have direct access to. For this

¹⁴⁴ Morgan, 175.

¹⁴⁵ Morgan, 13.

¹⁴⁶ Steve Saccone, *Relational Intelligence: How Leaders Can Expand Their Influence Through a New Way of Being Smart*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009).

¹⁴⁷ Saccone, 53.

study I conducted three focus group discussions. Because this research is most interested in the perspective of young men who are not yet husbands, all focus groups were composed of 18-26 year old single men and were limited to six to eight participants. A total of eighteen young men participated in the focus groups. All focus group participants regularly attend or have previously attended a Newlife Church gathering. Each group was small enough to ensure everyone had a chance to participate yet large enough to gain diverse perspectives.¹⁴⁸ Each focus group was made up primarily of young men who were close friends or at least familiar with one another in order to facilitate discussion by ensuring that the participants were similar to one another.¹⁴⁹

Instrumentation

The design of this research project considered advantages and disadvantages of standardization as it relates to questions used in the focus group interviews. At one extreme a researcher may choose to adhere to a strict line of standardized questions that are asked of each group. At the other extreme is questioning that changes from group to group based on what was learned during previous interviews. For this research project I employed a compromised design that began with a fixed set of core questions and then, as appropriate, proceeded to a variable set of issues based on the characteristics of the particular group.¹⁵⁰ I moderated each focus group discussion and audio recorded participant responses. As moderator, I facilitated the discussion

¹⁴⁸ Richard A. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), 17.

¹⁴⁹ Morgan, 133.

¹⁵⁰ Morgan, 143.

and managed group dynamics in such a way as to ensure broad participant involvement and interaction.¹⁵¹

Focus groups were asked the following core questions: 1) What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term “successful marriage?” 2) What is a husband’s role in marriage? 3) What is a wife’s role in marriage? 4) What experiences or observations have shaped your opinion about a husband’s role in marriage? 5) How is your definition of a husband’s role in marriage similar to, or different than, that of the culture around you? 6) How important is the development of an initiative to equip young men to become husbands? 7) What would such an initiative look like? What key topics would be discussed?

Protecting the privacy and confidence of research participants was a top priority throughout this project. Some of the discussions elicited candid and deeply personal information that others simply do not need to know. The first step in protecting participant confidentiality was to have the entire research plan reviewed and approved by the University’s Human Subject Review Committee. This overall research plan includes an informed consent document that each participant was asked to sign before engaging in the research. Second, when necessary, interview participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their personal identity. Research questions did not require personal identifying information of any kind. Finally, any data collected during the research including notes, audio recordings, or paper instruments was destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Analysis

Krueger finds that the key to effective analysis of focus group data is to continually reflect upon the purpose of the research.¹⁵² This project seeks to understand how the perspectives

¹⁵¹ Morgan, 145.

of culture are influencing the attitudes of young men regarding their role as a husband in order for Newlife Church to develop a small group ministry that equips young men to become counter-cultural husbands.

Data collected during focus group interviews received note-based analysis. Focus group interviews were recorded audibly and the recordings were used to verify specific quotes and to transcribe the oral summary at the conclusion of the focus group.¹⁵² Data collected from each focus group was analyzed to identify common words, big ideas, and emerging themes. This was accomplished by considering the meaning participants ascribe to words, the context of those words, and their frequency and intensity. A full text narrative of each focus group session is contained in Appendices C - E.

Limitations

Understanding cultural influences on young men's attitudes on the role of men as husbands is potentially an enormous proposition when taken in a global, national, or even local context. For that reason, this research and any conclusions of the research will focus only on the perspectives of unmarried young men within Kitsap County and the small group ministry of Newlife Church. Three focus groups consisting of eighteen young men were assembled for this research. Still, insights gained and conclusions drawn from this research may prove useful to communities and churches outside of Kitsap County.

¹⁵² Krueger, 141.

¹⁵³ Krueger, 144.

CHAPTER 4

Data and Analysis

Data

The primary purpose of this project is to understand how the perspectives of culture are influencing the attitudes of young men regarding their role as a husband in order to develop a small group ministry that equips young men to become counter-cultural husbands. The data for this project was obtained through focus group interviews that included 18-26 year old men who reside in Kitsap County and attend, or have attended, Newlife Church. Each focus group interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to identify common themes as well as unique responses that assist in understanding various perspectives. Full transcripts are in Appendix D. The following tables document key words and phrases articulated by focus group participants.

TABLE 1

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED TO DEFINE A “SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE”

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase presented
Accountability partner	1
Ability to get along with each other	2
Teamwork	1
Don't have to agree on everything all the time	4
Responsibility to express feelings	1
Man must initiate resolution	2
Trust	1
Honesty	1
Devotion	1
Faithfulness	2
Long lasting	1
You'll stay together no matter what	1
Not ending in divorce	2
God centered	2
Not a contract	1
Like a contract	1
Covenant relationship	1
Defined boundaries	1
Support each other	1
A guy being able care of his wife	1
Good sex life	3
Loving your spouse and her family	2
Happy	2
Enjoy being together	2
Friendship	2
Good communication	1
Honor and respect each other	1
Share 50/50	1

TABLE 2

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED TO DESCRIBE A HUSBAND'S ROLE IN MARRIAGE

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase presented
Be a provider	5
Be an equal partner	3
Willing to lay down his life	1
Servant	1
Leader	5
Spiritual leader	2
Putting wife above all else in the world	1
Initiate communication	1
Financial provider	3

TABLE 3

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED TO DESCRIBE A WIFE'S ROLE IN MARRIAGE

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase presented
Fulfill sexual needs	3
Support to me	3
Great mother	1
Encourager	2
Uplifting	2
Helper	3
Domestic responsibilities	2
Someone who balances you out	1
Friend	1
Companion	1
Accountability partner	1

TABLE 4

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED TO DESCRIBE EXPERIENCES AND
OBSERVATIONS THAT HAVE SHAPED OPINIONS ABOUT A HUSBAND'S ROLE IN
MARRIAGE

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase presented
Example of a mentor	1
Father	2
Positive example of my parents	3
Mistakes of my parents/family	2
My own mistakes	1
Cultural media/music	2
Married friends	1
Older brother	1
Other families	2
Biblical examples	2

TABLE 5

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED TO DESCRIBE CULTURAL MESSAGING TO
YOUNG MEN ABOUT THEIR ROLE AS A HUSBAND

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase presented
A husband doesn't have to be a male	3
A husband is something different to everyone	2
Men are portrayed as boys/poor examples	3
Men take as opposed to give	1
Guys have no idea how to act	1
It depends on how your parents affected your perspective	1
Culture moving away from the idea of marriage	1
Marriage is counter cultural	2
Celebration of divorce	1
Easy to divorce	1
Divorce is acceptable/normal	1
Expiration dates on marriage certificates in Europe	1
Love is a feeling, not a choice	1
Culture says, "Just don't be alone."	2
Culture says, "Find someone hot."	1
Culture says, "We give up."	1
Cohabitation is encouraged	2
Sleep with as many women as you can	3

TABLE 6

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES USED WHEN ASKED TO DISCUSS IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF DEVELOPING A MINISTRY TO EQUIP YOUNG MEN TO BE COUNTER-CULTURAL HUSBANDS.

Key Word/Phrase	Number of times key word/phrase used
We need someone telling us what right is	2
It would be a good/important thing to do	2
Need a mature Christian mentor that I know	1
Learn from a successful husband	2
Learn from multiple Christian men	1
Be a great example	3
First teach my dad how to me a man, I should learn from him	1
Relationship is everything	1
We all agree this is a problem	1
Call men out	1
Take over MTV	1
Accountability is a big piece	2
Importance of commitment to woman	2
De-feminize men	1
Settle hard and aggressive men	1
Be real when discussing temptation, sin, sex, marriage, confession	5
Panel discussions in front of youth	1
God shows us how to forgive	1

Analysis

After analyzing each transcript and associated data table, I identified major themes consistent among the focus groups and organized discussion of these themes according to the specific research questions. This analysis includes discussion used by focus group participants to ascribe meaning and context to their responses.

Defining a “Successful Marriage”

Clearly defining a successful marriage is a question that focus group members struggled with. The problem is not that they do not want a successful marriage. The problem is that for many young men living examples of a successful marriage are difficult to find. According to one participant,

In our culture the phrase “successful marriage” has almost become like a fairy tale. You don’t hear people saying, “We have a successful marriage.” You hear people saying, “We hope we have a successful marriage.” It’s not something people connect with because they don’t see it around them. People are actually losing hope.

In defining a successful marriage, all focus groups referred to a relationship in which both husband and wife are “happy” and “enjoy being together.” One participant described a personal relationship he had with a long-married couple:

I knew a couple married forty-eight years. The lady told me that though they had a lot of fun together the key to them staying together was that she was his best friend.

A good sexual relationship was identified by each focus group as an indicator of a successful marriage. Each of the groups connected a successful marriage with “good sex,” while just one group went further to connect a strong sexual relationship with God’s plan for a husband and a wife:

A man is to fulfill his wife's needs and a woman is to fulfill her husband's needs on a sexual level. A good sex life puts marriage on a Godly level. It brings you closer together.

Frequent use of words such as "commitment," "faithfulness," and "devotion" were used to support the common theme that a big part of a successful marriage is perseverance. Two focus groups discussed the idea that a successful marriage means, "You'll stay together, no matter what." Still, focus group participants did not link a successful marriage to a relationship that is completely free from disagreement or occasional relational tension. In fact, the most common response was that successfully married couples "do not have to agree on everything all the time." One particularly insightful focus group participant surmised that a successful marriage comes down to constant communication:

All of it is tied to communication. We have to talk things out. I'm very auditory, especially with girls. I need to talk things out.

A Husband's Role in Marriage

According to all focus groups, a husband's role in marriage is to "lead." There was, however, variance in the meaning that various groups affixed to this leadership role. One focus group emphasized the man is "in-charge" and ultimately "responsible" for the decisions and direction of the family. While the group agreed that a husband and wife should discuss difficult decisions, the group agreed that it is the man's job to "put his foot down" if agreement could not be realized. At the same time, this group agreed that that the husband is an equal partner who should not be "ruling and reigning over the woman like a dictator." The group was unable to identify any particular foundation or decision-making principles that a husband should use in such a situation.

All focus groups associated a husband's role in marriage to that of a "provider." While participants agreed that the husband should be "making the money," participants recognized that in the postmodern era this is not always the case:

Well, the man is supposed to be in-charge – traditionally – but that is changing. It seems like whoever is making the money is the one that is in-charge. Guys have to figure out what else they can do if they aren't the bread winner. Everything is more equal now.

Two focus groups emphasized a husband's role as a spiritual leader with one participant pointing out that if a husband is not willing to lay down his life for his wife, then "he shouldn't be getting married." Two groups linked the responsibility of spiritual leadership to the sacrificial example of Jesus and the love of God:

As long as you are sacrificing your time, your money – it's not only financial, it's spiritual. The man is the spiritual leader. If you provide God's love, God will provide for your family.

A Wife's Role in Marriage

One role of a wife, as identified by all focus groups, is meeting the "sexual needs" of the husband. Two groups discussed that a wife should be "willing to have sex and meet my needs," emphasizing the importance of a "good" sex life. The third group explained why meeting a husband's sexual needs is a wife's role in marriage:

A wife needs to meet a guy's sexual needs. It's one way to have a closer bond. It's God's gift to marriage. She should give her husband whatever he needs.

Another role identified by all focus groups is that of providing "support" to the husband in terms of "encouragement" and "appreciation." One participant described his observation of how many women fall short in this area:

A wife should respect her husband. I see a lot of women who just don't like their husband. They roll their eyes when he talks, back talk him – it's really crazy. I wouldn't want to put up with that every day of my life.

Finally, focus groups consistently identified the wife as a “helper” to the husband. While some references to “helper” included a variety of domestic responsibilities such as raising children and day to day duties associated with running a household, other references included the wife as a “companion,” and one who “balances” the husband emotionally and spiritually. One participant observed,

“Helper” can be interpreted to mean that a woman should work to help cover the costs of running the house. It's not cool to go to work and come home to a wife who is sitting around the house. A little extra money is nice. I think it's good that a woman has a job. My mom would sit at home and just kind of clean every single day. This sucks!

Focus groups agreed that culture has turned reference to a wife as a “helper” into a derogatory term that degrades and insults women. Some participants characterized the term as “old fashioned,” “embarrassing,” and “a little shady these days.” One participant, concerned with the way culture views women asserted, “Women aren't helpers; they are objects.” Another observed,

Yes, the woman, as created by God, is a helper. But we are also supposed to be servants. So in a way, it's like we should be serving one another. In our culture this is non-existent.

Influential Experiences and Observations

All focus groups agreed that the influence and example of family members, in both positive and negative ways, has had a significant impact on their opinions about the role of a husband in marriage. Several participants referred to the “positive example of my parents,” the example of a “father,” and “mistakes” made by parents. The presence of a father who is willing to share lessons and set a good example has positively shaped many participants' perspectives. One participant explained the positive influence of a father who loves his wife:

Comparing and contrasting marriages I see in my entire family, my mom and dad are the only two to have a successful marriage. Whenever we have family reunions, I see all the little stabs people take at each other. Then I see how my mom and dad treat each other. They manage, despite everything beating them down, to make it work.

Focus groups noted external influences that have shaped their perspectives on the role of a husband. These examples include mentors such as a youth pastor, married friends, and biblical examples. Not surprisingly, participants also identified popular culture as an influencer on their perspective about husbands. One participant, describing the “cultural man” as a “little boy,” added,

I just strive to be better than any man in a rap or hip-hop song – pretty low bar! It’s true though...it’s what I hate most about our culture. We are affected by music.

At Odds With Culture

All focus groups agreed that their definition of a husband’s role in marriage is quite different than that of the culture around them. At the same time, focus groups agreed that the impact and influence of culture’s perspective is having a detrimental impact on young men:

When you’re single, we are supposed to be building up toward marriage. A young guy is learning how to be a really good person that eventually gets divorced. They are not learning how to be a committed husband who loves his wife. Their whole life up to marriage is teaching them how to divorce someone.

One specific area of contrast discussed by focus group participants is culture’s resignation to the idea that a husband is male and a wife is female. Participants observed, “A husband doesn’t have to be a male,” adding that “a husband is something different to everyone.” One participant pointed out,

The perfect dad comes home, and everybody says, “Oh, it’s so much better now that dad is home.” Dinner is already on the table – wife gives him a kiss. That is

so fake. It should be that way, but today a husband doesn't even need to be a man. Who knows what a husband is today. It's something different to everyone.

Another contrast in definitions of the role of a husband between focus group members and culture relates to the way in which men are portrayed in the media. Men, according to the focus groups, are "portrayed in the media as boys - they are full grown men who act like boys." For example, participants observed that "cohabitation is encouraged" in film, song, and print. It is culturally acceptable to "have as much fun as you can" by "sleeping with as many women as you can." The message to young men is that they should "find someone hot" before becoming tied down in marriage. One participant described his experience with a friend:

This one guy tells me that he does all this sexual stuff to prepare himself for marriage. And I just want to punch him in the face. You're (his friend) missing the point!

Focus group participants are concerned that cultural perspectives are diminishing young men's commitment to become and remain married. Participants agree that culture has "given up" on marriage and that marriage itself is becoming "counter-cultural." Focus groups described the current condition of marriage as a "joke," as "sad," and described divorce as a "normal" part of life.

I think a husband needs to be a leader, but that's not what culture wants anymore. They want us to go along for the ride.

Equipping Young Men

Focus group participants agreed that young men are searching for an "example" of what it means to be a husband in a successful marriage. Participants explained that they "need someone telling us what 'right' is," and stated that this type of leadership could come from "mature Christian men," "a successful husband," or their father. These young men also

emphasized the importance of learning from someone that they have a “relationship” with. All participants agreed that in the postmodern era this is a particularly difficult endeavor:

The fact that we’re talking about this truly makes me sad. It’s a big enough problem that, even though we don’t know each other, we all agree that this is a problem. We have to fix it. We are the next generation. We don’t want to contribute to the problem. It’s not a baby tiger – it’s going to eat us. I see a sick generation of men. We are taking the initiative to solve it.

Participants provided suggestions regarding the specific type of guidance they believe young men need most. This included an emphasis on “accountability,” the “feminization of men,” and the power of “confession.” Most prominently mentioned was the need to “be real” as it relates to purity, temptation, and sin.

Talking about purity and being real about it. No high-horse stuff. Be real about temptations, sex, sin, masturbation, and how all that affects your future marriage. I saw five out of five prayer cards asking for prayer about purity. These are junior high kids. It broke my heart to have students that young having these problems. What do you think older people are doing?

Finally, focus group participants agreed, regardless of the words they used to describe it, that young men are not being adequately prepared to become successful husbands. Some discussed not being “prepared for the responsibility,” while others pointed to a “selfish” nature that causes them to resist “commitment.” One participant said it this way:

It’s possible to have a good relationship without God. But God shows you how to forgive and gives you a better chance to be a successful husband. Without God, views of right and wrong are very different.

CHAPTER 5

Implications and Recommendations

Implications

The first implication is that young men at Newlife Church are in no way immune from the relentless influence of cultural examples and media messaging that are relationally dangerous to young men and counter to God's plan for a husband in marriage. Our young men are experiencing, as Wilcox suggested, the concept of headship being emptied of all authority.¹⁵⁴ The relentless nature of this cultural assault on God's plan for a husband is causing our young men to grow weary and is constantly tempting them to accept mediocrity. This is a slippery slope to hell. The response from the church cannot be to simply build a "Christian bubble" with thicker walls. Instead, the church must come to understand and actively counter the influences of culture that corrupt God's plan for marriage and diminish a young man's desire to become a husband who loves his wife like Christ loves His church.

A second implication is that an effective and sustainable small group ministry can serve as a key starting point for training young men to become counter-cultural husbands. Steinke's research found that small group ministry is where one-on-one relationships tend to develop.¹⁵⁵ This is of critical importance for this thesis because one-on-one relationships are precisely what young men at Newlife Church desire. As relationships develop, so too does the transfer of wisdom and practical skills. Other research has determined that effective training programs can cause a shift in the belief systems of young adults regarding the characteristics of a successful

¹⁵⁴ Wilcox, 173.

¹⁵⁵ Steinke, 353.

marriage.¹⁵⁶ As the Holy Spirit uses Newlife Church to invite and attract the un-churched, the de-churched, and seekers alike, it will be incumbent on Newlife Church to offer a ministry that has a low bar of acceptance and a high bar of commitment.

A third implication is that Newlife Church lacks a strategy to develop and sustain any type of ministry that trains young men to be biblical husbands. Young men at Newlife Church are desperately seeking authentic, real-life examples of biblical husbands. Honeywell and Cantrill's research supports the notion that a young man's relational expectations in marriage are significantly based upon the young man's personal and observed experiences.¹⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Newlife Church has not been intentional in developing such a ministry or in leveraging existing ministry venues to meet this need. Many of the young men I spoke to learned how to be a husband by observing their father. In some cases this was a positive example that reflected a Christ-like husband. In other cases, the father served as an example of what not to do. In either case, young men in the postmodern culture need and desire relationship. Small group ministry focused on the training of young men is consistent with the DNA of Newlife Church which believes that nobody does the mission of Jesus alone.

A fourth implication is that young men at Newlife Church will be able to stand strong for Christ only when they know better what they already know. The young men I spoke to generally understood that the relationship between a husband and a wife is, according to God's plan, meant to mirror the relationship between Christ and the church. However, most felt uncomfortable discussing substantive details such as the wife as a "helper" and the concept of headship in the context of postmodern culture. Practical knowledge and application of God's plan for a husband

¹⁵⁶ Wright, Simmons, and Campbell, 224.

¹⁵⁷ Honeycutt and Cantrill, 10.

is of critical importance in training young men to be biblical husbands. Steinke found that biblical-based content was effective in increasing the knowledge of biblical content and restored understanding of Christian marriage among small group members.¹⁵⁸ Acquiring such knowledge and skills cannot require postgraduate study in theology. Instead, our young men need to be trained to believe it, explain it, and live it out in marriage. This can be best accomplished through a content-rich curriculum explored in relationship with mature Christian men worthy and willing to lead by example.

Recommendations

Leaders need clarity, churches need strategy, and processes need reality.

-- Andy Stanley

Young men of Newlife Church have an opportunity to influence culture and redeem the role of a husband in future generations. As such, strategies to leverage this influence for the mission of Jesus should take advantage of the experiential pattern seen throughout the New Testament. Young men who have a personal encounter with Jesus will go back to their own community to tell those around them. Those who hear will go and explore for themselves the things they have seen and heard.¹⁵⁹ Disciple-making strategies targeting men should focus on biblical examples of *who* the truth is, should leverage the experience of mission-driven action, and should constantly create new opportunities for growth.

In the context of Newlife Church, this is not a time to create a trendy ministry project that does not truly represent who we are as a church body. Newlife Church has built a foundational discipleship ethos on the idea of “going on the mission with Jesus,” meaning people come

¹⁵⁸ Steinke, 376.

¹⁵⁹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 121.

together in community to become the church. They begin to live out the mission of Jesus in a variety of ways, including serving the community, serving one another, doing life together, and impacting culture in a way that transforms lives. Through the example of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and intentional strategies, Newlife Church can help transform the trajectory of young men's lives by training them as disciples of Jesus who can take His mission to their families, friends, and communities. Ours can be young men who "come and see" and are transformed into husbands who "go and die." To achieve such an outcome, I make the following recommendations:

1. Develop a long-term strategic plan to create and sustain missional focus on training young men to become counter-culture husbands. Such a focus should become a distinctive characteristic of Newlife Church. See Appendix F.
2. Develop a core curriculum for small-group ministry focused on God's plan for men as husbands. This core curriculum should be adaptable to diverse relational environments conducive to connecting with young men "right where they are." For example, while a small group environment may be an ideal tool to connect with one young man, a one-on-one or activity-based environment may be a more effective way to connect with another. In any case, the core curriculum can be used. See Appendix G.
3. Incorporate the wisdom and experience of mature Christian men from Newlife Church into the core curriculum of the small group ministry. This is an opportunity to leverage authentic examples of biblical husbands. Through sharing their own experiences, these mature men can transfer to the young men very practical 'how-to' skills related to a variety of topics including problem solving, conflict resolution, and interpersonal communication.
4. Develop a series of leadership trainings to recruit and equip experienced Christian men willing to invest in the lives of younger men as a mentor, coach, and friend. See Appendix H for an example of the initial message.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

-- Neh. 4:14

This thesis has explored how cultural perspectives on the role of men as husbands influence the attitudes of 18-26 year old men at Newlife Church. A proposed qualitative research strategy was used to identify and analyze focus group participants’ experiences and observations that have shaped their attitudes and expectations for marriage, and the roles and relationship between a husband and a wife. This strategy was implemented among members of the community who attend Newlife Church.

The data collected from independent research and focus group participants revealed that postmodern cultural perspectives on the role of a husband in marriage are creating relational confusion and role compromise among 18-26 year old men at Newlife Church. In general, the young men who participated in the research were able to articulate key attributes and values related to God’s plan for a husband and a wife in marriage. However, participants discussed feeling overwhelmed and ill-equipped to combat a tidal wave of opposing world views that reject men as leaders and encourage cohabitation, same-sex marriage, no-fault divorce, and multiple sexual partners.

Participants in the research desire an authentic relationship with a Christian mentor who is involved in a successful marriage and is willing to share his experiences, mistakes, and insights. These young men want to have candid discussions about temptation, sin, sex, and marriage. They want to develop a powerful relationship with Jesus that prepares them to become

counter-cultural husbands. Our young men are eager to redeem and transform their legacy as husbands who love like Christ. Their desire is to help heal the world. By introducing these young men to Jesus, and investing in their lives, Newlife Church can facilitate legacy changing life transformation.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Focus Group Interviews: DYING TO LOVE: EQUIPPING YOUNG MEN TO BECOME COUNTER-CULTURAL HUSBANDS

I am conducting a research study for my thesis in order to complete my Masters Degree at Northwest University. This project seeks to find out how cultural perspectives on the role of men as husbands are influencing the attitudes of 18-26 year old men in Kitsap County. This information will be used to inform a curriculum for small group ministry that will biblically challenge cultural trends, train young men to lead successful marriages and equip them to take the mission of Jesus to Kitsap County. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to either participate in a focus group and/or answer questions during a face-to-face interview.

This study involves answering a series of questions that calls for the honest and forthright answers of the participants. If you participate in an interview, your answers will be recorded and may be used in my study, although your real name will not be used. If you consent to participate in the focus group and/or face-to-face interview you may revoke your consent at any time. The recorded interviews will be destroyed after the research process has been completed.

This project has been approved by the Human Subjects Review Board at Northwest University. If you have any questions or comments, you may contact me at 360-731-080. You may also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board, Dr. Kevin Leach, at Northwest University at 425-889-5248 or Kevin.leach@northwestu.edu.

Thanks!

Randy Drake
MA in Missional Leadership Student
Northwest University
Randall.Drake09@northwestu.edu

I have been made aware of my responsibilities as a participant. Furthermore, I am at least 18 years of age and legally able to enter into this agreement. I have also been made aware that I can withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty.

Print Name

Date

Signature

Appendix B: Focus Group Core Questions

Focus Group Questions: DYING TO LOVE: EQUIPPING YOUNG MEN TO BECOME COUNTER-CULTURAL HUSBANDS

- 1) What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term “successful marriage?”
- 2) What do you think a husband’s role in a marriage should be?
- 3) What do you think a wife’s role in marriage should be?
- 4) What experiences or observations have shaped your opinion about a husband’s role in marriage?
- 5) How is your definition of a husband’s role in marriage similar to, or different than, that of culture? Explain.
- 6) How important is the development of an initiative to equip young men to become husbands and what would such an initiative look like? What key topics would be discussed?

Appendix C: Focus Group A Transcript

1. What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term “successful marriage?”

Not ending in divorce.

Happy.

It’s a successful marriage if you support each other and enjoy being together. It’s not something that first seems like a good idea and then you just regret it later.

God centered. Focused on Him. Follow God’s laws and rules. You’re respecting each other and honoring each other.

In our culture the word “successful marriage” has almost become like a fairy tale. You don’t hear people saying, “we have a successful marriage.” You hear people saying, “we hope we have a successful marriage.” It’s not something people connect with because they don’t see it around them. People are actually losing hope.

I think of a guy being able to take care of his wife...putting his wife up above all else.

Good sex. A healthy sexual relationship.

Loving your spouse and the family of your spouse. Lots of people overlook it.

Defined boundaries...know what is expected. Don’t just assume. Set up boundaries ahead of time and respect them. No hidden agendas.

I knew a couple married 48 years. The lady told me that though they had a lot of fun together, the key to them staying together was that she was his best friend. Enjoy each other. Friendship.

All of it is tied to communication. We have to talk things out. I’m very auditory...especially with girls...I need to talk things out.

2. What do you think a husband’s role in a marriage should be?

The guy should be making the money...being a provider. Bread winning.

If he’s not willing to lay down his life for his wife...he shouldn’t be getting married. It sounds weird but my end goal in life is to sacrifice my life for my wife. (Told story he heard on the news of a husband who “took a hit” from a drunk driver in order to save his wife’s life). I want to be that guy. If I die, I get to go to heaven...it’s a win win. It says it in the Bible that Christ died for the church. That puts me in the right mindset.

Marriage is reflective of the relationship we have, as the church, with Jesus Christ. I’m thinking of Phillippians 2:3-8 roughly...not thinking of ourselves as better than others...and then what

Christ did is He came to be not just a man, a leader among men, but a servant. That was the role of Christ so that should be our role as a husband.

Love your wife sounds pretty basic but there is a lot to it. A fear for me, and for pastors, is that they can love their church more than their wife...Mark Driscoll talked about this...you've got to put your wife above all in this world. I think that gets undervalued in this world.

It is being a strong spiritual leader for the family. Being the one who leads the family to Christ. He teaches children what it means to follow Christ. Remains strong in the faith.

3. What is a wife's role in marriage?

Good sex.

A helper. God made the woman to be a helper but this world has skewed that to mean that a woman is a servant. Really, it's a helper. Thinking like this forces a man to realize that he is not God. They actually need someone outside themselves to help them. Being a companion...being a friend...that's the number one thing. I pick this up with women. You can tell if they want to help you or be headstrong...men can be like this too.

Somebody who balances you out. We don't have all the spiritual gifts. I think the person God has planned for us to marry is someone who really balances us out. This allows you to do something bigger than you could do alone. We get it wrong...some women get it wrong...yes, it's the man leading the wife but you're on the same team.

A wife is someone who is going to build the husband up and not tear him down. The man is the head of the family but the woman should be able to hold him accountable. My love language is words of affirmation so I hope my wife gets that.

Yes, the woman, as created by God is a helper. But we are also supposed to be servants...so in a way it's like we should be serving one another. In our culture this is non-existent. In our culture, one serves the other and we dress it up and call it different things but basically, in the end, to think that there are two people serving one another without saying, "I'm doing this to get something from you cause I feel forced to." From the woman's standpoint, she needs to know that the man cannot do it alone. From the guy's standpoint, he needs to know that he is doing this because it's how Christ loved the church. This is how I am supposed to lead...by serving...so it's two different ways to approach it. There's helping, but they call it something else.

4. Has culture turned the word "helper" into something derogatory?

Absolutely! Women seem to be the second...the lesser person. I think it's part of the curse...they strive to be on top so even if they are equal the woman may not view herself as equal.

If there is a real man willing to lay his life down for his wife...then he has a wife who is in love with him. It's not a fire that can die down and then be rekindled...you'd give anything for her

because she is there to support you. Just be there, loving you the entire time. She makes you life a happy thing and brings joy to your life.

5. What experiences or observations have shaped your opinion about a husband's role in marriage?

| Told the story of Mark _____ dropping everything to go paint a nursery for their new baby because his wife wanted it done before she actually had the baby. Mark said, "I'm going to paint the house because I love my wife...and I know that she wants me to do that." He stopped doing meetings...that SHOWED me that he loved his wife.

{would you consider Mark to be a mentor?} Definitely.

My father. That's the husband figure that I have been around the longest time in my life. Knowing him and knowing how he has loved me...just seeing that and my parent's relationship...just kind of made me say that "I want to have what they have." But for me...better...because it's for me.

I think that's a big reason why we don't see successful marriages because those father figures aren't there. It's just this circle...that doesn't get fixed in a lot of homes.

My parents too. My dad has taught me lessons...because of that, I look up to him. But I look up to my mom too...this is going to sound kind of weird...but I want to marry someone like my mom because they balance each other out. Those two role models in your life will show you how to live in your marriage...nobody has that...they don't have spiritual leaders...

I just strive to be better than any man in any rap or hip-hop song...pretty low bar! It's true though...it's what I hate the most about our culture...we are affected by music. There is an emotional connection with music. Looking at what culture says is the "right thing to do"...it's so dumb...it's disgusting and dumb...I want to through up sometimes...it's really not that hard to be a counter-cultural man if you look at what you have to be to be a cultural man. It's basically being a little boy...

A little boy who shaves...who have swag...Mark Driscoll talked about it.

The biggest person who has been a mentor in my life...he doesn't know it...but he has shown me the exact opposite path I want to take...my big brother (gave examples from his life). He didn't have a person to look to. I now know what potholes in the road to avoid because I saw what happened to him. A lot of people would call him a good guy...but...

I learn from my own personal experiences...I make mistakes.

I know exactly the kind of guy I hate...and that's the guy I was before I came to Christ. I know what I don't want to be because of what He did. If I have a daughter, I was not the kind of guy I want her to know. I know this very well because that "person" was me.

It's the great part about repentance...do a 180...not a 80...do a complete turn around.

I've seen families where the dad is so controlling...he runs the family like an Army...you don't want to be that husband who orders his wife around...but it goes the other way too.

6. How is your definition of a husband's role in marriage similar to, or different than, that of the culture around you? Explain.

Culture wouldn't say this...but marriage is basically to find someone to let you take whatever you have to in order to be happy and ...it's all about taking...our sinful, selfish nature that wants to take everything out of someone but give nothing in return.

If I'm doing a lot of receiving, I have to catch myself...I know it's in me so I know that's what is in the world around us.

Culture tells us that love is a feeling and not a choice. People expect to feel the way they did at the beginning forever...but that feeling can't last forever. Discussed TWO AND A HALF MEN.

It's not "find that woman you're willing to die for...find that spiritual partner." Society says, "Don't be alone...If you can find someone willing to marry you, that's better than being alone all your life." "Just go for it...lower your bar so you can have someone."

It's also opposite of that...culture says, "just find someone hot."

Culture is giving up on marriage. They look at the rate of divorce. Instead of saying "let's fix it," they are saying, "we give up." They cohabit or date for 6 or 8 years. It's kind of silly...that search for a compatible person. They are trying to find another way to do something that only works one way. Research shows that divorce spiked when laws changed (no fault divorce). It's an easy way out. Marriage went from something you had to commit to to something where there is an easy way out. Because there is an easy way out...it's useless. Slowly becoming...in 20 years if somebody gets married it'll be a big deal...it's sad...it's becoming a counter-cultural thing.

When we get married...I hope we all do...and we stay married...that will be a powerful testimony to the power of Christ because I'm seeing the Roman culture repeat itself. Temple sex and worshipping prostitutes...how is that any different from going to Vegas for the weekend? It's what happened thousands of years ago...but it's happening again. The power of the movement of Christ fluctuates...(Driscoll on having your own faith...forgotten, denied, rejected).

People get married to fill a hole in their heart...as an answer to the question, "What's the biggest thing I can do in this world to show that I love somebody?" After a few years of marriage you realize that the hole isn't filled...they are missing who fills that hole – Jesus. His love, not what we manufacture, fills the hole.

Culture says, until you get tied down go ahead and have as much fun as you can. Sleep with as many girls as you can. For me...it's like...I would definitely want my future wife to be saving herself for me. Even before I care about Jesus...I hated the thought of my future wife doing something with another guy.

The more girls do...they are disgusting...guys are just players.

When we're single, we are supposed to be building up toward marriage. A young guy is learning how to be really good people that eventually get divorced. They are not learning how to be a committed husband who loves his wife. Their whole life up to marriage is teaching them how to divorce someone.

This one guy tells me that he does all the sexual stuff to prepare himself for marriage...and I just want to punch him in the face...you're missing the point...

People cohabit because there is nothing binding between them...the back door is always open.

If you're going to act like that then get a dog instead.

7. How important is the development of an initiative to equip young men to become husbands? Explain.

Because of what society is telling young men we need to have someone telling us what is right.

{Who would you look to for that?} mature, wise, God-fearing men. I'm not going to look up to someone who isn't a follower of Christ. I don't need a smart theorist. I need someone who is just an older guy who is well versed in the Bible who has had a successful marriage.

{could it be somebody that you don't know that well?} I would say it needs to be somebody I know...how would you know if they are legitimate or not.

I would say multiple people...I look around the church and see lots of Godly husbands, fathers, guys who I could learn from ...

It could be either way....

I'd like to know the person first. I don't care if someone says, "I'm a good dad or husband." I'm learning because I see the guy doing it. I can see that their marriage is working...then I'll be interested in learning from that guy.

The relationship is everything. We are not going to break this trend unless young men find a Godly man to emulate. I've spent hours talking to Wes about his marriage. Wes and his wife saved themselves for marriage and now they have sex "all the time." That's the goal man!

8. What would such an initiative look like? What key topics would be discussed?

I don't think it starts with a random relationship. You should start with the person's dad. I shouldn't be looking to Mark or Kevin... I should be looking to my dad. The way to empower me to be a man is to teach my dad how to be a man. He's the guy who should be teaching me that stuff.

The fact that we are talking about this truly makes me sad. It's a big enough problem that even though we don't know each other we all agree that this is a problem. We have to fix it. We are the next generation. We don't want to contribute to the problem. It's not a baby tiger... it's going to eat us. I see a sick generation of men. We are taking the initiative to solve it.

Driscoll talks about talking to men differently than you would talk to a mixed crowd... and it's true. Men really get let off the hook... no one really calls out the man in a person... not sin management or behavior modification... instead, tell men, "I see your heart and it's disgusting. I see your heart and it's death." Christ can bring it back to life. We are the ROLE of Christ in the church but we are not Christ. He died for our sins. It starts with men being saved... then it develops from there into daily formation... it's the stuff that cuts... everything comes back to Jesus on the cross.

Accountability is really big. People I consider mentors are so because they have disciplined me. They have stopped me and changed my course. It sucked. I hated him for it... but he was right. As soon as I told Kevin and Mark they said, "no... that's not going to happen... your heart is wrong and what you're doing is wrong... and we are not going to let this happen."

Our culture likes to feminize men (shaved chest and arms). They are sensitive... Mark Driscoll is really big on this. My dad stopped drinking for our family and that was because of God.

There are also the opposite side guys... very hard and aggressive. One is pushing against, the other is hiding from it. They each have the same issues and we only see the tip of the iceberg. There is a whole lot of issues underneath.

Talking about purity... and being real about it. No high-horse stuff. Be real about temptations, sex, sin, masturbation... how that all affects your future marriage. I saw 5/5 prayer cards asking for prayer about purity... these are junior high kids... it broke my heart. To have students that young having these problems... what do you think older people are doing.

Be very real, talk about things that are really happening, sexual issues, take it back to Jesus.

That's how we got here... the church wants to cover things up and not talk about it... the problem just goes from one generation to the next.

When you confess something it loses half its power over you. You live a double life. You're trapped but you want to be free.

We don't open up and tell the truth to one another...let's confess and move on to the future and confront hard problems.

Have somebody who has been there sit up there and tell the story...we should have this panel discussion in front of the youth group.

Appendix D: Focus Group B Transcript

1. What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term “successful marriage?”

Devotion

Long lasting/committed.

Long lasting marriage means you'll stay together no matter what.

Biggest part of that is faithfulness. Otherwise, it's not a marriage

Marriage is outlined in scripture. It's intended to be a covenant relationship as opposed to a contract. "I'll continue to pursue this person if they are faithful to me."

Covenant: you give me this and I'll give you that.

A man is to fulfill his wife's needs and a woman is to fulfill her husband's needs on a sexual level. A good sex life puts marriage on a Godly level. It brings you closer together.

To glorify God in everything you do. When you're together, you glorify God. And when you're alone, you glorify God. She's like your accountability partner.

Teamwork. You have to work together so that expectations meet.

A husband and wife don't have to agree on everything all the time. But I can tell that successful couples like each other, you know, like they are friends too.

You have to disagree to have a successful marriage. A line can be drawn. Otherwise, there is no reality.

If you and your spouse are exactly alike, then one of you is not necessary.

If we don't agree, cool down and start the resolving process as the man. You initiate.

Both have a responsibility to express their feelings.

If there is a disagreement, the guy's role is to lead. But you have to build trust with her in order to get there. It takes time. Trust is big.

It ok to tell her that she is wrong...but be honest.

2. What do you think a husband's role in a marriage should be?

The man's job to initiate communication.

Support – financially.

To lead and to provide. Bible tells us to love our wives as Christ loves the church.

What if the wife makes more money (as common in today's world)? As long as you are sacrificing your time, your money..it's not only financial, it's spiritual. The man is the spiritual leader. If you provide God's love God will provide for your family.

3. What is a wife's role in marriage?

A wife needs to tend to a guy's sexual needs. It's one way to have a closer bond. It's God's gift to marriage Give her husband whatever he needs.

But that doesn't mean no intimacy. There can be sex without intimacy but that goes back to the guy's role. I would love for my wife to be a great mother and a support to me. It's like cancer when a wife is constantly not satisfied with your effort. It's a bad example in front of the kids and it's a bad atmosphere for the home.

Quoted a verse...a dripping faucet. A good wife encourages.

She should be uplifting..I like to know that I'm appreciated.

4. Has culture turned the word "helper" into something derogatory?

When I think of a "helper" I think of someone who is always asked to do something for me...you know, like Santa's little helpers.

Help is a little derogatory.

I don't think the term is derogatory in itself, but it could be interpreted that way.

Referring to your wife as a helper is little shady these days.

Helper can be interpreted to mean that the woman should work to help cover the costs of running the house. It's not cool to go to work and come home to a wife who is sitting around the house. A little extra money is nice.

I think it's good that a woman has a job. My mom would sit at home and just kinda clean every single day. This sucks! She went and got a job. But separate bank accounts are a foreign concept to me. Marriage is a union. It's like a merger with a company. They need to combine finances so two separate accounts doesn't make sense.

5. What experiences or observations have shaped your opinion about a husband's role in marriage?

I learned from mistakes...from what I wish I saw in my house. My parents got divorced when I was little and then my mom got remarried and then divorced again. There was a lot of crap in our house growing up. A lot on both parts. Then I got a biblical understanding of what a marriage should look like, I saw that and I desired that.

My parents wouldn't fight in front of us. They wouldn't sleep on it. They talked it out and didn't wake up angry.

Mostly from sermons and the bible. I never really had my dad around. Parents separated when I was two. Never had a father figure in my house. Never thought about it until after listening to sermons.

Comparing and contrasting marriages I see in my entire family. My mom and dad are the only two to have a successful marriage. Whenever we have family reunions I see all the little stabs people take at each other. Then I see how my mom and dad treat each other. They manage, despite everything beating them down, to make it work.

I grew up in a good marriage home. Not perfect but good. Wife and husband should always be on the same page as the kids. Know what is going on with the money.

6. How is your definition of a husband's role in marriage similar to, or different than, that of the culture around you? Explain.

The perfect dad comes home and everybody says, 'oh, it's so much better now that dad is home.' Dinner is already on the table, wife gives him a kiss...that is so fake. It should be that way...but today a husband doesn't even need to be a man. Who knows what a husband is today. It's something different to everyone.

If you're not a believer, a husband can be anything you want it to be. It's whatever you grew up with. It's however your parents affected you.

This is why so many people are divorced...guys don't even know how to act. They get scared, they get distance, they get divorced. More percentage of non-believers are divorced, I bet.

When a couple actually lives out their faith together, the marriage actually lasts. You can go through the motions or you can actually live it out. That's why Christian marriages don't work. You don't actively pursue a relationship with God.

Our culture is moving away from the idea of marriage completely. Men are portrayed in the media as boys. They are full grown men who act like boys. I don't think the culture sees a problem with it

A lot of people I know want to get married but there is no foundation for it. They won't have the discipline to make it last. Even Christians.

People celebrate that they got a divorce...it's expected!

People claim to fall out of love..that annoys me. You were only committed to the satisfaction they gave you.

In Europe, the marriage certificates have an expiration date. Marriage has very little value.

7. How important is the development of an initiative to equip young men to become husbands? Explain.

Take over MTV...

You can't really change someone's future now...you have to be a great example. Bring them to church. You've got to be a witness to someone...the rest will fall into place because of God.

The best way to do this is to live by example. People will know something is up and they will ask you about it.

7(b). Is the church equipping you?

I've learned a lot about relationships by going to Newlife. They emphasize relationships

It's not easy to do these things...we want to be selfish. We tend to step away from commitment. Accountability groups help pursue righteousness. Other churches write books. A lot of Christians are actually going against culture.

It's possible to have a good relationship without God. But God shows you how to forgive and gives you a better chance to be a successful husband. Without God, views of right and wrong are very different.

8. What would such an initiative look like? What key topics would be discussed?

A lot of people think that if you are going to be committed then you have to try each other out first. I was living with my girlfriend before I met Christ. It wasn't working. A woman needs to know that there is security. Maybe he is going to leave. For the guy, you can't grow in your character unless you can make a commitment. The gift of sex is taken away and the intimacy is lost. Two become one, in God, in the deepest emotional connection you will make.

You can't test drive a woman...

Appendix E: Focus Group C Transcript

1. What words or phrases come to mind when you hear the term “successful marriage?”

I think of two people who get along with each other and are able to be remain friends for all their lives. They shouldn't be that couple that argues all the time.

They don't cheat on each other.

The two need to be happy. If they are not happy then the marriage isn't successful. How could it be considered successful if one of them, or both, isn't happy?

It's a marriage where the husband and the wife share everything. Everything is split 50/50.

The sex has to be good..and frequent. I know too many older couples who rarely, if ever, have sex. I don't want a marriage like that.

It's important that you actually love your wife and that she loves you. There's too much that can go wrong if you don't really love each other.

A successful marriage means you don't get a divorce. No matter what...you stay married. That is success.

When it comes to things like money and kids, a couple has to agree on how to handle those issues. I see couples all the time who are always arguing about kids or money. It's like, “why are you mad, man” and he'll say something about his wife and money or his wife and kids...I don't want to live like that.

2. What do you think a husband's role in a marriage should be?

A husband should be an equal partner. He shouldn't be ruling and reigning over the woman like a dictator.

He should make money and put a roof over his families head or he should contribute to the family in a significant way. These days it's normal for a woman to make more money than the man so they have to figure out how he can contribute.

The husband should be the leader. Ultimately, he is in charge. Now, he should discuss certain things with his wife but at the end of the day, the man is responsible.

Well, the man is supposed to be in-charge – traditionally – but that is changing. (How?) It seems like whoever is making the money is the one that is in-charge. Guys have to figure out what else they can do if they aren't the “bread winner.” Everything is more equal now.

(So ultimately, who makes the final decisions?)

Well it really shouldn't come to that "final decision." The man and wife have to discuss problems and come to an agreement. They have to work it out.

(What if they can't work it out?)

It depends on the issue but at some point somebody has to figure out what is going to happen. I would say it is the man's job to put his foot down...

3. What is a wife's role in marriage?

A wife should be raising the kids and making meals and helping the husband run the house while he is at work. But some women work so in that case the guy should be more willing to help.

It makes sense for the woman to, you know, raise the kids but the guy has got to help. I don't think a woman wants to sit home all day and be nothing but a housewife. Those days are over.

A wife should respect her husband. I see a lot of women who just don't like their husband. They roll their eyes when he talks, back talk him, it's really crazy. I wouldn't want to put up with that every day of my life...

She should be willing to have sex and meet my needs.

4. Has culture turned the word "helper" into something derogatory?

Heck yes! If I called my girlfriend a "helper," she would be pissed. That word is kind of old fashioned. I can't imagine any woman wanting to be called a helper.

Look at the TVshows and music these days. Women aren't helpers, they are objects...or divas. They want to be so independent and guys gotta let them be that way or they are just going to be like that without you.

I wouldn't ever refer to my future wife as a "helper" in public. I think that would really embarrass her.

If the word was thought of as it is used in the Bible then there wouldn't be a problem, but most people don't know what that means. They just think of a helper as a kind of slave or hired hand.

5. What experiences or observations have shaped your opinion about a husband's role in marriage?

I just look at my family and see what a mess most of the marriages are. I don't want my marriage to be anything like that.

My dad has always taught me about being a good husband and a good man. My parents have a successful marriage and I think it's because my dad knows how to lead a family and how to love a woman.

Some of my friends have gotten married and I watch and listen to what is happening in their lives. Sometimes it's like, dude, what are you doing. You can't talk to your wife like that...I gotta get that kind of stuff out of my system before I even think about being a husband. It's like, as a husband, you have to be mature. You have to make good decisions. Some of these guys got married because it kinda seemed liked they felt like it was the next logical step. They'd been living with their girlfriend for so long, it just sort of made sense...in their mind. Now they regret it.

I look at what popular culture says about being a husband and I'll do the opposite. Look at Homer Simpson and Peter Griffin (Family Guy). These guys are dopes. They're lazy and stupid. It's no wonder marriages are falling apart. We are constantly shown terrible examples. Even with real life characters. Celebrities, athletes, all of these guys – they have no idea what a husband is supposed to do. Society sees this and doesn't know how to translate it.

6. How is your definition of a husband's role in marriage similar to, or different than, that of the culture around you? Explain.

Kinda like we were saying on the last question, culture doesn't really show us many examples of a husband we would want to be.

It's like we see what's depicted out there, but I know that isn't going to work. I think a husband needs to be the leader but that's not what culture wants anymore. They want us to just go along for the ride.

The whole idea of marriage is like a joke these days. It seems like everyone gets a divorce as just a normal part of life. I really don't want to have a relationship like that.

These days marriage is a controversial word. I think it means a relationship between a man and a woman. Culture says it can be a relationship between just about anybody. Some guy tried to marry a building...I don't get it!

If you're alone for too long, people start to talk. Is he gay? It's like, no, I just don't have a girlfriend right now. And everybody's like, "uh huh..."

7. How important is the development of an initiative to equip young men to become husbands? Explain.

It would be good to do, but I don't know how you'd do it. It's not like driving a car where you take so many lessons and then get a license....maybe it should be.

If there is a way to get guys who have been successful husbands to talk with guys like us, then that would work. I just need to know what works. I need some tools because I'm not ready to be a husband right now.

The best thing is to just know somebody who is doing right and then do what they do. If it works for them, then it will work for me.

Young guys just need to hear how it is.

It would be really important to do this because guys just aren't prepared for the responsibility. I know that I'm not.

Appendix F: 2014 Strategic Plan Outline

VISION

Newlife men are counter-cultural. They love Jesus, hate sin, and repent quickly. They love their wives like Christ loves the church and they accept responsibility to lovingly lead their family.

GOALS

1. Introduce men - particularly young men - to Jesus.
2. Train young men to be counter-cultural husbands.
3. Facilitate the development of mentoring/coaching/lifelong relationships among men of Newlife Church.
4. Equip young men to take the mission of Jesus to their neighborhood.

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a four-week small group core curriculum for “Man Up.”
2. Launch six “Man Up” small groups in Spring 2014.
3. Identify six apprentices.
4. Replicate.

STRATEGY

1. Deliver Basic Training: A series of lessons that teach core principles of following Jesus and the basic DNA of Newlife Church.
2. Sync: Ongoing monthly training for vision casting/alignment and addressing timely issues.
3. Boot Camps /Equipping Events: Yearly or quarterly training sessions.
4. Coaching: Your coaching relationship is a perpetual on-call resource for help and assistance.

STRUCTURE

1. Coach
2. Team Leader
3. Group Leaders
4. Apprentices
5. Group Member

Appendix G: Small Group Guide Outline

:: Week One ::

JESUS REVEALED

- Big Idea:** Jesus is God who reigns above all.
- Scripture:** Genesis 1: 26-27
John 1: 1-5
John 14:6
Revelation 17:14
Revelation 19: 11-21
- Video Clip:** Matt Chandler on a husband's responsibility to lead responsibly.
- Discussion:** Is Jesus for you merely a "good teacher" who had a few good principles for living or is He the ruling and reigning authority in your life?
- ACTION POINT:** Live out your life as if God holds men responsible – because He does.

:: Week Two ::

LOVE LIKE JESUS

- BIG IDEA:** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.
- Scripture:** Genesis 2
Ephesians 5
- Discussion:** How does a husband love his wife like Christ loved the church? Is it possible? How did Jesus resolve conflict? How did Jesus love people?
- Video Clip:** Mark Driscoll on Ordered Complementarianism
- ACTION POINT:** Love your wife like Christ loved the church.

:: Week Three ::

LEAD LIKE JESUS

- BIG IDEA:** Be bold in your faith and humble in your heart.
- Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 16:13

:: Week Three *continued* :

- Scripture: Matthew 6: 12-14
Ephesians 4:32
Nehemiah 4:14
2 Corinthians 5:18
- Discussion: What are some relational conflict resolution strategies that you have seen work? How does a husband balance leadership and relationship? What should a husband do when things get out of balance? How can he know?
- Guest: A mature Christian husband to discuss leadership, forgiveness, and reconciliation.
- ACTION POINT: Repent of your sin and pray for humility.

:: Week Four ::

DIE LIKE JESUS

- BIG IDEA: Jesus calls husbands to “come and die.”
- Scripture: John 12: 23-26
John 3: 1-21
Ephesians 5: 25-27
- Discussion: What does it mean to “love life?” To “hate life?” To “be where I am?” What does Jesus promise and what does it mean for a husband? What does it mean to “die?” How can we “live” if we have to “die?”
- Guest: Lead pastor to call young men to repentance and to the mission of Jesus.
- ACTION POINT: Die so that you can live.

Appendix H: Leadership Series Introductory Message

A Call To Lead

'Man Up' Leadership Series // INTRODUCTION

BIG IDEA: MEN HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD

*Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. * Be strong. And do everything with love. **1 Corinthians 16:13 (NLT)**
Greek = Be men.

*Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. **1 Corinthians 16:13 (ESV)***

Discuss how men today are acting...thesis intro

CHARACTER OF A LEADER

I. LEADERS START WITH THEMSELVES

*The saying is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder (an overseer) he desires an honorable position. So an elder (overseer) must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation...must not be a heavy drinker (not drink too much wine) or be violent. He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? **1 Timothy 3:1-5 (NLT)***

Leadership starts with the leader – in his character and in his home...your home is kind of a proving ground for the battlefield that waits outside your door. Paul is telling us that leadership is about character. And the first test of a leader's character are his relationships and conduct in his own home. If you can't love your wife, or earn the respect of your children or control your pants you can't lead. If you can't stop looking at porn on the internet or if you'd rather sit in front of a TV all night playing Modern Warfare then you aren't ready to lead. Mastering Angry Birds is not one of the seven habits of highly effective people!

William Bennett, a New York Times best-selling author, former Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan and Drug Czar under George H.W. Bush recently released book titled, "The Book of Man." I got it for Christmas and I love it. It's full of these stories, letters, and speeches from guys. Great leaders and thinkers...guys like Washington, Patton, Roosevelt, and William Penn. Bennett captures the essence of leadership and manhood but he also discusses the current state of our men...

For example, men between the ages of 18 and 34 are now the biggest users of video games with 48.2% of **all** American men spending an average of 2.5 hours per day playing video games. Additionally, men are spending an average of 4.5 hours per day watching television. Together this means that the average American guy is spending about 7 hours a day sitting on his couch doing absolutely nothing. Ignoring his wife, ignoring his children, ignoring his leadership responsibility.

It is possible to be a leader that everyone praises...except for your wife and children.

2. LEADERS HAVE THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT

*...He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. **1 Timothy 1:2 (NLT)***

*He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. **1 Titus 1:9 (NLT)***

Paul tells us that a leader "must be able to teach." Why? Why is this issue so important for our leaders today?

Because the world our men live in is a spiritual train wreck. Culture does not encourage young men to follow Christ, culture does not encourage young men to take responsibility for anything, particularly the responsibility to lead a family. Postmodern culture is telling our young men that there is no "truth," that there is no right or wrong, that whatever is true for them is true and right. But Paul says, "Wrong!" This is why leaders must be able to teach.

C.S. Lewis wrote that "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts." Our men are dry. Too many of us are like the seed Jesus talked about in the Parable of the Farmer (Matthew 13). We are scattered on the footpath. Our roots extend into dry, dead, rocky soil only to be devoured by birds – Angry Birds!

And we know from Matthew 7 that a "bad tree cannot produce good fruit." A tree that doesn't produce good fruit is "chopped down and thrown into the fire." The fruit of such a tree is – according to Revelation 14 – "thrown into the great winepress of the wrath of God." And make no mistake, this winepress will be full. John goes on to tell us that these grapes will be crushed and the juice – the blood – will flow for 180 miles and will be as high as a bit in a horse's mouth. We cannot accept this fate for our young men.

Do we blame culture? No. Culture is simply a reflection of the people who are in it. As leaders do we take the responsibility to teach our young men how to be counter-cultural husbands. Yes. This is our mission. Not just to be counter-cultural husbands but to also be counter-cultural leaders who have the character and courage to lovingly and truthfully speak into the lives of our young men.

3. LEADERS INVEST DISPROPORTIONATELY

You have planted much but harvested little. You eat but are not satisfied. You drink but are still thirsty. You put on clothes but cannot keep warm. Your wages disappear as though you were putting them in pockets filled with holes? Haggai 1:6 (NLT)

Author, Steve Saccone, wrote a book called "Relational Intelligence" and in that book he talks about the importance of leaders being "Disproportionate Investors." Investing disproportionately mean a couple of things. First, it means investing in people who are different than you. God has wired each of us to be a certain kind of leader...but we all have blind spots. We have strengths and we have weaknesses. So many people tell you to spend all your time improving on your weaknesses...Why? It's a weakness... That you're not good at it! More important than improving your weaknesses is to become aware of them and to consider them as you build your team or lead your ministry.

That's how Jesus did it...look at his team – a tax collector, political activists, a bunch of fishermen, a couple of guerilla warfare fighters, and probably one pick he would like to have back...Jesus chose to NOT do it alone. He invested in a diverse team. He planned, he invested, he cared, he empowered, he facilitated individual transformation, and he served in humility.

We all have examples of that rare leader who had enough charisma to seemingly do it alone. But to try to do it alone – to sacrifice the power of personal relationships – is to compromise the example of Jesus who would not give up investing himself in the lives of others.

Whether your leadership gifting is that of a:

Prophet - you have the gift to call people to repent, you like to preach, teach, and write.

Priest - you have the gift to focus on people, to love, care and serve them.

King - you have the gift to organize, develop policy, systems and procedures.

don't shortcut the redeeming process that takes place when a leader becomes intentional about relationships in his ministry.

Second thing about being a disproportionate investor is that you want to minimize your investment in consumers and maximize your investment in investors. You are only one person. You can't do it all and you won't connect with everyone. This is why diversity of your team or group is so important. You should invest in those who will turn around and invest in others...others who you have no chance of influencing.

So invest in others and do it disproportionately.

ACTION POINT: LEAD LIKE CHRIST

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

The question for you men is not, "Are you a leader?" You are a leader. It's a fact introduced by God in creation and it is a nail that Paul continually hammers in his New Testament letters. The question is, "What kind of a leader are you?"

Are you a leader with character beyond reproach?

Have you examined your heart and your motives?

Is Jesus for you merely a "good teacher" who had a few good principles for living or is He the ruling and reigning authority in your life?

Do you hate sin? Do you repent quickly? Or, like the first Adam do you stand by quietly and watch as your family and your eternal legacy goes literally straight to hell?

Are you ready to teach young men how to be counter-cultural husbands?

Are you ready to invest in the lives of young men who desperately need the salvation and freedom and example that only Jesus can give them?

The responsibility to equip our young men is ours! It is yours! Jesus is calling you to the wall. The only question is, "Where Are You?!"