

The Worth Of A Woman

In our culture today women are viewed, presented, talked about and sung about like a **commodity**. That the cultural viewpoint regarding women. In this session we'll reveal the danger of this mindset and challenge ourselves to embrace a biblical view of the women in our lives.

What is a commodity? A commodity is something of value that you use until you want to trade it in for something of greater value. A commodity is something you're not too attached to and you use it until you're done with it and then you move on to something else.

The message we get every single day regarding women is, *Take me, use me, do whatever you want to with me and then trade me*. And then we go on to another one. We see this in movies, on the web, in magazines and we hear it in the lyrics to songs. The subtle message is *use me and then discard me*. The result is a culture that devalues women in every way imaginable.

The ideas that we're talking about in this session may seem outdated or weird to you. That's okay, they were weird back in the first century – in fact, at that time women were a commodity. They were treated as property. Prostitution was legal and encouraged. Women slaves could be done with as their masters pleased.

The value of marriage was so low that on two occasions there were bills before the Roman Senate to mandate marriage because the upper class men wouldn't get married. They viewed wives as a hassle so they'd just have sex with prostitutes and slaves and not have to deal with a wife. There was an epidemic of the mistreatment of women. They had no status or voice in society.

Into this society Jesus, Paul and Peter spoke and their statements were staggering. They elevated women to levels they had never experienced. Women began to flock to the local church and found a new sense of worth and equality like never before. Jesus got the ball rolling ...

“A new command I give you: Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
John 13:34 (NIV)

Even the women ... the girls? YES! Give equal love, honor and respect to one another! Regardless of their age, gender, race, etc.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
John 13:35 (NIV)

Paul came along and contextualized this for the early followers ...

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...”
Ephesians 5:25 (NIV)

At this time men were takers, not givers. But this NEW thing that was happening would revolutionize society and bring value to all of humanity. This is what it means to be a Christian man!

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Peter, who one day had walked up to where Jesus was and found him talking to a Samaritan woman (totally inappropriate in that culture; offered to drink out of her jar!), was so impacted by the teachings of Christ that he penned these words ...

“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with **respect** as the weaker partner and **as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life**, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV)

“You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and **show her honor** as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”

1 Peter 3:7 (NASB)

“Weaker partner” simply means physical strength. We’re to leverage our physical strength for our wives’ sake. Use your power for the benefit of women!

We’re not superior to women. Jesus died for them just as much as He did for us! Be careful how you treat them. They are heirs with us – completely equal. And if we don’t get this right God won’t answer our prayers.

The bottom line is that in every conversation and interaction we are to treat women with respect and honor as daughters of God Most High ... and we’re accountable to Him if our thoughts, words or behavior is anything else. This is true for single guys and married guys alike.

We have to RENEW our mind to think differently. We have to MAKE up our mind to behave differently.

Let’s spend the balance of our time together talking about these two areas. First, what does it mean to RENEW our minds?

1. Playlist

If you have any songs with the words bitch or whore it needs to be erased before the weekend is over. In every country where there has been a genocide or slavery has been lawful, there is a de-humanization of women/people by ascribing a label to a group of people.

Illustration: Rwanda – Hutu’s decided that Tutsi’s were “cockroaches” (800,000 people killed); Nazi Germany – Jewish women were whores/rats and they were to be exterminated. U.S. Eras - American Indians, Civil War, Civil Rights

We should be completely intolerant of this kind of language. Get rid of it!

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2. Erotic Imagery (Porn)

Every time you sit down and look at pictures of naked women (or men) you're at school. What are you learning? Three things you're learning ...

- a. A real body isn't good enough.
- b. One body isn't good enough.
- c. Your wife's body isn't good enough.

Have the conversation with your girlfriend, fiancée or wife ...
"Honey, ..."

Single guys ... if you want to have a great marriage someday, the best thing you can do is check out of this school today! This school sets you up for extraordinary disappointment.

Illustration: Don't think porn is bad for you? During WWII the government gave the GI's as many cigarettes as they could smoke and guess what, they developed lung cancer! In our day porn is widely distributed and now studies are being released that show that if you spend enough time learning these three lessons that something chemically changes in the brain. It's a drug that deadens your desire for real women.

It's not just a **pastime** ... it's a **PATHWAY** that leads somewhere! It leads you to view women as a commodity. Don't make your wife compete with thousands of women who don't even exist!

We also have to MAKE up our mind to behave differently.

Who is one woman you really respect and would love to meet someday? Think about that lady. You would show her respect, wouldn't you?

That's how you're to treat every women you come in contact with. And it begins with deferring to women everywhere.

Challenge for Single Guys: Put a date on your calendar one year out and don't date for one year! Then spend the year "renewing" your mind. Learn not to view women as a commodity. Learn to bounce your eyes. Learn to speak respectfully. Learn to treat gently.

Let's Pray!

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Discussion:

1. Who is a woman you would be honored to meet? Why would you want to meet her?
2. Do you agree that women are viewed as commodities in our culture? If so, what evidence do you see? Have you seen this cultural belief creep into your own mindset? If so, how?
3. Read 1 Peter 3:7. Men are clearly called to treat women with honor. Why do you think this is difficult for many men? Is it difficult for some women to respect themselves or other women? Who do you know that does this right?
4. One way we're encouraged to behave differently is to eliminate certain music from our playlists. What are some other actions you could take as you strive to be more honoring toward women?
5. What does the "school of porn" teach men to think about women? Why is erotic imagery so dangerous? If men neglect to deal with their addictions to these images, how will their present and future relationships be impacted?
6. Think back to that woman whom you would be *honored* to meet. How would you act in her presence? What would it look like to treat all women you know with that kind of respect?

Assignment: Jesus' call to treat women with esteem and honor can seem old fashioned or counterintuitive. However, if we want our dating and marriage relationships to thrive, it's a truth we can't ignore. What is at least one thing you can do this week to honor the women in your life?