

Designed to Lead

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Date: 28 September 2025

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- [0:00] Well, Richard Phillips divides this book into two parts.! We've been studying, obviously, part one, and this is actually our last week in part one.
- Now, part one is understanding our mandate.! Part two is living out our mandate. So this is our last class this morning where we're laying the doctrinal groundwork, as Phillips calls it.
- Starting next week, Lord willing, we'll then transition to part two of the book, which is more focused on practical application, taking the biblical teaching that we've received and applying it to different realms of our lives, like marriage, parenting, friendship, and life in the local church.
- So I thought it fitting, considering this is our last week in this first part, to recap together something of what we've learned together so far in our study.
- So I want you to be thinking, what are some important truths that we've been taught? What are some important truths that we've needed to be reminded of as it relates to being a man and living as men?
- [1:12] And I'm going to use the whiteboard to write down our answers. So be thinking as I pull the whiteboard up, and then I'd love to hear some good truths that we can have written down for us.
- I'm going to write slow, because as the junior high and high school guys know, I've got really bad handwriting. So if I write too fast, you will not be able to read it. So just shout out for me.
- What are some truths that we've learned or been reminded of? Who man is. Who is man? Yes.
- This is also giving you more time to think. Made in the image of God. What else? What else? Granted dominion over creation.
- Okay. Give me some more.
- [2:20] Workers. Good. We're not just remembering last week. I like it. Yes. Made to work. Yes. Rational.
- Spiritual. Beings. One that wasn't in the book, but we kind of touched on as well. Relational. As well. Made for relationship with God, with one another.
- Relates to being spiritual. Made to know God, to worship God. What else? Yes.
- Fruitful. We think of Genesis 1, 26, or 27 perhaps, that we're to be fruitful and multiply.
- We're thinking of children and bearing children, but also fruitful in the work that the Lord has given to us to make what we put our minds to, to grow and to flourish and to cultivate.
- [3:31] What's the book's title? The Masculine Mandate. What's the mandate based on that term? What's he have in mind there? What is our mandate? What is our mandate? Not quite.
- No, that's true. Genesis 2, 15. Yes. To work and keep, says the man who's also teaching through this study, so I don't know.
- It's like we cheated. 2, 15. To work and to keep. Good.

Were we made to get outside of the garden? Were we made to escape from the garden into the wilderness? No. Where God put man was the intention to work and to keep.

Something that Richard Phillips emphasizes is that God put man into the garden to work it and to keep it and to do those things in covenant relationships.

[4:41] So in covenant relationship to God, though Adam failed. And then also we recognize the covenant relationship of marriage as well within the garden and the goodness of marriage.

So the goodness of work, the goodness of marriage. And of course we've seen how sin has tainted all of those things. Same with the image of God. Marred but not destroyed.

And God is renewing us in the knowledge of our creator now that we've been redeemed through Christ. Anything else to add to this? These are good. How to know and called to particular work.

All right. Well, we're going to continue in our last laying of the doctrinal groundwork this morning by looking at chapter 5.

So we have some very succinct answers to some very basic questions of life. Who am I? I'm an image bearer of God.

[5:51] Made to be like God. Redeemed through Christ. We've answered questions of what do I do? We talked about how that's the airplane question. You obviously could give the answer that someone is expecting on the airplane.

If somebody asked you, well, what do you do? You could say your exact profession. You could say, well, I'm an accountant. Or I'm a teacher. Or I'm an engineer.

So on and so forth. Or we could answer that question in an even more basic way that gets to the heart of what God teaches us in Genesis 2.15.

Now I know that this maybe would stir up more questions. But if somebody asked you, what do you do? You could say, well, I like to think, as God says, that I work and I keep. Now, of course, that person should then say, what?

That's strange. What do you mean by that? But what a wonderful evangelistic opportunity that I now have to say, yeah, by that, this is what I mean. God says I'm to work and to keep. This is what it looks like in my life to work and to keep.

[6:56] So even if they don't ask you, you could take the initiative to explain what you mean by that. Well, last week we looked at the fundamental identity of man as an image bearer of God.

And as was mentioned, part of our role as being an image bearer is to exercise dominion. We saw that in Genesis 1. It clearly spelled out for us.

God made us in his image. And God gave us dominion. He gave us authority. Or we could say that God has called us to exercise lordship.

So the title of the chapter that we're studying this week is man as shepherd lord, hyphenated shepherd lord. Now the word lordship, I would gather that most people, if we grab them on the street and ask them about that word, they would frown upon it.

Authority in general is challenged. Authority in general is criticized as being inherently abusive. All authority is often viewed as abusive.

[8:02] When in reality, sometimes there are those in authority who abuse their authority. When we see that kind of abuse of authority, we should oppose it. We should vehemently oppose it.

But in our world today, there is sadly no distinguishing between authority exercised well and authority exercised poorly. Just authority in general is considered by many to be a negative concept.

So lordship would absolutely get lumped into that kind of negative thinking. I think that many a Christian even bristles when they read in 1 Peter 3 that Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him what?

Lord. But she did. And while I'm sure that all of us who are married are perfectly fine with our wives not calling us lord, let's be honest, that would be strange.

That title conjures up, as Richard Phillips says, images of overfed men in castles wearing powdered wigs and strange clothing. So maybe we don't use that title anymore.

[9:09] Though in England, they still do. Sam and Ollie aren't here for me to give them a hard time about this. But I'm not sure who gets to be called lords over in England. I actually found a website.

I went down a little bit of a rabbit hole this week and I found a website that told me that I could buy the title Lord of England. It said, click here to buy the title Lord of England.

I thought, well that's like a guaranteed virus that I'm going to put onto my computer and I'm not sure how to explain that one to Case. Well, somehow my laptop is fried because I was really trying to be lord of England over here.

The English do love their titles. We Americans, not so much. So maybe we don't use that title of Lord anymore. But we certainly can't overlook why Sarah did.

We shouldn't overlook why she did. The reason that Sarah called Abraham Lord was because she was submitting herself to Abraham's authority.

[10:08] And that's a good thing. So maybe the word Lord is outdated in our modern vocabulary, but the principle of authority, the principle of submission certainly shouldn't be set aside along with that title, though too often it is.

Authority and submission are just as foreign to most people as the term Lord itself. Now Richard Phillips doesn't just talk about lordship in this chapter.

He also talks about leadership. And he talks about how these two words are very similar in meaning. That leadership is perhaps a modern way of talking about lordship, which got me to thinking, is the word leadership actually related to the word lordship?

Do they have some kind of like old English root that ties them together? So I did a quick Google search and I discovered that no, they're not related in terms of their etymology, but I also discovered something else, Google AI, which just kind of pops up now when you go to do a Google search.

You can't help but see what Google AI has to tell you. Google AI doesn't just tell you that they are different terms with different origins. Google AI goes to great lengths to tell you that they are entirely different in meaning as well.

[11:28] Leadership, well that's a good word according to Google AI, but lordship, that's a dirty word. Leadership is this, they say it is focused on the act of guiding others forward, but lordship is rooted in the concept of dominion and having power over things.

Now the word over was actually italicized, kind of this subtle way of saying like, this is the M, we're going to emphasize this, that's bad, having power over, that's a no-no.

Google AI also said this, the last thing that I'll say, in modern usage, commentators often distinguish between the two concepts, contrasting service-oriented leadership with controlling lordship.

So that's something of the world's perspective, that's the world's take on lordship and leadership, they are two drastically different words in the world's eyes. But in God's word, we don't see such an extreme contrast between ideas of lordship and leadership.

We do see a very close association, that man has been given authority, and with that authority, what is he to do? He is to lead. Now of course, God is the Lord, capital L, over all creation.

[12:52] And there are no other capital L lords but him. That is repeatedly said in God's word. Like in 1 Chronicles 17:20, we read this, there is none like you, O Lord, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

So there's only one capital L, Lord. But, as we've seen, he has installed us on the earth to be Lord's, lowercase l, over his creation.

Where do we see this? Right there in the opening chapters of our Bible, in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam the right to name all the other creatures.

This is a function of him being the Lord, lowercase l, in the Garden. And so Genesis 2, 19 to 20, tells us this, Now out of the ground, the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them.

And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper fit for him.

[14:10] So we should notice that Adam didn't go to the animals. He didn't go and seek them out. They were brought to him. They answered to him.

Think of Adam much like you would think of a king. A king wouldn't go to his subjects in the city streets and in the market or in their homes if they had a need or a request.

Like, well, I heard that you needed something from me, so here I come to find out what I can do for you. No, his subjects would come to him and they would make their requests before him in his great hall as he sat upon his throne, his scepter in hand.

So it was with Adam in the garden. The animals were brought before him. They were brought to him showing who has authority. One by one they came to him.

And even says the birds of the heavens. What a submission that the Lord would bring the birds who could just flit about and fly away brought before him to be named. and he named them exactly as he chose.

[15:16] The text says whatever the man called every living creature, that was his name. So we see the great authority that was granted to Adam. There was no questioning his decisions by the animals.

There was no changing names after he gave them. He wasn't suggesting names that the animals could take into consideration. The name that he gave was the name that they had.

Philip says from that point their identity reflected Adam's lordship. They bore the names assigned to them by the highest of all God's creatures.

Adam was made to exercise authority. And we as men have been called to as well. Called to exercise lordship. Called to exercise leadership within some sphere of life.

Whether in the home, in the workplace, in the church, or in society in general. Just as our theme for this year says, we were designed to lead.

[16:21] And to lead in a way that brings about the flourishing of others. We're to lead in a way that brings about the good for others. Not to their harm, but to their benefit.

In whatever sphere we've been called to exercise our lordship in, we're to do it in a way that honors the lord. We're to do it in a way that honors the one who has given us that authority.

And we're to do it in a way that blesses others. Turn with me over to 2 Samuel 23. I want to spend just a little bit of time looking at 2 Samuel 23.

Here we have David's last words. The last words recorded of David as he's nearing death. And David, the leader that he was, he's going to talk about leadership.

He is passing along wisdom as a seasoned leader himself and he's going to teach us something of leadership. 2 Samuel 23 and we'll begin, we'll be looking at two verses, verses 3 and 4.

[17:31] So David says this, the God of Israel has spoken. The rock of Israel has said to me, when one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God, he dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

So you remember how Google AI had implied that having power over others is a bad thing, it's italicized over as if to say that that shouldn't happen. Well, we see here that David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says otherwise.

Actually, David says that God says, look at verse 3, God has spoken, God has said to me what follows, and that is that one can rule justly over men.

you can do it well. You can do it and it's good. How do you do it well? How do you rule justly over men? The next line says, in the fear of God.

What a wonderful description of good leadership. Leadership that honors God is leadership that is carried out in the fear of God. God is the one who exercises his authority well never forgets that his authority has been given to him by the Lord himself.

[19:00] We've said it before, we'll say it again, we answer to the Lord for how we lead. In what sphere of life do you have leadership in? How are you exercising the authority that has been given to you?

Are you exercising it in the fear of God? As David says, ruling in the fear of God. And then verse 4. Verse 4 tells us what happens when we exercise authority in this way.

Here's the result. Contrary to the opinion of man that says authority is always bad and will always oppress and hold others down, God's word tells us a very different result from those who rule in the fear of God.

Look at verse 4 again. He dawns on them like the morning light, like the sun shining forth on a cloudless morning, like rain that makes grass to sprout from the earth.

What a positive mental picture that David is painting for us here. A good leader, a godly leader, is like the morning light, like the sun shining in the blue cloudless sky.

[20:07] But he also says the good leader is like rain, which when you combine sun and rain, what do you get? You get grass that grows, just as we see even at this time of year. lush, green grass.

We're having to mow maybe twice a week right now because our grass is growing so frequently. Well, that's what our leadership should do, to make those that we've been put into the position of leading to grow and grow and grow, like green grass that needs to be mowed twice a week.

And that only comes as we do what? as we rule over them in the fear of God. So yes, we are lords.

But that's not all. Remember the title of the chapter for this week, Man as Shepherd Lord. It's not just man as lord, it's man as shepherd lord.

Richard Phillips says, if there is one image in the Bible that sums up God's model for leadership, it is that of the shepherd watching over, protecting, and leading his flock of sheep.

[21:18] Phillips then gives us a pretty lengthy list of examples of men who were both leaders and shepherds, or men who had the profession of being a shepherd that are honored and esteemed in God's word.

Now the Bible doesn't say that Adam was a shepherd, but it says that his first son, Abel, who was a godly, righteous man, was. He was, according to Genesis 4-2, a keeper of sheep.

Fast forward to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, they were herdsmen. Moses, we were told, was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro when he encountered God in the burning bush.

And then when God took Moses up on the mountain to show him the promised land, and to tell him of Joshua who was to succeed him, this is what Moses said.

Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, in that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep that have no shepherd.

[22 : 29] shepherd. So Moses' heart desire is that they would have a leader who goes out before them, who comes in before them, who is constantly at the front, leading as he ought. And what is that to avoid?

So they wouldn't be like sheep without a shepherd. They need a leader, they need a shepherd. King David, he was a shepherd of the sheep, and he shepherded God's people.

Psalm 78, 72 says, with upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hands. It's not talking about David with his sheep, that's talking about David with God's people.

He shepherded God's people. And then of course, there's the Lord Jesus. He wasn't a shepherd of a physical flock of sheep, but he called himself the good shepherd.

The good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep. So Richard Phillips concludes, all through the Bible, from beginning to end, God's model of servant lordship is that of the shepherd leader.

[23 : 33] Then Phillips goes on to helpfully show us how this model, the shepherd Lord, connects back to the masculine mandate of Genesis 2.15 that we have written there, to work and to keep.

We're to nurture and we're to inspire the hearts of those who follow us. That's the work aspect. And we're to protect those under our charge.

That's the keep aspect. We can consider the example of God himself. Obviously perfect in every way. We're to model our lives after him, to seek to be like him.

And we see God as the perfect shepherd Lord in Psalm 23. You can turn to Psalm 23 if you'd like to follow along looking at that text.

how does Psalm 23 begin? It begins with those well-known words, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

[24 : 29] So David sees God as his provider, as the one who ultimately cares for him. We see God then does what? Verse 2, he makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. What are the kinds of places that are suitable for sheep?

Green pastures, still waters, grazing grounds that are lush, that are safe from predators. These kinds of places, maybe we kind of take for granted, they're not just stumbled upon by accident.

Richard Phillips says, the shepherd must study the landscape and search out the safest routes to the best grazing grounds. Likewise, a shepherd leader of a family, church, or business must be able to point his followers in the right direction and guide them safely.

And that requires competence, doesn't it? It's not just any shepherd who leads the sheep to green pastures and to still waters, it's a skillful shepherd. It's a shepherd who knows what he's doing, a shepherd who finds those green pastures in skill waters.

[25:47] He's competent. And we must be competent too in whatever position of leadership the Lord has given to us. If we are to work well, we must know what we're doing.

So whether it's in the home, or it's in the church, or wherever it may be, in the workplace, that the Lord has called us to exercise authority, we should be skillful.

Phillips writes, to be successful as a shepherd leader, a man must master the needed skills, primary among them, the study of the truth of God's word.

So we then apply that truth in the sphere that God has given us authority in, and that should be then to the benefit of those that we lead. So all of that to say, we should always be learners, learners of God's word, learners of God's ways.

Think of David crying out to God in Psalm 25, teach me your ways. That should be our heart's desire, that should be our cry before the Lord. So we should be sharpening our skills, growing in competence to lead others.

[26:57] This is one reason that I think it's always good to say we should be readers, or we could say listeners of audio books, but we should be growing and using the treasure trove of godly individuals who have gone before us, that have studied God's word as well, and have written about it.

They've learned from his word, and they've written down what they've learned. We should never be done growing, and reading is such a clear way to grow. Remember the apostle Paul.

What did Paul ask Timothy to do? Bring the books, as Charles Spurgeon famously says, bring the books. Paul was a great reader, and Paul, by God's grace, was a great leader.

So we should be readers, reading God's word, reading good books, even like this one, about God's word, that we might better lead those who have been entrusted to us, leading them like our great shepherd of Psalm 23, leading them to green pastures and still waters.

So that's the work aspect of the masculine mandate applied to this title of shepherd lord. Shepherds guide those entrusted to them. Well, now let's consider the keep aspect of the masculine mandate and apply it as well to this title.

[28:16] Shepherds protect those entrusted to them. And we see God doing this with David in Psalm 23. Verse 4 says, Notice how personal God is with David.

He is not leading David from afar. God is not offering up assurances of protection from a distance. It's not like God is at the top of the canyon and David's down in the valley and God's calling out, you got this one, David.

I'm hoping that you'll make it through okay. Now David says, you are with me in the valley of the shadow of death. God is near to David. It is the presence of God as David's protective shepherd that gives David such confidence in his trials.

Richard Phillips says, the personal presence of a shepherd watching over and protecting the sheep gives the sheep assurance calming them and moving them forward because of their trust in his watchful care.

So we see something of the relationship here of guiding and guarding. How does a shepherd guide his sheep well? By guarding them, being near to them. As he protects them, they move forward in trust.

[29:44] So we too should be keeping those we lead in this personal kind of way. Now there are lots of spheres in which we've been called to lead and to keep.

We're to keep by protecting our wives and our children as we've said. We're to protect them from physical harm. We're to protect them from spiritual harm. We're to protect our church from harm.

Phillips argues that this protecting like a shepherd should be personal. This protecting requires a to be involved and to be engaged with those we're called to lead.

Our wives, our children, they should have confidence that we are protecting them. Just as David had that confidence of God's protective presence.

So, thinking about that in very practical ways, we should be physically present with them, but we should be emotionally present as well. We cannot protect well if we are far removed from those that we've been called to lead.

[30:47] If we are aloof, if we are disengaged, if we are in the room perhaps, but not actually available to those around us, we can't protect them well.

And, from their perspective, they will not feel protected by us. for example, I want to keep my kids safe, and I want my kids to come to me if they don't think that they're safe.

Or, I want my kids to come to me when they encounter something that concerns them. Piper and Judah have hit this stage of childhood where they're thinking and they're processing on a much deeper level, and I want them as they read things to come to me with questions, to come to me with concerns.

It's something that I'm glad when Piper, especially, is reading a book, and she notices something, and she says, Dad, what does this mean? Dad, is this right? Is this okay?

I want her to do that. I want to protect her, and I want her to know that she can come to me for that protection. As shepherds who keep, we should protect those entrusted to us, and we should want them to know that we're near, guiding them and guarding them, just as God guarded David with his rod and his staff.

[32:07] And to what end? What does David say? Well, he's comforted, isn't he? That's the end result of God's guiding, God's guarding. What does it result in?

It results in comfort for David. May those entrusted to us experience that same comfort as well. And then we come to the last two verses of Psalm 23.

history. And here we see that as God is David's shepherd, as God leads David in both working and keeping, guarding and guiding, what is the ultimate end result?

It's great blessing. David's cup overflows. Goodness and mercy follow him all the days of his life and he dwells in the house of the Lord forever.

May our leadership, an imperfect reflection of that for sure, but may our leadership reflect that, blessing others as we exercise authority over them.

[33:08] Just as David himself wrote in 2 Samuel 23, may we be like those who make them to grow like the grass, to flourish. So what a model that we have in Psalm 23, seeing God's leadership as David's shepherd, and of course, what a model that we have in our Savior, the good shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep.

We can't talk about this title of shepherd Lord without talking about him and without talking about self-sacrifice. If we are to love and to lead those around us that God has called us to, we must never forget that call involves self-sacrifice.

We must give of ourselves for the good of others. Richard Phillips says, our goal must not be just to carve out success for ourselves, but to leave a blessed imprint on the lives of those who are under our care.

Or to circle back to our theme for this year. The title is designed to lead, and the subtitle says, men leading with the heart of Christ.

That's what we're getting at in that subtitle. What is the heart of Christ, but one of self-sacrifice, sacrificial love? And that's the heart that we're to have as well.

[34 : 33] Giving of ourselves for the good of others. I don't know if you heard this news, but Vodibachum went to be with the Lord this week. If you don't know who he is, he was a pastor, he was an author, he was a speaker, he was a seminary president, in addition to being a faithful husband and father.

He actually spoke at the RB in that general assembly just two years ago. Some of us were there and privileged to be able to hear him preach. Well, I was reading one of his books earlier this week before learning that he had gone to be with the Lord.

It was his book entitled Family Shepherds, and as the title says, it's all about men being like shepherds of their families. And in the introduction, Vodibachum made this very simple statement.

He said, I want you to shepherd your family in the direction of the good shepherd. Well, that's how we should think of all that we've considered this morning.

Men as shepherd lords, we're under the authority of Christ, and we're seeking to lead others towards Christ. We're seeking to lead like Christ, and we're seeking to lead them towards Christ.

[35 : 43] And so what better way to do that than with the same sacrificial heart of our Savior. you're here. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks that we have the example of your Son as our good shepherd, that we would seek to lead as he does.

We thank you that we have you in Psalm 23 as David's shepherd, leading and guiding him. And we thank you, Father, that you give us your spirit to empower us, to give us strength, to give us ability.

We are weak in ourselves. We cannot lead in these ways. It's rather overwhelming when we think about seeking to be a shepherd Lord according to the pattern of your word in our own strength.

That's an overwhelming thought. So thank you, Father, that you've given us your spirits, and we pray that he would make us to be these kinds of men. Help us that we would spur each other on towards this end.

Help us that we would hold one another accountable. Help us that we would encourage each other, sharpen each other, and point one another towards the Savior. Help us to lead others towards him, we pray in Jesus' name.

[36 : 54] Amen. Amen.