

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 3: Relationships

Session 2: Living a Hi-Fi Life

Unedited Transcript

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Good morning, guys. It's great to see you. We do have a bunch of guests here today. I'm very pleased to have those folks here. We have all of the field team members who work in the state of Florida are here for some time of fellowship and encouragement and training and, honestly, I just think they wanted to come see the new office. If I can get all the Florida field team members to stand up. This is where you clap. That's good. Thanks, guys.

These guys have committed – some, their entire careers, from this point forward, some are doing this as volunteers, and some are part time. They are 100% committed to working with churches and helping churches reach and disciple men for effectively so that guys can be the fathers, the husbands, the workers, the church men, the community activists that we need to be to build God's kingdom. Give those guys ... Shake their hand. Give them a pat on the back. Give them some encouragement this morning. That's the first shout out.

Second shout out is my dad's here. You just got to recognize your dad when he's here. My dad's going to wave from the back there. My life has been blessed with many godly men but he's the first and the hallmark for the rest of them. Plus anything that I do wrong, it's his fault. It's my dad.

We are in challenge three, session two. I know these numbers are getting kind of crazy but we are in challenge three of the Journey to Biblical Manhood. We're in the relationships challenge. Last session on the Journey to Biblical Manhood, we talked about the marriage prayer. In this session, we're going to talk about having hi-fi relationships.

Before we go farther, let me do the third shout out and that is to the Fight Club. That sounds fun, right? The Fight Club. These are five guys who join us on the video Bible study every Tuesday at 7:00 PM. This is what they said, "We are group of men fighting the enemy to become godly leaders in our homes." Pretty cool. Chuck Cotton out of Calvary Baptist Church in Middletown, Ohio is our leader there and so I just want to give those guys a hand, welcome them to Bible study. I just want you to know if you're in Ohio and you're watching this online, we need field team members like we've got the guys in Florida. We need field team members. We've got a great team in Ohio and they're looking to add more guys to the field team there.

Last session, Pat talked about the marriage prayer and I just want to sort of give an endorsement to the marriage prayer. I know we call it 68 words that could transform your marriage, but I think it's actually a little bit different. I think it's 68 words that will transform your heart. When your heart gets

transformed, then your marriage will be transformed. I have a marriage prayer card. I put in my truck. Every day I get in my truck, stop for a second, read that prayer. It reminds me of some of the important principles in my marriage like unity and bringing glory to God and those kinds of things. It's a great way to start my day.

If you don't have a marriage prayer card, if you didn't get one, I think we have some more on the table. If not, we'll get you more. If you're watching this online, you can order marriage prayer cards from us and we'd love to get those in your hand.

This week, we're going to talk about having hi-fi relationships. As we start, let's look at our faith and life objectives. I'm going to grab one of these cards right here. Grab these cards off your table. Everybody grab your faith and life objective card. This is what we're hoping to accomplish in this challenge. If you're using this in your church, if you're using this with other guys outside of here and you've had these faith and life objectives, you'd give these out to all the guys that are participating. You would say, "This is where we're going. There's a point to this thing. We have an objective that we're trying to accomplish." The faith and life objectives then are that, first of all, the Christian man is built for relationship. By the end of this leg of the journey, I will understand that relationships give me the opportunity to love others as Christ loves me. If married, I will understand that marriage is a gift from God that represents Christ's love for the church. I will love others sacrificially. If married, I will make my wife after God my top priority. I will maintain moral and sexual integrity in my personal relationships. If married, I will pray with and for my wife regularly.

Today we're talking about having hi-fi relationships. What does hi-fi relationships mean? Well, let's look at our outline and let me show you where we're going to go. What is high fidelity? What does hi-fi mean? Why am I using that metaphor for our relationships? Then we're going to talk about having a hi-fi marriage and having hi-fi friendships.

Well, when I was a kid, I remember going into Tweeter Etc with my dad and we went to look for a hi-fi stereo system. It looks something like this. This isn't it but it looks something like this. It had a Yamaha turntable, if I remember correctly. We had a receiver and an amplifier and an equalizer. Remember all the things you put up and down? It had a dual cassette tape deck. Every gray head in this room is nodding up and down with me. Right? Had a dual cassette tape deck so you could do what? You could record tape to tape. How cool is that? You hear a song on the radio that you like and you run over and you hit the record button on your cassette player so you could take that bad boy in the car with you and you could listen to the song that you wanted to. I'm sure we were violating some law there.

Then we had some Bose bookshelf speakers. You remember those Bose speakers, Dad? He's still got them. Of course he does. Some Bose bookshelf speakers. By the way, if anybody would like some 50-year-old vintage speakers, my dad will give you a good price on them. Some Bose bookshelf speakers. This was a hi-fi system. Why do they call it hi-fi? I looked it up. Hi-fi, high fidelity is actually a term that came out in the 50s, believe it or not. What high fidelity means is that it has a minimum amount of noise and distortion from the original. In other words, a hi-fi sound, a high fidelity sound, sounds like as close as possible what the creator of that music created it to sound like. It sounds the way it's supposed to sound, no distortion, no noise.

You can see why that would be actually a pretty decent metaphor for our relationships, our relationships in our marriage and our relationships with friends. Hi-fi relationships are the same as hi-fi stereo sound. We're made in God's image. We're made for relationships. God said right from the

beginning it's not good for man to be alone. Hi-fi relationships work the way that God intended for those relationships to work. What does that look like?

Well, you know, a good place to start on trying to figure out how relationships are supposed to work is not the place that I think that you're going to expect that I'm going to go. I'm going to go to the ten commandments. Specifically, I want to look at the last four.

Now, when you think about the ten commandments, a lot of people think of like this set of rules, kind of like the lifeguard sets out on the pool deck. You know, you violate the rules, you get kicked out of the pool. That's not what the ten commandments really are all about. The ten commandments are a set of rules for living in community, in community with God, in community with your family, and in community with your friends and neighbors or in community with a million people wandering around the desert after escaping Egypt. That's what the ten commandments are. They're a set of relationship rules because God knew that if you read through the ten commandments and you follow the ten commandments and you do that in community, that that community is going to work better. That community is going to work the way that God intended it to work. That's the purpose of the ten commandments.

I want to look at the last four commandments because those are the four that are most focused on living in relationship. Starting at Exodus 20 verse 14 it says, "You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbors." If you read through the whole ten commandments, you can sort of see God's giving these commandments, laying them out. Then at the end, he's like, "Don't covet anything. All right?"

These aren't just Old Testament edicts. These aren't just Old Testament pool rules. These are really a guide today for God's perfect plan for living in community. If we want to have high fidelity to what the creator intended, this is a great place to start is looking at these last four commandments as far as they deal with relationship. You can see this in the New Testament as well. It's not just an Old Testament thing. Look at Ephesians 5:3, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you as is proper among the saints." Do you realize what he's saying here? Paul's saying that, to the Ephesian church, when people talk about you Christians, these things should never even come up. Nobody should ever say that Christians are sexually immoral. Nobody should ever say that Christians are impure. Nobody should ever say that Christians covet other people's things, want to take things that belong to somebody else. That's who we're supposed to be as Christians. Unfortunately, we look all around us and we don't always see this at work in our lives and especially in our Christian community.

Let's see if we can't come up with then a list of sort of hi-fi characteristics. You might want to turn your paper over. I'm going to keep putting this chart up so I don't want you to freak out. You might even want to turn your paper over. We're going to build a little chart here. If we were to look at these last four commandments, we might make a list of trustworthy versus deceitful, hi-fi versus lo-fi.

A trustworthy man is faithful. He's not adulterous but he's faithful. A trustworthy man, a man of hi-fi relationships has integrity. He's not stealing things from other people. He's honest. He's not lying. Thou shalt not lie. He's content. He's content in his relationships. He doesn't want what other people have. He's not coveting.

Then John 15 gives us another sort of measure of this which is this. "Greater love has no one than this, that someone laid down his life for his friends." Then in marriage, we see Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Let's add that to our chart too and so we can see that not only are hi-fi relationships trustworthy versus deceitful, but hi-fi relationships are loving versus self-serving. In other words, we're willing to sacrifice when we're in a hi-fi relationship. When we're in a lo-fi or a no-fi relationship, we're totally worried about one thing. We're looking out for number one. You cannot be in a high fidelity relationship with your wife, you cannot be in a high fidelity relationship with your friends if all you care about is yourself. It's an empty relationship.

Looking at this thing, this gets us to our big idea then. Trust, integrity, love, and sacrifice are the hallmarks of a hi-fi relationship. Let's look at these at these set of hi-fi characteristics and let's look at it in two contexts. We're going to look at it in the terms of a hi-fi marriage and then in a hi-fi friendship.

Let's talk about what a hi-fi marriage looks like in terms of this chart. Let's go to Ephesians 5. If you've got a Bible, turn to Ephesians 5. I'm going to read this whole passage but I've highlighted a couple of verses up on the screen. Ephesians 5:25 to 33 says this, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." If you have a pen, I'd encourage you to underline the phrase, "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. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own body. He who loves his wife loves himself." You might want to underline that phrase. "He who loves his wife loves himself."

"For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of His body. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Now, do not go home and grab your wife's Bible and underline that last phrase. Do not do that, but you could underline the first part of that phrase, "Let each one of you love his wife as himself." You can see in the context of marriage what does fidelity look like? What does a high fidelity look like? Well, it's loving your wife like Christ loves the church. It's loving a wife like you love yourself. Those are the two metaphors that Paul uses here. It's the golden rule. Do unto others as you would have done to you.

Now, one of the things that I've seen really undermine the ability of a wife to feel like she's loved is the idea of something that I call a trust buster. I can just say that word you already know what I'm talking about. A trust buster. This is a big issue that I've seen in marriages. A lot of it has to do with past behaviors. You know, let me tell you guys there's more than one way to commit infidelity. I've got a friend that I'm talking to right now who is financially unfaithful to his wife, made some decisions to spend some money without talking to her, a lot of money, and hid it from her. When you're hiding, you're not hi-fi. That's lo-fi. Doing things in the open is hi-fi. You can be financially unfaithful to your wife.

You can be sort of unfaithful in your honesty to your wife. You can lie about things. You know, little things. You know, we men, we have like a scale like there's little things and there's big things. Your wife has a scale too. There's big things and there's big things. If you lie to your wife about the little things, she's just assuming that you're lying to her about the big things because when you are unfaithful in your

word, that's the whole basis of fidelity in general is being faithful to your word. If you say you're going to go one place and you go another, if you say you're going to be with some guys from work and you're with some women and there's women in the group and you didn't tell your wife, if you say you're going to be here at this time and you don't show up until an hour later or two hours later, those are all trust busters. They're all things that make it impossible for your wife to trust you and they undermine the fidelity of your relationship in your marriage.

Then of course, I mean, do I have to tell you? Don't be sexually unfaithful. Forget grace right now. There's one woman in your life if you're married. That's it. There's no like, "I know it's really hard. There's all these pretty women around." Get over it. We're to be sexually faithful to our wives. Why? Because sexual faithfulness, especially for a guy, that is the core of our being. We think about sex how often? All the time. If you weren't thinking about it three minutes ago, you're thinking about it now. It's such a huge part of our identity, of our wiring. When you are not focusing that part of your identity on your spouse, when you're focusing outside of that, you are busting the trust. You are not being faithful. You are a lo-fi or a no-fi guy. I'm calling you to not be like that. I'm just calling you to not be like that. It doesn't matter what your friends are doing and it doesn't matter even what your wife is doing. God calls you to be faithful. He calls me to be faithful, not based on what anybody else does. Let's be high fidelity in our relationships with our wives.

You know, more insidious even than some of these big things are the little things like just sort of these little issues of deceitfulness and this is where I think being sacrificial being self-serving comes in. You know, it's not that you don't love your wife. It's just that you don't love her as much as you love yourself. That's not what Jesus said. That's not what Paul said. He said love your wife as you love yourself. How did Christ love the church? Sacrificially. We need to be willing to be sacrificial in our marriage, to not always get our own way, to look out for the best interest of our wives. That's the way to have a hi-fi marriage.

Looking back at the faith and life objectives, if you've got them on the table, says, "If married, I will make my wife after God my top priority." How do you do that? Well, it's in the next one. It's on the card. "I will maintain moral and sexual integrity in my personal relationships." Then listen to this. "If married, I will pray with my wife regularly." We get the marriage prayer. That's praying for your wife, but I want to encourage you to pray with your wife as well.

You know, there's a number out there from the National Association for Marriage Enhancement. They say this. That the divorce rate right now ... First of all, the divorce rate is not as high as you've been told. It's probably about 30%, maybe 32%. We know that about 70% of all married women are married to their first husband. We know that number for sure. 70% of all married women are married to their first husband. Therefore, the divorce rate can't be 40% or that number wouldn't be true or 50% like you hear. I don't want to pick on anybody but why do they tell you 50%? Because it sells tickets to marriage conferences. That's why they tell you 50%. It's not. It probably about 30%. There's another reason the divorce rate's going down. It's because what? People aren't getting married. People just aren't getting married. Why? Because they're so down on marriage because they look around and they see such devastation in marriages.

Here's what National Association of Marriage Enhancement says. When a husband and wife pray together regularly, the divorce rate goes below 1%. I know what you're thinking. It's weird to pray with my wife. Yes. Unless you're like some kind of spiritual giant, sometimes it can feel a little weird. Why? Because she knows you well. She knows what you said when you stubbed your toe last night. She knows

how angry you get when your team loses or whatever. You're like, "How can I pray with my wife, pray for my wife in front of her. I'm a hypocrite." Yes, you are. Pray for her anyway and pray for yourself while you're at it. We're all hypocrites. Get over it. Just pray with your wife, guys. It's the best way I can think of to have a hi-fi relationship.

Here's our big idea. Trust, integrity, love, and sacrifice are the hallmarks of a hi-fi relationship and you can think about further ways in the discussion time about how you can see that in your marriage.

What about when it comes to having hi-fi friendships? Proverbs 16 says this, "A dishonest man spreads strife and a whisperer separates close friends." Then John 15 says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone laid down his life for his friends." A dishonest man spreads strife. Have you ever had a friend that has sort of a passing acquaintance with the truth? You know what I'm talking about? Everything he says, you're like, "Can I really believe that?" He's always maybe he's an exaggerator or maybe he's a half-truth teller. Half-truth tellers kill me. It's like, "That was true." Yeah, but it was only like half the story. Or guys that just don't keep their word. They never show up when they say they're going to show up. They never do what they say they're going to do. You can't trust them.

You know, it's the bedrock for business relationships and for personal relationships to be trustworthy and honest. This Proverbs verse also brings up another trust buster and that's the trust buster of gossip. Now, we love to blame women for gossip but I got to tell you the king of all gossipers is some guy I know. You've run into him too. Guys are great at gossip and we do it in a way that sounds very sort of authoritative and, "I heard this. I'm not saying anything, but ... I don't want to say anything bad about anybody but ..." Well, yeah you do. You're about to. Gossip is a huge issue for men too and it undermines relationships. If you can't trust that somebody's not going to go tell somebody something about you, you're not going to have any kind of a real relationship with them. Don't be the guy that other people come to for information about somebody else. That's just gossip. It's being a whisperer and it separates close friends.

Jesus then in John 15, he gives us the ultimate example of a hi-fi personal relationship, laying down your life for your friends. We love to honor sacrifice in our culture. We celebrate the guy who wins the Purple Heart. We make movies about the guy who throws himself on a grenade to save his buddies.

How many of you saw Hacksaw Ridge? Man, if you haven't seen Hacksaw Ridge and you can handle gore, because it's very gory, I would really encourage you to go watch this movie. This story of a man, Desmond Doss, whose faith compelled him to not kill an enemy soldier but to go into battle with his friends anyway, to be a medic. Then when everybody else came down, they had to climb this rope ladder to get on the side of this cliff. When everybody else came down because they were getting overrun by the Japanese, he stayed up there and hid until dark and then in the dark, he would grab a guy, he would drag them to the edge of the cliff, he'd tie a rope around his waist and he'd lower him to the ground. Then he'd go find more. He'd go find what? Just one more. He'd pray every time, "Lord, give me just one more." That's a hi-fi guy. That's a guy who understood what it meant to be faithful man. Those are the kinds of guys that we want to be too.

We need to make sacrifice a spiritual habit. We talked about this in the last challenge that putting others first is a spiritual habit you can create in your life. You might even want to go back and look at that Bible study that we did a few sessions ago in the second challenge about having those six spiritual habits. Putting others first is a great example of how to do this.

What does that look like? It looks like the guy who turns down the promotion because he recognizes it's going to take time away from his family. It looks like the guy who volunteers his time to help a buddy out moving on a weekend when he really, really wanted to... When he had tickets to the college football game or to the basketball playoff game but instead he put those aside helped his buddy move. It's the guy who goes without something to build the kingdom.

I have a struggle. I'm going to be honest with you. I have a struggle right now. I give to the church and I give to a couple missionaries that I know, people that I know that are out doing work. I've got another guy that I know that needs to leave and he needs a little bit more money and I have it. I use it to pay my cable bill with. I'm having a very real struggle right now with 167 digital channels versus this guy and his family going to the mission field. You know what the struggle is? Look, if I do that, then there's going to be another guy, then there's going to be another guy. It's not about this guy. It's about setting priorities in my life. It's about deciding what's the quality of my relationship with this guy that I know? It's had tremendous impact in my life, tremendous impact in my son's life. Am I willing to sacrifice something to help him go do the thing that God's called him to do? Am I willing to do that? That's ultimately what it comes down to. Then of course it's not just a sacrifice for me. I'm using sacrifice in a very broad sense here. We all know that not watching cable is not really a sacrifice. It's a priority.

You know, I think a lot of times when we think we're being sacrificial, we're not really being sacrificial. We're just deciding to be truer to what the gospel calls us to be.

Here's our big idea. Trust, integrity, love, and sacrifice are the hallmarks of a hi-fi relationship.

You got some questions on the table. Let me pray for us and then I'm going to send you off to the questions. Then we'll come back in about 20 minutes or so and we'll do some wrap up. Let's pray.

Lord, you call us and you example for us what it means to be a faithful man. Jesus was the ultimate faithful friend. You give us examples all through scripture of faithful men, Lord, and unfaithful men so that we can know what to avoid. Lord, we want to have hi-fi relationships. We want to be men of fidelity. We want the church that we're a part of not to be associated with things that are immoral and contrary to what you've called us to be. Lord, we want to love our wives like Christ loved the church. We want to be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers. Father, would you instill that in our heart and help us to act it out in our everyday lives? In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

All right. Go head to the tables. Is anyone here, not from our field team, is anybody else here for the very first time? We just want to say good morning to you. Anybody here for the very first time. Leo. Hey, Leo. Yeah, let's give Leo a welcome. All right, if you just didn't want to raise your hand because you didn't know what I was going to do, you can still come up and talk to me up at this front table. Love to give you a little bit of the lay of the land of the Bible study. We'll come back in about 20 minutes. Enjoy the discussion time.

I want to give you one kind of bigger idea for you to leave here with. That is this. The gospel is what transforms us from lo-fi to hi-fi. The Bible says the heart is deceitful. If you look through the Bible, you can find lots of examples of men who failed. Adam hid when he sinned. Cain killed his brother. Judas betrayed Jesus and committed suicide. You might be thinking, "My relationships are so lo-fi, there's no way I can ever get it back." I want you to think about this. Abraham lied about who his wife was and he became the father of the entire Israel nation. David cheated and had a man killed so he could steal his

wife and eventually he became known as a man after God's own heart. Peter denied Jesus not once but three times, swearing the last time he did it that he didn't even know the guy and yet he's the man that Jesus chose to build the church on. Paul persecuted and had Christians killed. John Mark ran away from Paul and Barnabas and yet he's the guy that wrote the gospel of Mark and the guy that Paul said, "Hey, send Mark to me. He's a valued member of our team."

You can recover from lo-fi. You can recover from your mistakes but only through the power of the gospel. How does that happen? Because men who follow Christ have the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. That's what changes a man. If you do not have the power of the Holy Spirit in your heart, if you do not know whether you're following Christ or not, please come talk to me.

Father, bless these guys as they go out today. Give them a great end to their week, their workweek. Give them a great weekend. Help us as we go into church on Sunday to experience your presence and to go out into this world, Lord, and to build your kingdom. In Jesus' name, amen.