

The Walking Worthy Series

Volume 2:
Walking Worthy As a Husband

by Norm Wakefield



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To Alma

*I thank God for the privilege He has given me to be your husband
and for the grace He gives you to forgive my sins and endure my
weaknesses as I learn to walk worthy of the Lord Jesus Christ, our
glorious Husband.*

Contents

Walking Worthy As a Husband

Introduction to the Walking Worthy Series.....	i
Introduction to Walking Worthy As a Husband.....	iii
1. A Man's Identity As a Husband.....	1
2. A Calling From God.....	5
3. An Expression of the Gospel.....	13
4. A Spirit-Filled Husband.....	23
5. A Humble Head.....	31
6. A Loving Servant.....	41
7. An Understanding Intercessor.....	49
8. A Loyal Friend.....	61

INTRODUCTION TO THE WALKING WORTHY SERIES

It is the highest of all privileges to be called by God to be His child!

We have been called by His name, given the Spirit of His Son, and called to other relationships in life to express our relationship with God. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the *calling* with which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1). The *calling* of which the apostle wrote was a *calling* into a relationship with God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, every aspect of a man’s life will be affected.

As a man relates to God, he expresses that relationship through other *callings* in life. Biblically, a *calling* is an irrevocable act of God that establishes a special relationship with responsibilities, privileges, and promises that provide hope for the future. Paul informed the Romans that, “the gifts and the *calling* of God are irrevocable (Rom. 11:29).”

What acts of God establish a relationship that cannot be revoked? Birth establishes a relationship between parents and children, which obviously can’t be changed. Marriage, according to Jesus, is an act of God, which is not to be separated by man (Mark 10:9). Since our *calling* as sons of God is irrevocable, then our relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ are established for eternity, and thus the gifts God gives by His Spirit for blessing His Body are also enduring.

Since God has called us to these earthly relationships to express our relationship with Him, it is important that we walk worthy of our *calling* as sons, husbands, fathers, and members of the body of Christ. In this series, we won’t treat a man’s work as a *calling* because it doesn’t fit the definition as a *calling* from God. However, the responsibility to provide for his family is one of the biblical responsibilities of a man’s *callings* as husband and father. Since work is such an important aspect of a man’s life, an entire volume will also be devoted to how a man can walk worthy of the Lord as a provider.

Except for a man’s relationship with God, his connection and union with his wife should be his highest priority. God gives a wife to a man as a tremendous blessing. The author of Proverbs 31 says her worth is far above jewels, and she has the power to bring him glory in the eyes of other men. Even more,

God gives a husband to a woman to be an expression of His gospel, intercession, headship, humility, love, and friendship. In this volume, *Walking Worthy As a Husband*, we'll consider each of these aspects of a man's life as we learn how to walk worthy of our calling as husbands to our wives.

INTRODUCTION TO WALKING WORTHY AS A HUSBAND

You're embarking on a study which could change your life significantly. Whether you are now married or hope to be, this series of lessons promises to impact your marriage if you will be a hearer and doer of the Word of God. You're to be commended that you value your marriage enough to want to learn and grow to be more like Jesus Christ as a husband.

Most husbands long to see their wives look at them with respect and are greatly encouraged when they express their respect in words and actions. As a man walks worthy of God's calling as a husband, he provides the fuel to the fire of respect in his wife and children.

What do I mean by walking worthy of your calling as a husband? I'm suggesting that to the degree a husband loves his wife as Jesus loved the church, His body and bride, that husband walks in a manner worthy of God's calling. As we grow in expressing our love for God to our wives, their respect grows accordingly.

Here's what you can expect in this series of lessons. Each lesson will normally have a reading assignment, including insights from the Bible passages specifically related to the husband/wife relationship, and life examples. Suggestions for practicing what you learn, Scripture memory, a small group interaction plan, and prayer suggestions will help make the lessons practical—encouraging you to be not only a hearer of the Word of God but also a faithful doer of His Word.

During the first lesson, you'll do the assignment and group discussion together. However, in the following lessons it will be important for you to read the brief lesson and practice the application prior to any group discussion so you will have something to share in your next group meeting. Much of what you will glean from this series will be from other men. As God works in each of your lives, share it with each other, take notes, and apply new insights to your lives. The goal of this series is not primarily to impart new information. The goal is to encourage the application of truth to your life, resulting in a life change for the glory of God.

LISTEN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

As you begin this series, please pause and ask the Holy Spirit to speak to your hearts about how you might encourage one another and learn from each

other as you go through this series. Write below what you hear during the time of meditation.

OVERVIEW OF VOLUME TWO

Volume Two, *Walking Worthy As a Husband*, will lead you to grow in your love for Christ as well as in your love for your wife. You'll be encouraged by God's Word and the testimony of other men as you grow in understanding how your relationship with your wife is a calling from God. This understanding will then provide you with a foundation for viewing how fulfilling your calling as a husband is an expression of your love for God and the gospel. To walk in a manner worthy of your calling as a husband you'll want to grow as a Spirit-filled, humble, loving, praying, and loyal friend to your wife. Helpful suggestions for practicing these important qualities will produce fruit in your life which will glorify the Lord and bless your wife.

LESSON 1: A MAN'S IDENTITY AS A HUSBAND—WHO ARE YOU?

LESSON 2: A CALLING FROM GOD—A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP IS A CALLING FROM GOD

LESSON 3: AN EXPRESSION OF THE GOSPEL—EXPRESSING THE GOSPEL IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

LESSON 4: A SPIRIT-FILLED HUSBAND

LESSON 5: A HUMBLE HEAD—HUMILITY IN LEADERSHIP

LESSON 6: A LOVING SERVANT

LESSON 7: AN UNDERSTANDING INTERCESSOR

LESSON 8: A LOYAL FRIEND

Lesson 1

A MAN'S IDENTITY AS A HUSBAND

Since identity has to do with connection, power, and the shaping of our lives, a man's relationship with his wife is a vital part of his identity. After a man's relationship with God, his connection and union with his wife should be his top priority. A wife is a blessing. Proverbs 31 says her worth is far above jewels and has the power to bring him glory in the eyes of other men. Furthermore, God gives a husband to a woman to be an expression of His gospel, intercession, headship, humility, love, and friendship. We will consider each of these aspects of a man's life as we learn how to walk worthy of our calling as sons of God and as husbands. If a man's wife doesn't impact his life significantly, something is terribly amiss in his relationship with God.

A MATTER OF IDENTITY—WHO ARE YOU?

First and foremost, if you have God's Spirit living within you, then you are a son of the living God! But your next most important calling in life if you are married is this: You are the husband of _____. If you are not married and hope to be someday, then you will want to pay careful attention to these lessons so you can begin to prepare yourself. Although this may seem elementary, write your wife's name in the blank space below and repeat the phrase to yourself five to ten times emphasizing different words each time.

God has called me to be the husband of _____ for life.

What came to mind as you repeated the phrase above? Write your thoughts below and then share them with the group.

DO YOU HAVE A DESIRE TO GROW?

From the beginning of this track we want to have one goal: To grow and become more like Christ so that we can walk in a manner worthy of Him. We all have room for growth—some more than others. So let's get a feel for how we are expressing our relationship with God as husbands. We'll go through this exercise again at the end of this volume and *hopefully* we'll notice some growth! Try to answer the next three questions as unbiased as possible.

1. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the highest), how would you rate your relationship with your wife? _____
2. On a scale of 1-10, how would your wife rate your relationship with her? _____
3. On a scale of 1-10, how would God rate your relationship with your wife? _____

Did your score go down on each one? Don't be surprised if it did; that's normal. Perspective is everything. One of your assignments this week is to ask your wife to answer question number 2. Don't be afraid! You want honesty and it gives you something at which to shoot. Write down her assessment. Remember, this isn't an exercise for shame; it gives you a basis for prayer and growth. God gives grace to the humble and understanding your need can motivate you to pray and seek God's grace.

On a scale of 1-10, how does your wife rate your relationship with her? _____

GROUP INTERACTION

1. When you think about *God's* calling you to be a husband to your wife, what comes to mind? How does this truth impact your relationship with God? With your wife?
-
-

2. As you look at the overview of this volume at the beginning of this lesson, share with the other men in what area you most wish to grow.

3. Although this may be a little uncomfortable, share with the other men in your group the three scores above and anything else you would like to say about why you scored them the way you did. Of course, you'll want to be very careful not to slander your wife before your friends. Please share about how you are relating to her rather than how you feel about your wife. How are you walking with her as an expression of your relationship with Christ?

4. When you first married your wife, what was your vision for being a husband?

PRAYER INVITATION

As you close this first meeting, pray for each other. Since you've listened to others share the areas in which they want to grow, make that a matter of prayer throughout the next few weeks.

Names - Prayer Requests

Lesson 2

A CALLING FROM GOD

Being a husband is primarily about a man's relationship with God. Why is this so? Because the marriage relationship is a *calling* from God. From the time you said, "I do" to your wedding vows, you entered into a unique relationship in the sight of God. There are few relationships in life that classify as *callings*, but your relationship with your wife does qualify. If you are to walk worthy of your calling as a son of the living God, you must understand what makes it a *calling* and what your *calling* as a son has to do with your *calling* as a husband.

A CALLING IS NOT AN OPTION

Let me explain. In the Bible there are two kinds of *callings*. One call is an invitation from God's messengers requiring a response, such as the general appeal of the gospel to trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus referred to this kind of call when He declared, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). When a preacher offers this *call*, there is an option of obedience or rejection for the hearer. God may or may not be acting in the event.

The person's response to the gospel call will depend upon the second kind of *call*—the *calling* of the heavenly Father by His Spirit. This *calling* doesn't depend on the individual. It isn't an option for him because he doesn't act in the event—God does! Paul referred to this kind of calling when he wrote Timothy and spoke of God's power "who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2 Timothy 1:9). This is the *calling* of which Paul declared to the Romans. "The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29). From before the foundation of the earth, in eternity, God's children were set apart from the "people" in the

human race. Their purpose as His sons and daughters was secured by the grace given in Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:1-2, Paul taught that our introduction by faith into the grace in which we stand comes to us through Jesus Christ. Praise His name! Being sons or daughters of God is a *calling: an irrevocable act of God that establishes a special relationship with responsibilities, privileges, and promises providing hope for the future*. It is this *calling* of which we are admonished to *walk worthy*. God either calls you; or He doesn't. As we studied in the first track on identity, the presence of the Holy Spirit in a man's heart reveals if he is called by God to be His son.

Take a few minutes before continuing and write the definition of a *calling*—memorizing as you go. Please don't continue until you have a grasp of each aspect of the meaning.

Understanding your relationship with God is a *calling* enables you to understand that your relationship with your wife is also a *calling from God*.

THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP IS A CALLING OF GOD

Read Mark 10:6-12 in the Scripture Memory section. Did you notice who does the acting in the union? It is God! In defining the marriage relationship to the Pharisees and disciples He exclaimed, "What God has joined together..." Although a man and a woman are entering into covenant together through their vows, it is important apparently for us to know that *God is acting* to unite them as *one*. That's an amazing truth! The world doesn't consider the marriage relationship as an act of God. They view marriage as an act of man in the sight of God.

Furthermore, Jesus directed them that man was not to separate what God joined together. Usually marriage is viewed as a legal act by the state or church—one which can be broken by the state or the church. The term *irrevocable* is an important part of our definition of a *calling*. The Latin *voc* means to *call*. Sometimes manufactured items are *recalled* because there is some flaw in the design or manufacturing process. When God acts, there is no need to *recall* the action because it isn't broken or flawed! When God unites a man and a woman in marriage, it is for both their good and sanctification. It may have to endure some difficult tests, but the union itself is meant to last.

You'll notice in this passage on divorce and marriage, Jesus didn't include what has been referred to as the "exception clause" which is found in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. It is significant also to notice in Mark 10 that He was speaking to His disciples only. In the Matthew passages He addressed the Pharisees with His disciples present. How do we explain the difference?

The difference is the *calling* from God. The disciples, having been *called* into a special relationship with God, have responsibilities much greater than those who have not been called (the Pharisees). There's no need to give an exception to His disciples because they will *walk worthy of their calling* as sons and daughters of God. They are not looking for excuses to divorce their wives and find another who they think more suits them.

Religious people, however, who are fixed on self-pleasure and self-justification, need something to expose the intent of their hearts and *lack of calling* as sons of God. What are the chances that good wives of Pharisees are going to commit adultery (remember the punishment is death)? In both the cases in Matthew, the listeners would have quickly calculated their options: "My wife isn't going to commit adultery; I'm stuck with her!" Purpose accomplished. They didn't *want* to love their wives. Their only concern was themselves. I hope you *can't* relate!

At this point, please be careful not to get misdirected by questions on divorce and remarriage. The purpose of this lesson is to consider the scriptural foundation God's Word has given regarding marriage as a calling from God. We have seen clearly that marriage is:

- An act of God.
- A relationship man is commanded not to separate.
- A special relationship with explicit responsibilities.
- An expression of your relationship with God.

WALKING WORTHY OF YOUR CALLING AS A SON OF GOD IMPACTS YOUR MARRIAGE

Knowing God's name is at stake in your marriage elevates the relationship above other relationships and activities in life. God has *called* you to be the husband of _____. This *calling* has clearly defined responsibilities in God's Word. We will visit some of those responsibilities in the following weeks as we grow in our understanding of what it means to *walk worthy* of our *calling* as husbands. There are also wonderful privileges accompanying your calling as a husband. Next week, you'll learn about some of those privileges.