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EQUIPPING HUSBANDS AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE
CHURCH IN WESTFIELD, INDIANA, TO GROW
AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME

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EQUIPPING HUSBANDS AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE
CHURCH IN WESTFIELD, INDIANA, TO GROW
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To the many counselees who have surrendered their hearts to the Lord.

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PREFACE

This project has been a tremendous joy and has better prepared me “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12). I am grateful for how God has grown me as a counselor and husband as a result of completing this work. The personal discoveries I have made as a result of this project have richly blessed my family. In addition, I am better prepared to guide and encourage other men as spiritual leaders.

I am thankful that the Lord sustained me throughout the duration of this project and provided encouragement through many individuals. His provision of supportive advocates was an immeasurable gift that helped me maintain focus and discipline. I am especially grateful for my wife, Marianne, who patiently supported and encouraged me as I worked to better understand how men grow as spiritual leaders. God’s provision has never been clearer than through her dedication and unconditional love.

God also blessed us with four sons who each made personal sacrifices so I could complete my studies while maintaining family balance. Each of our sons took a personal interest in what I was learning. They read my drafts, asked questions, and attended my workshops as observers. It is my hope that their marriages will benefit as a result of their faithful engagement, and I am thankful for their participation.

I must also express my gratitude for my church family. Kirk Welch has been a humble and trustworthy friend as well as pastor, and he made several accommodations to make this project possible at Cornerstone Bible Church. Many throughout our congregation took interest in this research and spurred me on toward completion.

Finally, I have been blessed by my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Robert D. Jones, and the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Jones has modeled what it

means to be a servant. His gracious spirit encouraged me in the midst of changing church homes during my doctoral program, and his optimism kept me inspired. My spiritual life has grown deeper as a result of working under his direction, and I have been given a strong desire to further study the manner in which husbands can lead within the home more faithfully.

Many others have taught me, challenged me, and edited my work. We are a community of believers, striving to glorify our Lord as we work to strengthen the body of Christ. I am thankful for those God has brought into my life to allow me to finish this work. May his name be known as a result of our collective efforts. Thank you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Andy Miller

Indianapolis, Indiana

May 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Cornerstone Bible Church (CBC) is to “Make More and Better Disciples.” The church’s focus on the Great Commission requires evangelism, teaching of the Word, and discipleship. Since discipleship occurs most effectively through relationships, the covenantal marriage relationship presents a significant opportunity to encourage one another in the faith. Accordingly, a husband, as the head of the wife, is uniquely positioned to spiritually lead her in the faith (1 Cor 11:3).¹ Despite the tremendous opportunity husbands have to lead their wives in this intimate endeavor, husbands often fail to heed God’s call to lead their wives spiritually.

A recurring observation in counseling is that husbands and wives lack the spiritual foundation and unity necessary to overcome their struggles. Husbands are responsible for putting a spiritual foundation in place, but often abdicate this role to their spouse. Rather than knowing how to minister to their spouse and navigate a trial biblically, men frequently appear lost, demonstrating a spiritual apathy that compromises the family. Imagine how it would strengthen the body if men intimately knew the spiritual condition of their spouses and could speak wisely into the life of the one they are to love most intentionally.

Peter instructs husbands to know their wives deeply, stating that it is required of husbands to live with their wives in an understanding way, recognizing them as weaker vessels and fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet 3:7). CBC wants husbands to grow in their ability to lead their wives by understanding and cherishing them while

¹Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version.

encouraging them in the faith. The apostle Paul writes, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church,” and teaches that men are to give themselves up for their wives. This points to the call on a man’s life to focus keenly on how he listens to his wife’s heart and selflessly works to encourage her spiritually.

Following Jesus requires that men work diligently to grow in their God-given role as spiritual leaders of their families. Proverbs 20:7 states, “The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!” Thus, husbands will bless their wives and their children as they demonstrate righteous leadership. Providing attentive spiritual nurture in the home builds a firm foundation between husband and wife that strengthens the family, builds up the church, and promotes sharing the gospel more effectively with others.

Context

CBC was founded in 1989 in Carmel, Indiana, and eventually moved to Westfield, Indiana, as the ministry evolved. Pastoral leadership has transitioned twice over the years, but the congregation has been led for well over a decade by the current pastor. He is committed to faithful, exegetical teaching, which has led to steady growth and a congregation of 600. The church is currently at 80 percent capacity and will need to address future growth by relocating or adding a third service. While there is no opportunity to grow the current facility, CBC does own two acres of adjoining property that could be used for various purposes. One potential opportunity for this vacant land would be to construct a multi-use community center. If a project of this magnitude unfolds, the elders have discussed the possibility of a community counseling center being an integral part of that vision.

Regardless of whether a counseling center is constructed, CBC is a church that desires to establish a robust counseling ministry. The leadership’s vision is that the biblical counseling ministry not become what Garrett Higbee refers to as a “silo of biblical counseling” that replaces counseling in community but rather that counseling become

infused into the life of the church.² Those struggling should receive biblical counsel within a discipling relationship or their home fellowship group and CBC wants the biblical counseling ministry to serve the broader church in a teaching and assisting capacity while providing formal counseling in more extreme situations. Rather than overemphasizing accreditation, the church's preference is to build a philosophy that engages a broader section of the congregation. Since the ability to minister compassionately with the Word needs to be woven deep into the fabric of the body, CBC hopes to encourage biblical counseling to occur throughout the church. Therefore, all within the body must be equipped to use the Word of God to help others navigate life. Providing counsel from Scripture is not limited to a select few—it is a responsibility and gift in which all Christians should participate.

As a result of desiring that biblical counseling take place throughout the body, a need exists within CBC to continue to strengthen the congregation's ability to apply the Word in discipling relationships. Therefore, leadership is considering how to more effectively equip people to use the Word as they encourage, counsel, and grow those they are discipling. For this reason, formal training in biblical counseling should be developed to bridge the gap between theology and practical application. Establishing formal training in biblical counseling would be helpful to the life of the church because it is an area of ministry that works intentionally to raise up disciples.

Several areas are well developed in CBC's ministry due to a commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture and the passion that undergirds their living in obedience to all God has commanded. The church has clearly benefited from a high view of Scripture and is deeply committed to the value of developing a robust counseling ministry. Two years ago, the development of the counseling ministry was abruptly cut short as a result of the departure of the elder leading the charge. CBC has reflected upon what was learned as a

² Garrett Higbee, "Biblical Counseling and Soul Care in the Church," in *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, ed. Bob Kellerman and Kevin Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 57.

result of that season and is raising up a group of lay leaders capable of counseling within CBC. The elders would like to develop a team capable of counseling the community at large as well as care for one another through biblical counsel. In my role as a lay leader, I carry a personal counseling load and am looking for counselor trainees. CBC has discussed the possibility of becoming a certified training center for the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and is interested in partnering with other local churches to accomplish this task.

Despite the strengths and opportunities outlined, some weaknesses exist as well. The three greatest weaknesses that impact a potential counseling ministry are a lack of leaders equipped to integrate biblical counseling into the life of the church, a limit on space where people from the community can come for counsel, and a failure to equip men to grow as spiritual leaders in the home. CBC has not determined a way to better equip men to nurture their wives and children, but the elders feel that growing men in this area would prepare them to eventually take greater responsibility for discipleship outside the home. Husbands at CBC often demonstrate room for improvement in how they lead spiritually within the home. Not only does this impact the strength of CBC's families, but it weakens the church's effectiveness in the unbelieving community.

Rationale

While CBC offers tremendous teaching from the pulpit, men do not always know how to apply what they have learned in their role as husbands. While many resources focus on the tasks of spiritual leadership, men must first realize their responsibility and accountability for spiritual leadership within the home. Discipling at home requires that a man first take the time to understand where his spouse is at spiritually, and before he can ever lead her he must assess barriers that would preclude his leadership from being accepted. CBC has a tremendous opportunity to help men learn how to approach their role differently.

Many would agree that spouses are positioned to know their partners' spiritual footing better than anyone else. As a result, husbands must prioritize their role in leading their wives on the journey of growing in Christ. Marriage becomes an opportunity as well as a calling to serve as a conduit through which the Lord can work in a way that is unique to all other relationships.

In addition to some of the benefits of men growing as spiritual leaders, there are also detriments if a man ignores his God-ordained call to look after his wife's spiritual health. CBC's elders notice emotional and relational separation between spouses when husbands ignore their wife's spiritual health. Leading well at home establishes a firm foundation that helps husbands provide comfort and assurance when trials come. Growing a man's ability to be attentive to the spiritual needs of others also develops his ability to minister to the body.

CBC's leadership has observed husbands abdicating their spiritual leadership as an all-to-common pattern in marital disputes. This fails to leverage the covenantal union that exists between husband and wife and eliminates one of the most powerful resources for change in the counseling process. It would therefore be beneficial to help men take greater responsibility for the spiritual nurture of their families. Men who cultivate a deep desire to disciple in the home will likely be more open to discover the need to make personal changes in order for their discipleship to be trusted and valued.

If a man has an understanding of his wife's spiritually state, then he is better positioned to nurture her. For example, a husband should take an interest in what his wife is hearing from God in her study of the Word and pay close attention to places where she might be struggling. Men are uniquely positioned to encourage their wives and to pray for them as they gain an understanding of their struggles, fears, and disappointments. Not only should a man pray for his wife, but he should pray with her and cultivate intimacy through calling upon the Lord together. A husband should be quick to celebrate his wife's successes and serve as her closest companion in joy and in sorrow. Additionally, husbands

must develop the trust required to allow open conversations regarding sin. He must be a safe person to whom his wife can confess sin, and he is to give her biblical hope pointing her to repentance and the love of Christ. Men should strive to study Scripture alongside their wives and demonstrate vulnerability as they wrestle with the Word together. Finally, men can nurture their wives by drawing them into opportunities to serve and are to lead by example in their outward focus.

There are many ways for a man to be spiritually nurturing, and developing this care and concern strengthens families as well as helps men hone their skills to later lead more broadly within the church. Paul states an overseer must “manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive” and asks, “If someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” (1 Tim 3:4). Additionally, Paul notes an overseer must be sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach and gentle. Men need to incorporate these characteristics into their efforts to lead their wives. If men are to develop into strong leaders within the church, CBC must help them first become effective at home.

Offering biblical counseling to the community requires a pipeline of families equipped to come alongside others with the Word, and this need has caused the elders to think more intentionally about how to cultivate stronger families able to minister to others. Since the responsibility for developing spiritual health within the family rests on men, CBC has a growing interest in how men are leading within the home as a prerequisite for leadership within the church. Particularly, CBC leadership wants to see men leading their wives spiritually. If a man can demonstrate success leading his wife, his gifts can most likely be utilized within the body in significant ways. CBC wants men to practice biblical leadership.

A thorough diagnostic paired with proper teaching experienced alongside a mentor might engage husbands in an entirely new thought process. In addition, when the relationship between husband and wife grows deeper spiritually it creates an environment

that fosters growth unlike any other form of discipleship. Properly equipped, spouses can likely help get to the root of their loved one's heart issues faster and more effectively than anyone else in their life. Most people are known more deeply by their spouse than a pastor, small group leader, or accountability partner. By thinking of marriage as a primary discipling relationship, husbands have the opportunity to spur their wives on to tremendous spiritual growth and grow substantially themselves in the process.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to teach men at Cornerstone Bible Church in Westfield, Indiana, to become better spiritual leaders of their wives.

Goals

Five goals were critical to the success of this project. The first two goals required identifying men who would engage with a diagnostic to assess their awareness of how they are doing leading their wives spiritually. The third and fourth goals focused on delivering content and providing an introduction to mentoring aimed at growing a husband's desire to become a more faithful leader. Finally, the fifth goal was focused on reassessment, so men could be encouraged that intentionality produces fruit in the home for God's glory and prepares them to become better leaders within the body of Christ.

1. The first goal was to develop a diagnostic instrument to allow husbands to assess their current attitudes toward leading their wives spiritually.
2. The second goal was to strategically recruit men with committed, Christian wives to complete the diagnostic and secure commitments for them to participate in two workshops designed to study spiritual leadership.
3. The third goal was to develop a curriculum, tied to the diagnostic, that men would work through together to grow their awareness, commitment, and skill in faithfully leading their wives spiritually.
4. The fourth goal was to meet and deliver content intended to help men grow as spiritual leaders.
5. The fifth goal was to reassess the test group of men to determine if a change occurred in attitudes and habits regarding a husband's spiritual leadership in the home.

Research Methodology

As outlined, this project had five goals focused upon helping men grow in their ability to serve as spiritual leaders within the home—particularly as it relates to nurturing their spouse who is the “suitable helper” God has provided. The vision for this project was to simply get men to reflect upon whether they were leading their wives well and prompt them to evaluate their effectiveness in fulfilling God’s call to lead spiritually at home.

The first goal of this project was to develop a diagnostic to assess the degree to which husbands were currently leading their wives spiritually.³ This diagnostic was intended to assess a man’s current knowledge of what it means to lead his wife and his desire to grow in the area of becoming better at providing spiritual nurture. The diagnostic tool assessed a husband’s personal spiritual health as well as his understanding of his wife’s spiritual maturity to establish a starting point. If a man lacked the spiritual foundation from which he could lead his wife well, then this diagnostic would help him assess strengths and weaknesses. Second, the diagnostic assessed a husband’s knowledge of what it means to lead biblically and explored his attitude toward God’s call for husbands to spiritually nurture their wives. Getting men to think about what Scripture says regarding a husband’s responsibility to spiritually lead his wife was critical because helping men become more convicted of “why they need to do this” intended to be helpful in getting them more engaged in actionable steps in “how they can better do this.”

A group of fifteen men were selected to complete the diagnostic and provide feedback. The aim with this group of “beta testers” was to replicate the profile of those who would later be strategically recruited to go through both the diagnostic and the curriculum. Success required reworking fundamental issues that surfaced in beta testing.

³ All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

The second goal of this project was to strategically recruit a group of ten men who would complete the diagnostic and sign a commitment card indicating they would participate in an eight-week study engaging with eight hours of curriculum delivered in two half-day workshops. Men were required to profess to be Christians and needed to be members or regular attenders of CBC.⁴ It was not imperative that men participating be married for any specific length of time, because the project intended to help men grow as spiritual leaders in any stage of marriage. However, it was required that a man's wife be a believer to allow him to utilize curriculum intended to nurture growth in the life of a spiritually receptive spouse. Additionally, commitment cards were received indicating that each man agreed to participate actively in an eight-week study, acknowledging they would faithfully complete the exercises and interact with their wives and the project leader as required.

The men agreed to engage in approximately one hour of assignments to be completed outside the teaching time and to interact with the project leader between sessions. This goal was considered successfully met when diagnostics for at least ten men were completed, collected, and scored. A t-test was used to score responses and those values were to be retained to compare against a follow-up assessment upon completion of the project.

The third goal was to develop eight hours of curriculum to grow a man's awareness of how to faithfully lead his wife. The curriculum, with associated exercises to be completed outside the training times, was tied to the diagnostic and aimed at shifting attitudes and increasing competency in key areas of the diagnostic addresses. This goal was considered successfully met when eight lessons, of one hour each, had been created along with associated homework to reinforce teaching in the form of practical exercises

⁴ Regular attenders were considered men who had not yet gone through the formal membership process but were known by the elders or pastoral staff as active participants in the life of the church. The project invited men considered capable of eventually mentoring others.

at home. An expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the curriculum's methodology, scope, and viability as teaching capable of helping men become better leaders.⁵ This goal required that all the curriculum evaluation indicators met at least 90 percent sufficiency. If any component of the diagnostic fell below the 90 percent benchmark, then it was reworked until success was achieved. The expert panel was comprised of one thought leader in the biblical counseling movement, one overseer of biblical counselors, and one pastor with experience in family ministry.

The fourth goal was to conduct two weekend workshops to deliver the content and follow up with the men after each session. Men studied as a group and were encouraged to engage with one another as they worked through the content in community. As the workshop leader, I followed up with the men between each workshop to encourage, challenge, and discuss what the individual was discovering as a result of their homework. This interaction with the men outside the training times was helpful as they engaged their wives according to the prescribed homework. This goal was considered successfully met when both four-hour workshops were conducted, delivering eight one-hour lessons and all the men had an individual session following the initial workshop.

The fifth goal was to reassess the test group of men to determine if a change occurred in attitudes and habits regarding a husband's spiritual leadership in the home. This goal was successfully met when the reassessment had been completed by all men and a t-test had been scored and compared against the initial diagnostic.

Definitions, Limitations and Delimitations

Various terms used in this project could be misconstrued due to their meanings in other contexts of ministry. Therefore, the following clarifications are provided to assist the reader.

⁵ See appendix 1 for rubric for curriculum evaluation.

Spiritual leadership. The spiritual leader moves people from where they are to where God wants them to be and thus influences them positively in the faith. Spiritual leaders work to discern God's will and make every effort to move believers from living for themselves to pursuing God's purposes.⁶

Discipleship. Discipleship is the process of doing deliberate spiritual good to help someone else follow Christ more faithfully.⁷ It refers to helping a person grow in Christlikeness, which requires helping them learn what the Word commands as well as encouraging them toward obedience.

This project had limitations that were beyond my control as project overseer. Accordingly, the limitations were considered as the data and results were evaluated. It is possible that accommodations might be made in a future repeat implementation that would remove some of the barriers currently present. One limitation was the faithfulness the men exhibited as they engaged with the diagnostic and the curriculum. While the project targeted men believed to be committed to personal growth, there was no way to ensure that all the men worked diligently. A second limitation was the lack of men able to mentor other men. As a result, I initially needed to handle personal interaction with all the men in the study. The intent of the project was to see if measurable results could lead to raising up other men who would then mentor others through the same process in the future. The project was limited to the number of men I could follow up with without having mentors ready to disciple men following the workshops.

This project also had some delimitations. The first delimitation was the length of the project. I recognized that it was difficult to change behavior over a short period of time. However, this project aimed to make a measurable difference in getting men to take an initial step in how they thought about their role in leading their wife's spiritual

⁶ Henry T. Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (Nashville: B & H, 2011), 611.

⁷ Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 17.

development. The project did not intend to be an exhaustive test leading to a final destination, but rather is an “on ramp” to inspire men to want to play a more active role in their wife’s spiritual growth. A second delimitation was that the curriculum would be limited to materials aimed at getting to the heart of why men should work at growing as leaders. The project’s intent was to inspire men to want to become more faithful in leading their wives and pulled together exercises aimed at inspiring men to work at this noble goal. Rather than covering all aspects of leadership in the home, the curriculum was narrowed in scope to studies that lead men to explore how they are doing and grow their desire to engage more intentionally with materials already in the public domain.

Conclusion

Since a husband is the head of his wife, he has a role in the home as an overseer of the “suitable helper” God has provided. A man who demonstrates gentle faithfulness in nurturing his wife’s spiritual vitality will also have an ability to care intentionally for God’s flock. Therefore, it is valuable to the church to encourage men to grow in faithfully leading their wives. Helping men grow in this manner encourages them to live with their wives in an understanding way as advocated in 1 Peter 3:7, and models for the world Christ’s love for the church (Eph 5:25).

As men grow in their ability to think of the marriage as the primary discipling relationship, they will bless their wives by encouraging them in the faith, strengthen their marriages and families, grow their potential to lead within the church, and bring tremendous glory to God.

The next chapter examines four biblical passages that help establish theological support for how men are to serve as spiritual leaders in the home.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR LEADING SPIRITUALLY WITHIN THE HOME

Introduction

This chapter puts forth a biblical theology of how men are to effectively lead within the home. While a man's responsibility to lead includes leading both women and children, husbands who desire to faithfully lead must consider the spiritual leadership of their wives as their first priority. This primacy is evidenced by Genesis 2:24 defining marriage as the primary relationship: "A man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Men often see themselves as providers or protectors, but it is less common to encounter a husband committed to helping his wife grow in her knowledge of God and her obedience to Christ. Nurturing another's faith through thoughtful discipleship is the work of a spiritual leader.

Leading successfully in the home not only fulfills a man's responsibility to his family, it is also critical to the life of the church. Men must spiritually care for the flock, and according to 1 Timothy 3:5 if a man cannot "manage his own household" well, then he will not serve effectively within the church. Therefore, it is important that men demonstrate an ability to care for their wives well if they are to faithfully serve as overseers within the church.¹

Scripture provides clear instruction on how men are to lead, and this chapter will identify and examine four passages that provide context and direction regarding how

¹ Paul is addressing elders in this passage and provides instruction regarding how faithful "overseers" within the church must be characterized. While this passage is not intended to be applied to men universally, arguably all men should strive to demonstrate character that is fitting to lead within the body. Thus, 1 Tim 3:1ff. is specific to elders but provides an excellent guide for husbands desiring to become more faithful spiritual leaders in the home.

men can grow in obedience to their call as husbands. Men must consider the importance of their primary discipling relationship and look to Scripture for answers to how they can encourage and strengthen their wives spiritually. A faithful commitment to the leading in accordance with the Word blesses a man's wife as well as sharpens his ability to lead within the church and please God through his obedience.

Husbands Must View Wives as God's Blessing (Gen 2:18-25)

Genesis provides context for the marital relationship, as it establishes a foundation regarding God's design in the order of Creation. In addition to putting forth important elements to consider regarding marriage, Genesis informs how a man might think about caring for his wife. Genesis 2:18-25 is helpful to men as they lead spiritually because it highlights the beginning of the human race and the important role men and women play in one another's lives. A husband should show gratitude for the companion God has provided because a high regard for his wife in turn pleases God; as called for according to 2 Corinthians 5:9.

While there has been some debate in recent years regarding the authorship of Genesis, it is widely accepted that the Pentateuch, comprised of the first five books of the Bible, was written by Moses during the second millennium BC.² Thematically, the message of the Pentateuch is clear: God made a covenant with his people, Israel, to establish a theocracy and make them into a great nation. God's sovereignty is immediately evident in Genesis 1:1, which states, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Creation inspires a sense of awe and wonder regarding God's omnipotence. It frames how human beings are to interact with Creation, and this includes how men relate with women.

Genesis is critical to helping husbands and wives rightly think about marriage.

² Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 39-40.

It establishes how men and women came into existence and provokes thought regarding how their union completes the image of God. In thinking about how Genesis 2:18-25 might shape men as spiritual leaders, it is important to look at the context of the passage and take a broad view of Creation in general. This passage follows Genesis 1, which presents the creation of the world, and is followed by the Fall in chapter 3, where all unravels. Genesis 2, between Creation and Fall, delves deeper into specifics regarding the creation of mankind. One might infer that while men and women are to be partners, men are charged with the responsibility for leading according to the order of Creation. Men were created first, prior to woman and, while not greater than their wives, men carry a burden to lead. To further develop context, this passage is perhaps best studied with a deeper understanding of the creation of the world in Genesis 1.

After creating the universe and every living thing, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (1:26). God then gave men and women dominion over the earth. Men and women were commanded, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” (1:28). The Lord declared all he had made “very good” (1:31). However, after placing man “in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” (2:15) the Lord proclaimed, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” K. A. Mathews writes, “Unique to the creation account is God’s declaration that the man alone is “not good.”³ This pronouncement in Genesis 2:18 begins the passage under consideration and illuminates God’s purposeful intent in creating woman. God did not want man to be alone, so he created a “fit helper.”

Men are not in some way superior to their wives. This passage does, however, cause a reader to ask about a wife’s role and position as “helper.” Quoting Claus Westermann, Mathews says the text is “clear that differences are present. The woman is designated a ‘helper’ in 2:18, which affirms her subordination, for ‘one could not say in

³ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 212.

2:18 that man is created as a helper for the woman.’ We cannot exchange the roles of the man and woman as though they were equal without undoing the narrative’s texture.”⁴ It is entirely possible that a woman might feel insignificant as a “helper” rather than experiencing the fullness of being a fellow image bearer alongside their male counterpart. However, it is interesting to note that the word “helper” translates as an assistant and often refers to the assistance provided by the Lord. Carl Schultz notes that divine assistance, either material or spiritual, as referred to in Psalm 121, is how readers might best characterize “help.” Other variations of the word refer to strength or might and refer frequently to the power of the Lord.⁵ Victor Hamilton remarks, “This same word describes Yahweh’s relationship to Israel.”⁶ God is seen throughout Psalms as a “helper” to his people. Thus, women should be emboldened by the thought of their ability to come alongside their husbands as helpers demonstrating an element of God’s character.

Men should hold their wives in high regard as uniquely gifted “fit helpers,” showing preference to them, and thus helping them feel deeply valued in their differences. Reverence for wives as image bearers is part of a man’s duty as a husband. Men are to enjoy and appreciate the assistant they have been given and are to do so showing respect and honor. If a husband is to treat his wife in this manner, he must consider how she experiences and interprets life differently. As a spiritual leader, he is to encourage her to exercise her gifts, and celebrate her so she is encouraged to thrive in her God-given role.

Genesis 2:19-20 moves the narrative forward and simultaneously emphasizes the need not only for a helpmate, but for a companion. God “formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would

⁴ Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 220-21.

⁵ Carl Schultz, “1598 עֲזָרָה,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 661.

⁶ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 175-76.

call them.” Man exercised authority as he named every animal, yet he experienced emptiness as “there was not found a helper fit for him” (2:20). This passage restates and furthers solidifies that something is missing—rule over Creation in solitude is not sufficient. A companion was needed. God, in his grace, filled this void. Therefore, if men are to faithfully lead their wives, then they must recognize and honor the blessing women are as companions who serve, in part, as assistants according to God’s design.

Readers might ask what is required in response to the gift of companionship God provided. How is a man to care for his wife as they unite to “fill the earth and subdue it” (1:28)? Ross provides a helpful perspective: “God intended husband and wife to be a spiritual, functional unity, walking in integrity, serving God, and keeping his commandments together. When this harmony is operative, society prospers under God’s hand.”⁷ Through Ross’ lens, one might think of the union between husband and wife as a loving partnership that leads to a more faithful, robust pursuit of the Lord. Men must lead in this area, striving to worship God in how they tend to their companions and steward their marriage. The consideration for partnership between a man and woman seems to reconcile with New Testament theology found in Paul’s desire for unity in Ephesians or Peter’s emphasis on societal order in 1 Peter. Thus, the full counsel of God begins to come into view as the hierarchal nature of leadership within marriage is balanced with the importance of companionship and unity.

As a man faithfully responds to God’s provision of woman, he might do so with the same awe and wonder with which he appreciates the rest of God’s creation. It is interesting to note that God’s provision did not occur immediately. Wenham writes, “Despite God’s identification of man’s need, there is a delay in his provision. . . . This hold-up creates suspense. It allows us to feel man’s loneliness. All the animals are brought before him, and we see him looking at each one in the hope it would make a

⁷ Allen P. Ross, “Genesis,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1:31.

suitable companion for man.”⁸ Husbands should pause regularly to thank God for the companion he has provided. Not only should a man express gratitude directly to God, but he should also pray for his wife regularly as a way of delighting in her, encouraging her, and asking for God’s protection over the one specifically created for him.

The weight of man’s loneliness is answered in Genesis 2:21-22 as God magnificently creates woman. Unlike anything else in Creation, God causes “a deep sleep to fall upon the man,” forms woman directly from Adam’s rib, and presents her to him in all her splendor. As a husband loves and leads his wife, it is imperative that he examine Creation for clues regarding how women were created. Men and women share a common beginning unique to all other living creatures in that Eve was taken from the side of man. Biblically speaking, woman is not “subsumed under her male counterpart” but, rather, it is notable that both came into being from something that preceded them.⁹ Animals were creatures—they were not in any way a complement to Adam or born out of him the way Eve was. This theological reality from the Creation narrative thus shapes the manner in which a man should treasure his wife as he considers the distinct origin of woman. Since women as well as men were uniquely designed in the image of God, a man’s spiritual leadership should be rooted in a desire to help them both strive to fulfill the purpose for which they were created—to worship the Lord and do all “to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).

God’s creation of woman delights Adam. Wenham observes, “In ecstasy man bursts into poetry on meeting his perfect helpmate.”¹⁰ He proclaims, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” naming her “Woman” since she was taken from him (Gen 2:23). It is noteworthy that these are the first recorded words spoken by mankind—

⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 68.

⁹ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 177.

¹⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 70.

and they are words of significance. Hamilton points to the work of Brueggemann, who argues that “bone and flesh” refer to a “covenant formula” rather than common birth and that it hints at a “common, reciprocal loyalty.”¹¹ If this is the case, then husbands must spiritually lead from a position of total allegiance to their wives. Thus, a man must not only nurture and love his wife but defend her and even serve her loyally by deferring to her wishes above his own.

Perhaps the most meaningful step in differentiating between men and women is simply recognizing differences exist and demonstrating sensitivity toward how they manifest in a marital relationship. For example, a man might recognize his wife is less inclined to express her true feelings as a result of being intimidated by the possibility that he is more dominant because of position or physical strength. In a similar fashion, wives may at times feel overpowered in decision making because their husbands are overly forthright as leaders. These are considerations that men need to be sensitive to if they wish to lead their wives with gentle love and understanding.

The Genesis passage concludes, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (2:24-25). This passage encapsulates all that has preceded this text. As a result of the specially created and covenantal relationship that exists between man and wife, the prior family bonds are to be subject to this new union as primary. Therefore, apart from their relationship with God, men must make their wives their first priority and spiritually lead their wives by holding fast to them as commanded in Scripture. A man’s loyalty to his family of origin becomes secondary as he takes on the mantle of leadership and clings to his wife, making sure she is loved and built up in the Lord.

¹¹ Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 179.

In their nakedness, Adam and Eve had nothing to hide. Husbands are well served to examine this text and embrace their wives in the same manner. Walking in humility as a leader requires openness, acceptance, and grace. This is the image that comes to mind when nakedness is comfortable. To know one's spouse and be authentically known is God's intent, and the way a man can most effectively nurture his wife as she grows in her faith. Hamilton sums it up well when he writes, "The climax of the creation is, interestingly, the notation that the couple *were naked* and felt no shame before each other. Of course, *naked* refers primarily to physical nudity, but one may also think that no barrier of any kind drove a wedge between Adam and Eve."¹²

Men must appreciate their wives as God's rich blessing in their lives. The Lord saw that man was not well-served to be alone and without help, and he created woman in response to that need. As a result, husbands should respond in gratitude and lead their wives in a manner that encourages them in the most important endeavor in life—to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). Adam was delighted with the woman God created, and husbands are in a similar position. Men need their wives and are blessed by their wives, yet often fail them out of selfishness or an inability to see the gift that they are. As a man worships the Lord, he should reflect on this tremendous provision and offer up his thanks accordingly. In a similar fashion, men must consider all the riches they have received in their uniquely suitable partner and celebrate that they no longer walk alone.

Husbands Must Address Their Wives' Needs (1 Pet 3:7)

Men must attend to their wives' needs by working to better understand them, while exercising care not to wield power over them. First Peter is written by the apostle Peter to the "elect exiles of the Dispersion" (1:1) and is addressed to Gentiles scattered to

¹² Hamilton, *Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

the northwest portion of Asia Minor bordering the Black Sea.¹³ Peter’s instruction is intended to help his audience, persecuted for their Christian faith, live in a godly manner despite being oppressed by authority. As a result, 1 Peter is an excellent exposition on living a godly life despite one’s circumstances. Karen Jobes affirms the foundational nature of Peter’s letter: “Some have accurately described 1 Peter as ‘the most condensed New Testament resume of the Christian faith and of the conduct that it inspires.’”¹⁴

While Peter is primarily focused on helping Christians respond well to authority, he addresses men from a different viewpoint—as those given authority. In so doing, Peter challenges husbands to demonstrate reverence for their position and to lead in a manner that exhibits respect for women as their eschatological equals or “coheirs.” He writes, “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (3:7)

Peter’s instruction to husbands is intended to provoke men to think more intentionally about the inherent authority they have been given and the ways in which they might intimidate their wives as a result of their strength or social standing. Since oppression often leads to a recipient suffering, it should be a husband’s desire to protect his wife from this kind of pain, rather than inflicting it. Thomas Schreiner highlights Peter’s perspective: “Only one verse is addressed to husbands, presumably because Peter focused on those who were liable to experience oppression from authorities (whether rulers, masters, or husbands) rather than those who actually exercised authority.”¹⁵ Peter’s direction, while brief, is therefore aimed at encouraging men to cultivate a

¹³ Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 7.

¹⁴ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 1.

¹⁵ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 159.

nurturing environment in which wives feel empowered because they are understood and honored as equals. This is the example he wants Christian households to model for the unbelieving world.

Considering context, Peter's intent was to point exiled Christians, suffering under the weight of authority, to a time of future deliverance through salvation. Accordingly, his exhortation to husbands in 1 Peter 3:7 is rooted in a desire for households to persevere well amid living as exiles. John MacArthur concurs, noting, "Peter's expressed purpose in writing his epistle was that his readers would stand firm in the true grace of God (5:12) in the face of escalating persecution and suffering."¹⁶ This call for steadfastness has implications for husbands in that they must understand and honor their wives in a manner worthy of the blessings they have received in Christ. Peter's theology regarding living in accordance with God's will provides foundational underpinnings that inform how a man should steward his authority as a faithful Christian husband.

In addition to understanding the letter's context, following the flow of Peter's thought is of equal importance. Scholars generally agree that 1 Peter can be divided into three primary sections.¹⁷ First, Peter reminds readers of the great hope they have in salvation. In 1 Peter 1:3-2:10, he points to the promised inheritance that awaits Christians noting that they have been "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" and that believers are promised "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading." (1:3). This gift demands a response, and Peter eventually calls husbands to respond in how they care for the "fit helper" God has provided. He broadly instructs exiled Gentiles: "Be holy in all your conduct" (1:15).

¹⁶ John F. MacArthur, Jr., *1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 2004), 10.

¹⁷ J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Dallas: Word, 1998), xxxiv.

The second section of Peter's letter addresses the hostility of the world and describes the positive witness believers have as they honor the social order. Here he calls his audience to "be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (2:13) and reminds them, "Honor everyone . . . fear God." (2:17). Beginning with verse 2:13, he puts forth a "household duty code" aimed at helping slaves, wives, and husbands live obediently. J. Ramsey Michaels aptly notes that Peter's treatment of the relationship between husbands and wives is the only section of the code that includes mutual obligations. However, Peter's more thorough instruction to wives signals his greater concern for the oppressed parties in society.¹⁸ Peter encourages wives, stating, "Be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word" (3:1). He then turns his attention to men and challenges them to live "in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman" (3:7).

Finally, Peter provides encouragement in verses 4:12-5:11 and exhorts his audience to suffer joyfully. He reminds them of the assurance they can have in the goodness and peace that is sure to come. Peter summarizes, "Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good" (4:19). Peter's desire is that the oppressed will faithfully "do good" regardless of their plight. The expectation that good works will accompany true faith applies to how husbands honor the gospel by treating their wives with love and respect. Jobes writes, "Perhaps this letter's universal relevance is due to its presentation of how the gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundational principle by which the Christian life is lived out within the larger unbelieving society."¹⁹ In today's unbelieving culture, living out the gospel is perhaps most powerfully modeled between husbands and wives. Thus, according to Peter, a husband's faithful love for his wife demonstrates to the world how deeply and

¹⁸ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 155.

¹⁹ Jobes, *1 Peter*, 1.

unconditionally God loves his people. If a man professes an allegiance to Christ but fails to care well for his wife, then his witness is tarnished. Peter's hope-filled message calls readers to live in a gospel-centric manner regardless of their circumstances. This message is thematically steeped in the concept of demonstrating God's grace to others.

With an understanding of context and the flow of Peter's argument, readers are equipped to look more closely at the passage specifically directed to husbands. First Peter 3:7 calls husbands to "live with your wives in an understanding way" and to do so "showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel." Three points quickly become evident—men must know their wives, honor their wives, and recognize a woman's more fragile nature.

As a result of Peter's desire that Christians readily extend God's grace, he expects a man to work at knowing his wife's joys, fears, disappointments, and desires to care for her as he encourages her in her faith. This is not an intellectual exercise; rather, it requires a man to be "quick to hear, slow to speak," as commanded in James 1:19. Careful listening and humility leads to the type of deeper understanding Peter desires for husbands. Davids remarks that the Greek term *gnosis* in 1 Peter 3:7, which refers to understanding a woman, "has a variety of meanings, but here it is not analytical knowledge or religious insight that is intended, but personal insight that leads to loving and considerate care, whether in the bedroom or in other activities of marriage."²⁰ Wives have emotional, relational, spiritual, and physical needs. Therefore, it is a husband's responsibility to come alongside his wife with a deeper knowledge of how to support and nurture her in these areas. Schreiner remarks that this view is too loose and believes that Peter is advocating for a greater depth of understanding than the simple kindness and consideration some Bible translations seem to imply. In contrast, Schreiner indicates that the text connotes "being conscious of God" and calls husbands to live "informed by the knowledge

²⁰ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 122.

of God's will" as they come alongside their wives.²¹ Readers who take into consideration the entirety of 1 Peter might prefer to depart from Schreiner's perspective and adopt the more standard interpretation that men are to know their wives deeply and personally. By striving to better understand their wives' hearts, men obey 1 Peter 3:7 in a manner that is holy as the Lord is holy (1 Pet 1:16).

Of course, a man might struggle to fully know his wife if she is not vulnerable or if she withholds trust as a result of feeling intimidated or emotionally trampled. For this reason, Peter says men must show "honor" to their wives treating them as "weaker vessels" (1 Pet 3:7). Peter is not insinuating that wives are in some way inferior to men, but instead that as image bearers they are to be honored as equal in worth despite being "weaker" in some ways. Schreiner takes a straightforward view of the weakness men are to acknowledge. After considering possibilities he remarks, "The most obvious meaning, therefore, is that women are weaker than men in terms of sheer strength."²² However, some scholars argue that Peter is pointing to a more vulnerable social standing in addition to weaker physical strength. Davids notes that men in Roman society physically or sexually abused their wives often without consequence. Thus, men's greater social status allowed them to wield power over women.²³ This sinful male dominance sometimes occurs when men take advantage of women, abusing God's created order, and exploiting a wife who faithfully submits (3:1). Jobs agrees that the context of 1 Peter in its entirety best supports Schreiner's view, but is compelled to add that "the immediate context makes it clear that the female is also weaker in the sense of social entitlement."²⁴ Peter likely has both social

²¹ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 172-74.

²² Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 160.

²³ Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 123.

²⁴ Jobs, *1 Peter*, 209.

status and physical stature in mind as he calls husbands to respect a woman's greater vulnerability according to the imbalance of power between men and women.

While scholars seem to agree that 1 Peter refers to strength, social standing, or both, Wayne Grudem suggests the description "weaker" could also imply women are more sensitive. He writes that an emotional weakness might "fit the context (because it is something husbands should not take advantage of), namely, a greater emotional sensitivity. While this is something which is also a great strength, it none the less means that wives are often more likely to be hurt deeply by conflict within a marriage, or by inconsiderate behavior on the part of the husband."²⁵ According to Grudem, one could argue that men must recognize not only their greater physical strength, but also be aware of the possibility that more subtle differences might lead a man to inadvertently overpower his wife emotionally as he leads. This view seems to evidence gender bias since Scripture is filled with examples of women like Deborah, Esther, and Ruth who demonstrate tremendous emotional strength. Schreiner disagrees with this notion of emotional frailty and writes, "Nothing else in the New Testament suggests that women are intellectually inferior, nor is it clear that women are weaker emotionally, for in many ways the vulnerability of women in sharing their emotions and feelings demonstrates that they are more courageous and stronger than men emotionally."²⁶ Since the text does not specify the precise manner in which women are weaker, the best response might be for men to consider the physical strength and social standing of women and show deference to their wives in situations that might otherwise dominate or intimidate them.

Peter's instruction requires a husband to honor his wife by looking "not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" as called for in Philippians 2:4. A man's attitude toward his wife transcends respect and puts her first, which empowers her

²⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 152.

²⁶ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 160.

and encourages her as he provides for her needs. While a husband will never supersede Christ's role as the one able to satisfy all his wife's needs, men must see themselves as instruments God uses. The husband must answer the call to selflessly love the woman with whom he has entered into a one-flesh, covenantal union.

Husbands are well served to heed Peter's instruction and steward their God-given authority faithfully rather than abuse their position by selfishly lording over their wives. Men are best able to serve as spiritual leaders when they exercise humility as they fulfill their biblical responsibility of headship. Gentle leadership seems to be the thrust of Peter's vision for husbands. However, why would a man be motivated to behave in this manner and what are the implications if a husband fails to heed Peter's counsel?

Peter grounds his call to husbands by stating that wives are "heirs with you of the grace of life" (1 Pet 3:7). Michaels notes that Peter is referring to saved wives, stating, "The abrupt plural 'coheirs' brings the discussion back from 'woman' in general to the specific group of wives just addressed in vv 1–6, i.e., the Christian wives of Asia Minor."²⁷ Despite the fact that Peter is speaking of Christian women, Scripture clearly demands godly treatment of women regardless of their salvation and removes any doubt regarding the expectation that husbands treat their wives with the grace modeled by Christ. This view is contrary to how some complementarians abuse Scripture by taking advantage of their interpretation of what it means for a wife to submit.

Since Greco-Roman culture positioned women as inferior, Peter establishes a level playing field by reminding his audience that wives are to be treated as recipients of God's grace and therefore honored as image bearers of equal standing before the Lord. The implication of this passage is significant because it reminds readers that "coheirs" should be working together to assist one another as equals with a future inheritance.

²⁷ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 170.

Upon this foundation of understanding and care, men are best positioned to lead their wives well. They are cautioned that the ramifications of not doing so are tremendous.

Finally, it is critical to consider the consequences of not heeding Peter's exhortation. The text states that a man's "prayers may be hindered" (1 Pet 3:7) if he fails to honor his wife. There is some debate as to whether this refers to a man's prayer life as the head of the family, or only the common prayers of husband and wife. Grudem warns readers, "So concerned is God that Christian husbands live in an understanding and loving way with their wives, that he 'interrupts' his relationship with them when they are not doing so."²⁸ This warning regarding hindered prayer should deeply trouble a man. Grudem goes on to say, "No Christian husband should presume to think that any spiritual good will be accomplished by his life without an effective ministry of prayer. And no husband may expect an effective prayer life unless he lives with his wife 'in an understanding way, bestowing honor' on her."²⁹ Schreiner supports this view, writing, "Husbands who ignore such a command will find that their prayers are hindered, which means that God will refuse to answer their prayers. God does not bless with his favor those who are in positions of authority and abuse those who are under them by mistreating them."³⁰ Michaels, however, argues that Peter is not referring to a man's individual prayer life returning void, but rather that a husband and wife should not expect their unified prayers to be fruitful. He reasons that a lack of oneness precludes an effective two or more gathering in the Lord's name (Matt 18:20). From his perspective, "coheirs" must be united as marital disobedience might hinder a couple's prayer life together since "the face of the Lord is against those who do evil" (1 Pet 3:12).³¹ While it is difficult to

²⁸ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 154.

²⁹ Grudem, *1 Peter*, 154.

³⁰ Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 161.

³¹ Michaels, *1 Peter*, 171.

be certain which prayers might be hindered, it seems most prudent for men to err on the side of doing all they can to steward their authority in a manner that pleases the Lord.

With a clear view of Peter's thoughts regarding how a man is to faithfully lead his wife, men must work toward understanding their wives so they can effectively show honor. Peter clearly indicates that men are excluded or distanced from God's provision through prayer if they are insensitive to their wives' needs. A desire for God's blessing should be a tremendous motivator for a man who truly fears the Lord. Because the consequences of a husband failing to know, honor, and gently care for his wife are so significant, the primary duty of every husband is to faithfully obey Peter's call for households to be an example to the unbelieving world.

Husbands Must Love Their Wives Sacrificially (Eph 5:25-33)

Ephesians provides clear instruction regarding how husbands are to love their wives and it shapes the manner in which men must lead. This letter is helpful to both husbands and wives, as it contains the most lengthy and challenging passage regarding marriage in the New Testament. In addition to exhorting men to follow Christ's example as they love their wives, Ephesians calls women to respect their husbands and willingly submit to their leadership. As couples heed this instruction, marital unity will likely increase.

Most scholars affirm the apostle Paul as the author of Ephesians since he identifies himself in the opening salutation. Additionally, the letter stylistically mirrors many of Paul's other writings. Similar to Colossians and Romans, Paul begins with theological underpinnings followed by a call to action predicated upon those truths. The first three chapters of Ephesians present Paul's theology and shift to application in chapters 4-6. Paul's instruction to husbands and wives in chapter 5 is therefore grounded by the apostle's preceding theology. When considering Paul's exhortation to husbands regarding how they are to love their wives, it is helpful to recognize that this letter thematically

emphasizes the importance of Christian unity. Since Paul advocates for unity throughout Ephesians, his vision regarding husbands and wives should be viewed through this lens. His instruction for couples is rooted in his yearning for unity within the entire body calling believers to walk patiently and humbly, “bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:1-3). Paul’s deep desire for unity is applicable to husbands because it is their duty to maintain unity within the flock God has given them to lead—their family

One of the primary reasons Ephesians provides tremendous instruction for men is it establishes godly order within divine relationships. Paul’s guidance includes instruction aimed at husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves. According to Paul, order within marriage should be evidenced by wives respectfully submitting to their husbands and husbands selflessly loving their wives. Order is apparent when the love binding married couples is mutual and evidenced by reciprocal action.³² Paul puts forth the sacrificial love modeled by Christ as the biblical standard for husbands. In a similar manner, he exhorts wives to submit to their husband’s headship “as to the Lord” (Eph 5:22). Submitting with such allegiance is possible because believers who have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit are empowered to yield to one another within this divinely ordered relationship.³³ However, Paul’s teaching is not intended to instruct men to abdicate their responsibility to lead in the spirit of mutual submission. Men are to lead as the head of the household but to do so in a manner that invites women to honor their husband’s headship. He knows that when women faithfully follow a godly husband, they will likely grow in their spiritual vitality. A woman can still flourish if her husband neglects his responsibility as a loving leader, but when a man loves as commanded in Ephesians it

³² F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 241.

³³ Peter Thomas O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 398-99.

makes a meaningful difference in a woman's life. Thus, a biblical model of order within the home establishes a strong foundation from which men can best serve their wives.³⁴

With Paul's desire for Christian unity in mind, and household order a primary objective supporting this theme, readers are well served to consider the broader context of Ephesians 5:25-33. The first chapter of Ephesians establishes a firm foundation by calling believers to recognize the riches they have been given in Christ. Paul begins his letter noting that Christians are predestined, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, and sealed by the Spirit. A faithful husband will have a greater commitment to love his wife biblically, thus positioning himself to nurture her heart, providing his attitude and actions toward her are rooted in his understanding of the inheritance he has received in Christ. It is only through his union with Christ that a man will be empowered to abandon his fleshly desire and love properly. A husband is more likely to live with his wife in a sacrificial manner if he first considers all the undeserved riches God has given him.

Paul continues to lay groundwork with a clear presentation of the gospel in the next two chapters and transitions to application in chapter 4. He commands believers to "walk in a manner worthy" (4:1) of their calling and exhorts them to "put off" the old man and "put on the new self, created after the likeness of God" (4:22-24). Christians are to be "imitators of God" and to "walk in love as Christ loved us" (5:1). Having clearly established that Christians must live differently, Paul puts forth that believers must function differently within marriage than unbelievers. As noted by John Stott, "Paul has been outlining the new standards which God expects of his new society, the church."³⁵

With this context in mind, readers can more easily grasp Paul's view of godly behavior in marriage as a response to the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Ephesians

³⁴ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work: An Exposition of Ephesians 5:18-6:9* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 131.

³⁵ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians: God's New Society*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 213.

5:21 states Christians are to give thanks to God by “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” Paul’s call for mutual submission serves as a pivotal statement leading to the passage under consideration regarding husbands because it establishes that as husbands and wives yield to one another, they demonstrate the presence and power of the indwelling Spirit. According to Lincoln, Ephesians 5:21-33 functions as a cohesive unit that begins with Paul’s directive to mutually submit to one another as a result of being filled with the Spirit.³⁶ Thielman concurs, noting marital unity is “a description of yet another result of being filled in the sphere of the Spirit: those who are filled in the Spirit not only speak, sing, make melody, and give thanks in corporate worship; they also submit to one another in the fear of Christ.”³⁷ Husbands and wives should not misunderstand this to mean both are preeminent in the home, but rather consider the biblical mandate that a they each must “look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil 2:4). Husbands are given the mantle of headship, but are to reflect how Christ “emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant” (Phil 2:7). This servant leadership demonstrates the humility of Christ but does not imply men are subject to their wives’ authority. Christ humbled himself unto death but never gave up his authority. Husbands must therefore take responsibility for leading the family but do so with the sensitivity of a servant rather than abusing their position of authority. Jesus illustrates the servant leadership that a husband ought to emulate when he washes his disciples’ feet, commanding, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Husbands are to demonstrate this “dying to self” and thus foster a cooperative spirit in those they lead by being leaders worthy of respect

³⁶ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 352.

³⁷ Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 372.

and submission. If men will humble themselves in this manner, unity is likely to prosper in the marriage.

Ephesians 5:25-33 begins Paul's exhortation to men following his instruction that women are to submit to their husbands "as to the Lord" since the "husband is the head of the wife" (5:22). His message to husbands in Ephesians 5:25-33 can be divided into two parts. The first of these is found in verses 25-27, which states, "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."

There can be a tendency for men to feel overwhelmed by the idea that they must love in this manner. Men ask how "Christ loved the church," and express concern that there may be limits to a man's Spirit-enabled ability to follow Jesus' example of selflessness. It is common for husbands to feel burdened by the reality that Jesus died for his bride—not all husbands express a willingness to surrender to the depth Christ did. Some husbands struggle to make even the most trivial sacrifices in their marriages. Yet Paul purposefully sets a high bar, pointing to the impact Christ's love had on the church.

While this text is helpful for a man desiring to obey the Lord in how he loves his spouse, it can also be a confusing text in some ways. Men may wonder if they are to somehow sanctify their wives and present them "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph 5:27). Additionally, Paul's reference to "washing of water with the word" (Eph 5:26) might leave a man uncertain how to follow Christ in his demonstrated love for the church. Verses 26 and 27 need not confuse the reader. Paul is simply exhorting men to emulate Christ's love and uses purpose clauses to undergird his call for husbands to care for their wives in Christ's self-sacrificing manner. His mind is focused on the goal and impact of Christ's love and these grounding statements are intended to help men better understand the depth of their charge to follow Christ.

Various scholars have provided differing views regarding what Paul intended in his reference to “washing of water with the word.” O’Brien perhaps pushes the boundaries of Paul’s intended meaning the furthest when he writes,

Christ gave himself to the church to make her holy by cleansing her. This cleansing was effected by a spiritual washing brought about through Christ’s gracious word in the gospel. His love for the church is the model for husbands in its purpose and goal, as well as in its self-sacrifice (v. 25). In the light of Christ’s complete giving of himself to make the church holy and cleanse her, husbands should be utterly committed to the total well-being, especially the spiritual welfare, of their wives.³⁸

Clinton Arnold posits that Paul is using Christological asides for illustrative purposes and notes that his digression points strictly to the Christ’s transformation of his bride. Arnold aptly argues that anything more goes beyond a husband’s capabilities, which he believes confirms that Paul’s analogy “is solely a lesson on Christology.” He continues, “It is also distinguished from the human analogy insofar as Christ not only receives the bride to be his own, but he is also the one who presents the bride he has purified to himself.”³⁹

In a similar manner, Frank Thielman remarks, “The analogy between the love of husbands for their wives and the love of Christ for the church leads to a digression on the relationship between Christ and the church.”⁴⁰ Husbands cannot make their wives holy, cleanse them, or present them as radiant, and it is hard for anyone to argue otherwise. Only Christ can accomplish the work to which Paul is referring. Yet, Thielman is amenable to the fact that men are able to provide spiritual leadership in the home. He affirms a man’s ability to have impact while advocating for Christ, but husbands should not denigrate Jesus’s sanctifying work by supposing they in some way accomplish a work only he can do. This inevitably robs Christ of his glory, because he is the one who sanctifies every husband and every wife in his church. This concurs with Stephen Fowl, who writes, “Clearly there are certain respects in which husbands cannot exactly replicate

³⁸ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 423-24.

³⁹ Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 386-90.

⁴⁰ Thielman, *Ephesians*, 382.

the relationship between Christ and the church. For example, husbands cannot present their wives to themselves as holy and blameless, without blemish or wrinkle.”⁴¹

It is thus important for men to understand what Paul is saying. While a husband’s total commitment to his wife’s well-being is paramount, he is not able to spiritually wash her with the same purpose as Christ. Without a proper understanding it is possible to apply Paul’s text in ways it was not intended and place too great an emphasis on a man’s role in marriage. It is not a man’s responsibility to sanctify his wife.

A clear perspective regarding roles is important as men must strike a balance between their part and God’s part. They should not be deceived into thinking that everything rests upon their performance. Men are to indeed selflessly give themselves up for their wives, but they should not over emphasize their role and assume their godly behavior will have the same redemptive value as Christ’s. With that said, Paul’s words can be helpful in properly shaping a man’s thinking. As biblical leaders, men do have an opportunity to impact their wives spiritually and in so doing participate in Christ’s ongoing sanctification of the companion they have been called to lead.

When fully understood and applied, this passage moves a husband to strive to accommodate his wife’s needs and promote marital harmony by looking for opportunities to understand her perspective. His gentle, caring nurture has a positive impact as her heart for the Lord develops. Lloyd-Jones concurs when he states, “We must realize what the Apostle is concerned to do. He is really concerned about one basic point only, namely, harmony and peace and unity as they are displayed in the married relationship and in the home.”⁴²

The second part of Paul’s admonition, verses 28-33, builds upon the preceding exhortation. Paul restates that husbands are to “love” and provides comparative language

⁴¹ Stephen E. Fowl, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 190.

⁴² Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work*, 131.

to help clarify. Pointing back to Christ's steadfast commitment to the church, Paul writes, "In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. 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." Paul challenges his audience to consider how they love themselves and to behave accordingly. This comparison that men are to love their wives as "their own bodies" (5:28) reminds readers of Jesus' command in Matthew 22:39 to "love your neighbor as yourself." Paul's challenge is not intended to heavily focus husbands on self but instead suggests men reflect upon their unwillingness to do anything to harm their bodies. One of the most fundamental human needs is to nourish the body daily. In the same way, a husband should exercise concern for his wife surrendering his needs for her wellbeing. Snodgrass captures this essence, writing, "In the end love is a matter of *justice* for the other person, but raised to the degree that one is willing to forego one's own rights, interests, and desires."⁴³ A husband's love requires knowing his wife and working to meet her needs above his own. According to Paul, husbands are empowered to do this "because we are members of his body" (Eph 5:30). It is through their intimate union with Christ that men are able to love as Christ loved.

Paul concludes by stating, "'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" (Eph 5:33). Paul ends with a clear and powerful emphasis on unity. By quoting Genesis 2:24, Paul reminds husbands of the new bond they formed in marriage and calls them to commit wholly to

⁴³ Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 297.

their bride. Marriage is a relationship intended to be more intimate than any other and one that is to emulate the relationship between Christ and his bride—the church.⁴⁴

A husband’s leadership should evidence a gentleness and a spirit of surrender balanced with the conviction that he cannot abdicate his God-given responsibility to lead. This Christlike humility is foundational in a healthy marital relationship. Mutual submission does not mean that there should be a dilution of the husband’s headship; rather, Paul is advocating for men to lead in a manner that invites their wives to submit. Men must look for opportunities to take counsel from the “fit helper” God has provided and work to incorporate their wives’ needs and contributions into their decision making. Thus, the concept of a husband “giving himself up” for his wife was modeled by Paul who, though he was a strong leader, considered himself a “slave.” By establishing the importance of mutual submission and headship, Paul laid a foundation for men to lead well. A man can best lead his wife spiritually if he serves with compassion, watching over the companion God has provided with great humility and self-sacrifice.

Husbands Must Walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25)

While Paul’s instruction to “walk by the Spirit” in Galatians 5:16-25 is not intended specifically for husbands or married couples, it does inform how believers must live and this applies directly to husbands and wives if they are to live obediently. A crucial precursor to a husband’s ability to lead his wife in a godly manner is a commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior. Servant leadership requires dependence upon the Spirit and a willingness to follow Christ even in challenging times. Galatians calls Christians to “walk by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16), which is of great value because a daily surrender to the Lord is foundational if a husband intends to lead his family spiritually. A man must submit to God’s authority and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit before he can successfully guide someone else. As a husband follows the Lord, he will demonstrate the fruit of the

⁴⁴ Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage, Home and Work*, 223.

Spirit, which will invariably help him as he leads his wife. Understanding the message of this letter in its full context allows readers to better grasp what it means to live according to the Spirit.

Since Galatians begins with a salutation common to Paul, scholars agree that it was unequivocally written by the apostle. After establishing his apostolic authority, Paul makes a case for why he is confident in his message, stating that it “is not man’s gospel” but, rather, the “revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:11-12). He then presents his primary concern to the Galatians—spiritual freedom.

Unlike Paul’s other letters, Galatians is unique in that it addresses a region of churches in Galatia instead of a person or specific city. Though there is debate regarding the exact region, it is clear that false teachers have infiltrated parts of Galatia and threaten to poison it with an alternative gospel.⁴⁵ Paul writes that he is “astonished” the Galatians “are turning to a different gospel” (1:6). He rebukes their false narrative and notes that believers are saved by faith rather than works.

Paul calls his audience to walk by faith, noting that a Spirit-led life results in spiritual fruit and the denial of sinful desires. Paul’s exhortation is directly applicable to husbands because it illuminates the need to yield to the Spirit and become “doers” of the Word rather than “hearers only,” as called for in James 1:22. If a man is to build his house on a foundation capable of withstanding the storms of life, then he must hear the Word and obey as Jesus warned in Matthew 7:24. Hearing the Word and doing it can only be accomplished through the transformative power of the gospel and is fundamental to men building strong foundations at home.

To better understand Paul’s message, Galatians flow of thought can be divided into three sections. The first section, comprised of the initial two chapters, presents historical background and establishes Paul’s credibility as one called by God. Paul exhorts

⁴⁵ Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 38.

his audience for “turning to a different gospel” (1:6) and reminds them that “a person is not justified by works . . . but through faith in Jesus Christ” (2:16). It is helpful for husbands to recognize that simply providing for their families financially or doing good deeds is not sufficient. Since a person is justified by faith alone, men must demonstrate faith in Christ and lead their families in a manner that maximizes the possibility that those they lead spiritually will do the same.

Paul transitions to theology in chapters 3 and 4, stating that Christians cannot “rely on works of the law” (3:10). He explains to the Galatians that the law “imprisoned” mankind “so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe” (3:22). Those who have become heirs of God’s promise receive the “Spirit of his Son” according to their belief (4:6). Thus, Paul doctrinally emphasizes the freedom and empowerment Christians experience through salvation obtained by placing their faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. A man who loves God will recognize that the Spirit helps him in many ways, including his relationship with his wife. He can be confident his failures as a husband are no reason for condemnation and to rejoice in the opportunity to pray for God’s help as he leads.

Finally, in typical Pauline fashion, the apostle pivots from indicatives to imperatives for Christian living. Chapters 4 and 5 provide practical application regarding what it means to live a Spirit-filled life rather than being slave to the law.⁴⁶ Paul’s immediate context in this final portion of his letter is that the freedom the Galatians have been granted must not be “an opportunity for the flesh” (5:14). Instead, they should serve one another since “the whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (5:14). Husbands are well served to consider their freedom in Christ and respond as spiritual leaders by prioritizing their wives and loving them as the Greatest Commandment instructs.

⁴⁶ George, *Galatians*, 349-50.

In the passage under consideration, the apostle writes,

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. . . . Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:16-23)

Paul wants his audience to grow in their desire to please God instead of satisfying their fleshly passions. By rooting out idolatry and sowing to the Spirit, men will demonstrate the spiritual integrity that is a prerequisite for godly leadership.

It is here, amid Paul's call to live out the gospel, that readers encounter his instruction which can be so helpful to husbands: "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (5:16-17). Meditating on what it means to walk in this manner is important to husbands because it indicates that the Spirit empowers men to overcome their natural desires. Reflection on the enabling power of the Spirit is hopeful for men who want to serve as faithful husbands. Paul's words lead readers to ask what it means to "walk by the Spirit" since he intimates this is a choice Christians make. How do men make this choice? Fung provides some clarity on this passage: "To "walk by the Spirit" means to be under the constant, moment-by-moment direction, control and guidance of the Spirit. By living in this manner, believers can be sure that they will not "carry out" (NASB) the desires of their sinful nature."⁴⁷ Paul's words are consistent with his teaching in Romans 8:5: "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit." Clearly, Paul wants to compel followers of Christ to "put to death the deeds of the body" (Rom 8:13) and to take action by surrendering to the Holy Spirit's prompting in the fight against sin. Thus, men who want to lead their wives in a godly manner must grow in their spiritual awareness and identify areas where selfish desires must be mortified.

⁴⁷ Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 249.

To walk by the Spirit takes vigilance and requires prayerfully seeking the Spirit's guidance and conviction. Men who wish to lead their wives as gentle, loving leaders will need to call upon the Spirit's guidance and search for how God answers their prayerful seeking.

Paul presents a clear message that applies to husbands. If a man is to be successful in leading his wife spiritually, then he must listen for conviction from the Spirit and demonstrate a willingness to yield to God's guidance. Men cannot do this apart from an authentic relationship with Jesus and a willingness to listen for the prompting of the Spirit. Men who desire to grow as spiritual leaders must cultivate a rich relationship with Christ that leads them to a robust awareness of the Spirit's direction. Faithful husbands should not only work at this personally but, as spiritual leaders, encourage their wives to do the same because being in step with the Spirit is a critical part of the Christian life. Paul makes it clear that those led by the Spirit are no longer "under the law" (Gal 5:18) and points out that the Galatians have been set free in Christ from the bondage they experience when they rely upon their own efforts. It is helpful for a husband striving to "get it right" to rest in a dependence upon the Holy Spirit to enable him to walk as a godly leader.

Yet, how do men embrace this work of the Spirit while synergistically doing their part to grow as they strive to lead? Progressive sanctification calls for Christians to "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). Paul's instruction is informative because in order to lead others spiritually, a husband must make a sober self-assessment and consider the fruit evident in his life—particularly regarding those he is called to most deeply love and lead. If he determines he is not doing his part to follow the Lord in how he leads, he must prayerfully consider where change is needed. It is therefore critical to understand Paul's teaching on the progressive sanctification that begins when a person places their faith in Christ. Paul provides clarity regarding the difference between a life that results from sowing to the flesh and a life evidenced by sowing to the Spirit. Paul's teaching further benefits men desiring to lead biblically by helping them become

increasingly mindful of where fruit is absent in the lives of those they lead so they can more faithfully and lovingly guide them.

Paul transitions from the moral argument he has put forth and draws a significant contrast between the “natural” life and the “spiritual” life. Careful consideration of this contrast is an opportunity for men to take stock in how they are living as nurturing companions to their wives. Paul first specifies several ungodly works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19 and describes the significant risks of repetitive patterns of sin.⁴⁸ Husbands wishing to be faithful leaders in the home must die to the type of temptations described. The apostle warns against “enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions . . . and things like these” (5:20). Fleeing this type of behavior is a significant expectation of husbands. It is a weight for a man to consider himself in sin if he is guilty of allowing rivalry, dissent, and division into his marital relationship. As a result, husbands should be greatly troubled if they are failing in these areas. An element of leading a woman is to take notice and work to model Christ for her. A man must also be able to identify foolish, sinful behavior in his marriage and lead his spouse to higher ground. It is interesting to note that some of the vices listed seem to be common occurrences in a man’s life. Longenecker notes that these “unexpected items” are seldom thought of as they are “not always as externally obvious as ‘sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery . . . and orgies.’”⁴⁹ Yet, these sins of anger, strife, and enmity must be eradicated.

Paul’s exhortation is striking: “I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:21). Does Paul mean that a man trapped in sin might lose his salvation? Certainly not, but the apostle is clear that

⁴⁸ R. Alan Cole, *Galatians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 212-13.

⁴⁹ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1998), 266.

an unrepentant person who embraces repetitive patterns of sin might not have salvific faith. Paul’s caution regarding the genuineness of faith should compel a husband to examine how he lives and how he serves his wife. He should practice loving her well and strive to sow to the Spirit in how he loves her.

Paul is aware of the Galatian’s pattern of attacking one another, and his address is focused on providing a God-honoring solution. “The works of the flesh are evident,” Paul states in Galatians 5:19. Those who indulge without conviction and repentance in things like “anger, rivalry, dissension, and division,” among several other sins Paul outlines, are most likely unsaved. Those who are saved are to live differently. A man indwelt by the Spirit “must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds” (Eph 4:17), but rather “put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24). There is great wisdom here for husbands wishing to lead their families. Stott affirms the intentionality required in godly living, remarking, “We ‘have crucified’ our old nature. It is not now a ‘dying’ which we have experienced through union with Christ; it is rather a deliberate ‘putting to death.’”⁵⁰

A life in Christ results in increasingly producing the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). Paul remarks, “Against such things, there is no law” (Gal 5:23) and calls the Galatians to vigilantly “keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal 5:26). The life a person indwelt by the Spirit will bear the fruit Paul describes. He instructs his readers in Galatians 5:24 to “not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another,” but to instead “keep in step with the Spirit.” Husbands are well served to think about how they strive to be “in step” if they are to be effective leaders in the home. Paul concludes Galatians noting that one reaps what one sows (Gal 6:7). A person either reaps corruption as he sows to the flesh or he reaps eternal life by living a life of surrender.

⁵⁰ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 150.

Paul's letter to the Galatians has significant implications for husbands, because a man's leadership must be rooted in a desire for "doing good," as he simultaneously recognizes that surrendering to the Spirit empowers him to lead in a godly manner. By sowing to the Spirit, husbands will be more inclined to edify their wives, and tend to their spiritual well-being as well as their physical needs. Their actions must be the result of wanting to please God in how they follow Christ as they lead. The apostle exhorts his audience to "not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up . . . let us do good to everyone" (Gal 6:9). As husbands walk in the Spirit, they will love with greater humility and "in due season" reap a harvest in how they positively influence their wives in the Lord. Often men expect to reap a harvest without putting in the work required. Paul puts forth that a commitment to faithfully sowing to the Spirit is required if a man wishes for his family to truly thrive.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL AND HISTORICAL
SUPPORT FOR LEADING SPIRITUALLY
WITHIN THE HOME

Introduction

This chapter examines practical and theoretical insights surrounding what it means for men to spiritually lead their wives and families. Genesis 2:15 states, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” Accordingly, men are called to nurture, protect, and help things grow.¹ While men often have a willingness to participate in their family’s spiritual journey, they frequently miss the important opportunity they have to impact their entire family’s faith. A man’s headship requires that he steward his leadership well and, in so doing, inspires his family in their pursuit of the Lord. Men often neglect their responsibility entirely and are inattentive to the condition of their spouse’s spiritual health or emotional needs. If a marriage is to thrive and be centered on Christ, a man must take a biblical approach to leadership. However, how can a husband’s leadership change if he does not put in place a thoughtful plan of action?

Without the mentoring of a godly father, grandfather, or other influential man, a husband is left to discover how to lead a family on his own. Men who learn in this manner often do so by trial and error, forming a method of leadership that is impromptu and lacks vision and purpose. Many men learn to lead by experimenting and their experience of pain or pleasure becomes their guide. Additionally, some men incorporate tactics acquired in the workplace that are ineffective in the home, further complicating

¹ Richard D. Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate: God’s Calling to Men* (Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2010), 21.

their effort to move the family in a positive direction. Leading can therefore result in a continuum of results ranging from grossly lacking to highly proficient, depending on how he acquired his skills. If a man does not have a biblical understanding of leadership, it will likely lead to frustration, apathy, or the abdication of responsibility to his wife.

Ideally, a man should learn through a discipling relationship where godly skills can be observed. Yet, formal instruction that imparts basics of biblical leadership can greatly benefit a man as well. Regardless of method, men must be challenged to intentionally grow as leaders. This intentionality includes acquiring the practical skills necessary to cultivate a healthy approach to nurturing and leading others. Stuart Scott points to the importance of learning how to lead biblically: “Poor leadership is the cause of many conflicts in marriage. Any time a husband’s method of leadership helps him to accomplish his own fleshly gain, and enables him to lord it over his wife or allows him to be irresponsible, his method of leading is wrong”² So, how does a man begin to sharpen his method of leading?

While leadership looks different for each man, fundamentals should undergird every man’s approach to spiritually leading his family. Shaping a man’s understanding of leadership will bless his wife and pay great dividends as his offspring lead throughout future generations. This chapter will identify and examine three areas of leadership where men might be instructed and discipled to grow in their ability to lead as God intended. Men must establish a firm understanding of their purpose and role as husbands, grasp what it means to be spiritual leaders, and embrace spiritual disciplines that will guide their families toward a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Husbands Must Understand Purpose and Role in Marriage

Leading in a godly manner within the home is so important that the

² Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2002), 1525.

qualifications for overseers in Titus and 1 Timothy require that men first demonstrate that they can lead their families faithfully before serving as overseers of the flock. First Timothy 3:4-5 states, “A man must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” While this instruction is intended for elders, it should encourage men to desire sharpening their ability to lead in the home.

For a man to lead his family well, he must have accepted Christ as his Lord and trust the Bible as his sole authority. Without a commitment to the Lord and the Word, a man will not lead with a biblical perspective and will fall short of glorifying God in how he manages his household. Once a man has a firm spiritual foundation in place, he will be empowered to understand God’s purpose for marriage. Additionally, he can grasp his biblical role as a husband, which will allow him to faithfully fulfill God’s call to be the “head of his wife” (Eph 5:23). Thus, a husband must establish a biblical foundation if he is to behave in a manner consistent with God’s will. Not only does a clear grasp of purpose and role help a husband personally, it also helps him properly encourage his wife in her role, which allows the marriage to flourish as God intended.

Some might ask how developing a keener understanding of God’s purpose for marriage and the role of a husband helps a man practically in leading his family. The answer to this question is that by establishing a firm grasp of why marriage was designed and by reflecting upon what God expects of husbands, a man’s actions will become focused on God-honoring outcomes. If men understand why marriage is important, they are able to more clearly identify what must be accomplished in the home according to God’s standards rather than their own. Empowering men by giving them a clear vision regarding “why” they do what they do as husbands can make it easier to develop “how” they can better accomplish it. Purpose leads to greater clarity and encourages men as they grow in their biblical leadership. Not only does a clear grasp of purpose and role help a husband personally, it also helps him properly encourage his wife in her role, which

allows the marriage to flourish as God intended. It is, therefore, critical for a husband to establish a biblical foundational if he intends to “manage his own household well” as called for in 1 Timothy 3:4.

Biblical Purpose for Marriage

When reflecting upon marriage, men must recognize that marriage was established and created by God. It is a permanent covenant made before God and must be understood to be the primary human relationship.³ With this understanding in mind, men can begin to more carefully examine God’s purpose for marriage. The first purpose married men might consider is God’s gift of companionship.⁴ God states in Genesis 2:18, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” The Lord created woman and men became beneficiaries of having someone with whom they can share their lives. Helping a man see the need to foster a greater sense of companionship with his wife directs a husband’s effort toward cultivating what God originally intended. If a man can learn to value the Lord’s desire that a marriage evidences intimate companionship, his energy will be properly directed toward enjoying his wife’s company. A husband must see the need to put off his selfish desires and put on pleasing God by enjoying his wife and serving as a faithful companion to her. Too many husbands take the gift of companionship for granted or ignore it altogether. MacArthur reminds readers,

Upon meeting his wife, awestruck Adam declared, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (v. 23). Immediately Adam recognized her as his perfect companion. He saw no

³ Robert D. Jones, “God’s Place in Your Marriage,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 17, no.1 (Fall 1998): 44-46.

⁴ Stuart Scott’s ministry and book *The Exemplary Husband* has shaped the thought put forth here regarding the biblical purpose for marriage. While Scott does not include the idea regarding bearing fruit developed in this chapter, he does clearly articulate the other four biblical purposes for marriage put forth. These are well supported throughout Scripture and thus, to a degree, in the public domain. However, Scott’s exegetical observations have been helpful as a basis for reflection.

blemishes or shortcomings in her, because both her character and his attitude were pure. There was nothing to criticize in Eve and there was no critical spirit in Adam.⁵

A man who sees his wife in this manner, as intended in the beginning, will invite his wife to follow more willingly.

Some husbands could argue that their wives do not enjoy their companionship. Perhaps a woman does not care for fishing or football. How is a man to be a companion to his wife if she is disinterested in the things he loves? Resolving this issue is a husband's responsibility as a leader and is best accomplished by taking greater interest in his wife's desires and pursuits than his own.

Paul challenges readers to consider the example of Christ in Philippians 2:4-7: "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." Companionship at times requires an emptying of self to be fully present and available for one another. Only from a position of humility can husbands fully experience the reciprocal companionship from their wives that God had in mind when he created marriage. Selfless, unconditional love and an interest in the other person is required if a man is to create an environment that empowers him to lead well.

In addition to companionship, another purpose for marriage is that God created an assistant for man. Men who grow in their ability to see that women were created as helpers will develop an eye for finding ways their wives can use their gifts to assist the family. Men should encourage their wives and celebrate their unique gifting because God created them to complement their husbands in this way. Understanding the helpful role of a woman does not imply women are lesser in value or purpose. To the contrary, husbands are blessed by the way wives can help in areas men are deficient. This ability of wives to

⁵ John MacArthur, *Different by Design*, MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 19.

assist their husbands as they lead elevates the status of how some may think of a “helper.” Women are truly partners in many ways rather than “lesser than” assistants relegated to simple tasks. Men and women complement one another, thus allowing women to demonstrate their ability to serve as both a partner and helper simultaneously. Proverbs 31 illustrates some of the qualities God-fearing wives and notes that an excellent wife is “more precious than jewels” (v. 10). A godly woman can be trusted and “works willingly with her hands” (v. 13). She provides food for her household and keeps herself from becoming idle (v. 27). This image of the assistance women provide also evidences that women are able to anticipate what needs to be done and serve as a teammate.

One example of partnership that extends beyond simply helping is the manner in which many husbands and wives raise their children. Women frequently demonstrate their giftedness in providing wisdom and discernment that transcends assisting their husbands with the children. This type of involvement extends beyond “help” and demonstrates unity and oneness centered on a common vision and objectives. Martha Peace notes that women should do whatever they can to help their husbands succeed. She suggests wives embrace their husbands’ goals and work with diligence to help them accomplish what they have set out to do.⁶ This perspective illustrates how a woman can be an integral part of a man’s mission and captures how women often serve concurrently in the role of helping as well as planning, encouraging, and coming alongside their husbands as equals. Thus, marriage was designed to be a partnership with each partner strengthening the other. Working as a team has a tremendous impact on marriage, and men must see blessing and nurture teamwork as it is part of their responsibility as spiritual leaders.

Another purpose for marriage is that the relationship between husbands and wives is to reflect Christ’s love for the church through how they love one another.

⁶ Martha Peace, *The Excellent Wife: A Biblical Perspective* (Bemidji, MN: Focus Publishing, 2005), 72.

Husbands must demonstrate Christ's love by "giving themselves up" (Eph 5:25) for their wives. A husband's loving care for his wife should be so compelling that unbelieving observers think, "If this is how Jesus loves the church, I want to know Christ." Reorienting how a man values the important call for his marriage to put Christ's love for the church on display changes many things within the home. For example, if husbands and wives struggle with finances, communication, or sexual intimacy, each of these areas of concern can be positively impacted by shifting the focus to loving as Christ loved. A husband might dedicate more energy toward family finances to support and reassure a wife who has labored alone to pay the bills. In a similar manner, a man can learn to communicate better by giving up a selfish desire to gorge himself on sports and instead spend time talking with his wife. Imitating Christ's love for the church within marriage takes a shift in priorities from self-focused wants to God-centered desires. Men who wrestle with pornography, killing intimacy at home, can grow in their affection for their wives by learning to see feeding their sexual passion elsewhere as the antithesis of modeling Christ's love for the church. Each man experiences his unique temptations and shortcomings, but the biblical expectation is the same. A spiritual leader must strive to fight against the cares of the world and work to ensure his marriage reflects Christ's sacrificial, unconditional love for the church.

God also created sexual union in his purposeful design for marriage. After creating man and woman in his image, God commanded, "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). Additionally, Genesis 2:24 suggests that a man is to "hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." While bearing children is not possible for every couple, and there is great significance and purpose in life for those who are single, clearly the Lord intended for husbands and wives to come together sexually and procreate. Procreation is not God's sole purpose for sexual intimacy in marriage. John Piper affirms a broad purpose for intimacy: "God did not make this massive capacity for pleasure merely to make sure there would be a new generation. It works that way. But God could have

arranged it so that we get no pleasure in it, but get nauseated if we don't have sex twice a week. That would have worked too. There is more to this pleasure than procreation.”⁷

Thus, a husband might also consider his wife's pleasure as he contemplates how he leads in the area of sexuality and come to see intimacy as a way to serve his spouse.

Paul speaks of the importance of sexual intimacy broadly as well. He states,

But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Cor 7:2-5)

Paul's warning is that husbands and wives consider how their physical union serves their mate and how freely giving in this way guards spouses from temptation to sin. This selfless focus on the body as a gift intended for one's spouse is opposed to how culture views sexual intimacy. Scott notes, “Society has moved so far from what God intended that, for many, physical intimacy is merely a means to selfish pleasure.”⁸ The blessing of sexual intimacy is others focused. Thus, a marriage that evidences healthy sexual relations will be one that understands marriage was intended to allow man and wife to procreate, to serve one another, to renew their covenant in intimate one-flesh love, and to guard against temptation when this purpose for their marriage is faithfully embraced with a proper perspective.”

Keller puts forth an excellent way to think about sexual union and its purpose in marriage. Pointing to Proverbs 2:17, he notes that Scripture identifies a spouse as a “covenant partner.” Accordingly, he suggests sex might be thought of as a covenant renewal: “Indeed, sex is perhaps the most powerful God-created way to help you give

⁷ John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 1730.

⁸ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1917.

your entire self to another human being. Sex is God's appointed way for two people to reciprocally say to one another, 'I belong completely, permanently, and exclusively to you.' You must not use sex to say anything less."⁹ Couples are wise to see the gift of sexual intimacy as from the Lord and a oneness that represents the depth of their commitment, vulnerability, and union.

Finally, a couple bearing fruit together is a God-given purpose for marriage. While bearing fruit is expected of individuals as well, husbands and wives have tremendous potential when united in serving and endeavoring to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12). Second Peter 1:8 speaks against being "unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" and a married couple will be blessed to consider they can lift one another in the qualities Peter identifies, including "brotherly affection" and "love." An excellent example of bearing fruit together in ministry is the manner in which Priscilla and Aquila served. Their instruction to Apollos and strengthening of the Christian church demonstrates how two toiling together for the sake of Christ can have tremendous kingdom leverage. This marriage stands in stark contrast to Ananias and Sapphira who failed to bless their community by selfishly impacting one another for evil (Acts 5:1-11). These two marriages provide some context for how husbands and wives might think about working together for good. Spouses are uniquely positioned to encourage one another and to "spur one another on to good works" as the body is called to do in Hebrews 10:24. Thus, the fruit of "making disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19) has the potential to flourish when husbands and wives join forces.

In addition to finding encouragement through partnership while serving together, marriage sharpens each spouse in their ability to think of others first. This sharpening illustrates one element of how marriage was created for the purpose of helping one another grow in Christlikeness. Couples are likely to grow in their ability to bear fruit because

⁹ Timothy Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 257.

they are given an opportunity to practice selflessness in the context of marriage. Gary Thomas agrees that one of the sanctifying effects of marriage is that it regularly confronts selfishness. He writes, “Marriage creates a situation in which our desire to be served and coddled can be replaced with a more noble desire to serve others—even to sacrifice for others.”¹⁰ Cultivating this habit of considering the needs of others leads to a life of greater fruit. Marriage has great purpose in that not only do husbands and wives complement one another in serving, but marriage, by design, has the potential to train a spouse to be more attentive to the needs of others.

Role of a Husband

Once a man has established a foundation for his leadership through his understanding of God’s purpose for marriage, he can deepen his ability to serve as a spiritual leader by examining his God-given role as a husband. While marriage problems can be traced back to the heart, a man’s lack of understanding of his role or his unwillingness to fulfill it can exacerbate marital challenges. If a man flounders at loving and understanding his wife, or fails to lead her as a servant, it will impact the entire family and hamper the spiritual growth of those he is called to lead. It is, therefore, easy to understand how a wife might become distraught if her husband is negligent in his role. To prevent a leadership vacuum in the home, a man must be faithful to his role to love, understand, and lead his wife.¹¹

As men contemplate their role, they must first consider the command to love as Christ loved. This love, as evidenced by Christ, is to be sacrificial as well as sensitive. Does a husband “give himself up” (Eph 5:25) freely for his wife or cling to having things

¹⁰ Gary L. Thomas, *Sacred Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 2916.

¹¹ The material presented regarding the role of a husband is supported by Scripture but was acquired from third-party teaching that may have drawn upon unknown sources. The ministry of College Park Church in Indianapolis, as well as the content provided through the training conducted at Faith Church in Lafayette, IN as collectively contributed to and shaped the concepts put forth in this chapter. Although it is biblical content, it is credited to institutions and may have been developed by others.

his way? What does he believe it means to “show honor” to his wife, treating her as a “weaker vessel?” (1 Pet 3:7). Is he looking to be served and selfishly rule the home, or does he grasp what it means to mutually submit to one another without abdicating his responsibility to lead? Lou Priolo notes the danger of self-focus: “I can tell you, without any fear of contradiction, that the root cause of virtually all enduring marriage conflicts is selfishness.”¹² Men must, therefore, love selflessly and follow Christ’s example as a servant if they hope to build a godly marriage and faithfully adhere to their role to love.

It is surprising that so many marriages struggle as a result of men falling short in how they love when Scripture provides direction regarding sacrificially care for others. What might be the reason for this inability for men to experience their full potential as loving leaders? In part, the failure of men to fulfill their role to love may be the influence of culture. Men are often consumed by their careers and neglect caring diligently for their wives. Husbands often allow themselves to be drawn into worldly pursuits and prioritize many things above their wives. To counteract this misplaced focus, men should reflect upon ways they can redirect their energy and serve daily in the home. By disciplining themselves to serve and demonstrating they care, husbands are likely to express love on a more consistent basis. Scott notes that a husband “must show his love in tangible ways. He will not simply say, ‘I love you,’ but he will assure her of his love by his deeds. It is also important that he refrain from pointing backwards to isolated demonstrations of love as if they are frozen in time and sufficient for today. He must continue to display his love daily.”¹³

Tending to a wife’s needs embodies how Christ loved when he “gave himself up” for the church (Eph 5:25), and men need to put their wives above themselves if they are to glorify God in their role. Referring to the instructions provided in Ephesians,

¹² Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2017), 104.

¹³ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1125.

Köstenberger writes, “In the context immediately preceding Paul’s teaching on marital roles, he exhorts believers to live lives of love and keeping with the love of Christ who gave his life as a sacrifice for them.”¹⁴ Biblical love is sacrificial and focused on putting one’s mate above self. Mack notes how men fail to recognize that a husband’s role is selfless love—not lordship: “Many men are enthusiastic about the Bible’s teachings on marriage roles because they think that they have been appointed as the boss of the family. Such men typically claim to have great expertise concerning what Paul teaches about submission in Ephesians 5:22-24, but they show little grasp of what it means for them to love in a Christlike way.”¹⁵ Scripture casts a vision for how a husband must love stating, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor 13:4-7). Men who grasp this aspect of a husband’s role demonstrate an authentic emptying of self and prioritize their wives’ needs rather than insisting on their way.

By dying to himself and making personal sacrifices as he loves, a husband imitates Christ. This expression of love is affirming and nurtures a wife. It also simultaneously grows the husband as he learns about his own heart as he demonstrates this love. Keller points out, “Marriage has the power of truth, the ability to reveal to you who you really are, with all your flaws. How wonderful that it also has the ‘power of love’—an unmatched power to affirm you and heal you of the deepest wounds and hurts

¹⁴ Andreas Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 1055.

¹⁵ Wayne Mack, *Your Family, God’s Way: Developing and Sustaining Relationships in the Home* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R 1991), 86.

of your life”¹⁶ Husbands must put aside their personal needs and hurts and faithfully fulfill God’s command to love the wives God has given them.

In addition to loving his wife in accordance with Scripture, a husband’s role also includes becoming a life-long learner of his wife. A man is commanded to cultivate his ability to understand his wife’s perspectives and learn ways to respond to her that best suit the occasion. First Peter 3:7 commands men to live with their wives “in an understanding way,” which suggests a man know his wife so well that he can care for her with her deepest spiritual needs in mind.

Truly understanding a woman compels a man to show honor and lead with gentleness. As a husband comes to see his wife’s heart, the need for spiritual leadership becomes clear. A wife might be fearful of a health concern raised with her child or struggle with worry over family finances. She could harbor anger toward extended family or experience sadness over her feelings of inadequacy as a mother. Men who work to understand their wives’ emotions through the trials life presents are better positioned to point them to Jesus in a manner that will nurture and bear fruit. Paul affirms this life-giving care in Ephesians 5:28-30 when he writes, “In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. 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.” Careful study of a woman’s feelings, hopes, fears, and struggles leads to a man better understanding what might bring his wife peace and joy. This greater perspective allows a man to spiritually lead with tenderness. Husbands do not need to be overwhelmed by the weight of their role as learners. Rather, they should trust the Lord to give them eyes to see how they might grow as spiritual leaders by faithfully serving in their role as understanding listeners.

¹⁶ Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, 162.

Finally, the role of a husband is to be a servant leader. There are many examples of Christ's leadership in Scripture and each evidences the life of a servant. In Matthew 20:28, Christ makes clear, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." What does it mean for a man to give his life for his wife's gain? How can he lead in a way that is humble and service oriented? This is the example a husband is to follow if he is to follow the Lord.

Many refuse to embrace the role of servant leadership. Like the Rich Young Ruler (Matt 19:16-22), some husbands are unwilling to give up their personal idols and become servants. However, servant leadership is the biblical model a man must follow if he expects to have a positive spiritual impact on his family by remaining faithful to his role as a husband. John 10:11 declares, "The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Witmer points out that selflessness is unnatural to man, yet it is required: "As the Good Shepherd came to lay down his life for the sheep, he is our model for serving our wives! Such sacrificial love is contrary to our natural inclination."¹⁷ Scott further endorses the need to lead through service. He too points to the life of Christ, remarking, "One who leads as Christ leads is always thinking of others, not self. He is willing to sacrifice his own comfort and even his own well-being for those he leads. He is willing to put himself last, prefer others, and even serve those he leads. Christ gave us an amazing example of serving when He humbled himself and served the disciples in the upper room."¹⁸

By serving in their role and leading as servants, men position themselves to lead their wives spiritually. Women are called to a difficult role, but Witmer affirms it will be "much easier to bear if you as her husband fulfill your responsibility to provide loving leadership."¹⁹ Scott agrees: "Husbands, how do you serve your wife? Even though she is

¹⁷ Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 79.

¹⁸ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1706.

¹⁹ Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 77.

called to assist you, you must serve her.”²⁰ When a husband has clarity that his role requires servant leadership, his foundation strengthens and he increases his ability to nurture his wife.

Husbands Must Understand What It Means to Be a Spiritual Leader

It is not enough for a man to simply lead well according to the world’s standards or to provide for his family financially. A man’s greatest responsibility is to lead spiritually. This responsibility is especially important in how men lead their wives. God works powerfully through husbands since marriage is to be a woman’s primary, most intimate relationship. Therefore, men are well positioned to nurture their wives and guide them toward a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Yet, men often struggle to determine what it means to be a spiritual leader. Phillips suggests that the biblical model of leadership is that of a shepherd: “The way for Christian men to leave a lasting legacy is for us to embrace the Bible’s model of shepherd-leadership. Our goal must be not just to carve out success for ourselves, but to leave a blessed imprint on the lives of those who are under our care.”²¹

In a similar manner, Scott affirms a man’s role as a caregiver: “An observant overseer will see areas where the Lord might already be working in his wife’s life and look for ways to be of assistance in that area.”²² Thus, he expands on Phillip’s thought by pointing to the importance of a man’s awareness of where God is working in his wife’s life.

Piper suggests that a humble reliance upon God is required of spiritual leaders. His broad view suggests a man must be equipped to assess a person’s spiritual health so

²⁰ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1712.

²¹ Phillips, *The Masculine Mandate*, 64.

²² Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1736.

he can guide them accordingly. This leadership must be rooted in a deep trust in God. Piper writes, “I define spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power. The answer to where God wants people to be is in a spiritual condition and in a lifestyle that display his glory and honor his name.”²³ Thus, for a man to lead spiritually he must be committed to tending to the spiritual health of others. This desire to see others grow in Christ requires that a man is able to properly observe, encourage, and guide others spiritually.

Spiritual Leaders Observe

One of the primary characteristics of spiritual leaders is that they must observe the spiritual health of those they hope to influence. If a man intends to lead someone in the faith, then he must know where they are in their relationship with the Lord. This depth of understanding requires mindfulness and thoughtful observation. Spiritual leaders need to be adept at asking good questions, listening carefully, and observing behavior as they seek to understand. The practice of observance is especially important if a man is to lead his wife. How can a man fulfill his highest calling as a leader if he does not grasp his wife’s deepest spiritual needs? Husbands need to be aware of how their wives struggle, where their confidence in Christ is strong, and where their assurance might be lacking. Men who seek to understand in this manner are better positioned to encourage their wives to “love the Lord your God with all your heart” (Matt 22:37) and to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt 22:39).

The apostle John wrote, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 4). Spiritual leaders have this same longing—they want others to be faithful “doers of the Word” (Jas 1:22), and they study where there might be

²³ John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

opportunities to assist struggling believers. Careful observance also readies spiritual leaders to effectively evangelize an unbelieving wife or share a timely word of encouragement with a woman who is new to the faith. Some men do not see the need for this depth of awareness as critical, but a lack of comprehension prevents husbands from knowing where to focus their attention as they strive to nurture, love, and challenge their wives in the faith.

Developing the ability to assess the faith of others can be a daunting task. Some question if a man lacking a vibrant faith can lead a more spiritually mature woman. While this imbalance is unfortunate, it is a common occurrence. It can be challenging for a less mature husband to lead his wife. However, a man's deficiencies should not be an impediment, but rather, an inspiration to a more faithful pursuit of the Lord. Feelings of inadequacy need not cause a man to withdraw or become discouraged. Instead, men must take their responsibility seriously to lead spiritually and do what they can while trusting God to grow them in their role in his timing. Rather than surrendering in defeat, a less mature man can still be observant and take an interest in his wife's love for Christ. Simply expressing a desire to better understand his wife's faith is a step toward leadership, and one that is certainly pleasing to God.

Just as some husbands are challenged to lead more mature wives, others have been called to lead women just beginning in the faith. The varying circumstances men face highlight that each situation is different, and no man should expect to be perfectly prepared. If a husband is willing to do his best to fulfill his duty to lead, he can commit to intentionally observing how his wife pursues God. A man should not wait to act, but rather, do the best he can to be a safe person with whom his wife can share her journey. Men can take steps toward greater leadership by listening. Proverbs 18:13 states, "He who answers before he hears, it is his folly and his shame." Any attempt to lead spiritually will result in foolishness if thoughtful communication is absent from the marriage.

Once a man understands his wife's worldview, he can expand on that foundation and explore the nuances of how she lives according to what she believes. By "knowing"

his wife in this manner and understanding her relationship with Christ, a husband is more likely to discern how to best come alongside and encourage. Witmer speaks of this intimate “knowing” and notes that it is a critical part of leadership. He suggests men should be familiar with their wives’ greatest worries and strive to understand how those they lead work through their worry in light of Christ’s instruction regarding the future. A husband should also seek to understand his wife’s greatest concern for herself, for her husband, and for her children. Does a particular sin weigh upon her heavily? What are her aspirations, joys, disappointments, and fears? Witmer challenges men to discover answers to these questions and to simply ask their wives, “How are you doing?” with a patient focus on drawing out their hearts.²⁴ Observing is a skill that exemplifies leadership, and men desiring to lead their wives spiritually will find it is of great benefit to make it a priority.

Spiritual Leaders Encourage

In addition to being observant, spiritual leaders demonstrate the gift of encouraging others. Spiritual leaders build upon their foundation of careful observance by being champions for things they see that are aligned with following the Lord. This encouragement should not include too many suggestions for improvement, but rather is an opportunity to affirm. By taking an interest in his wife’s faith, a man will likely spur her on in her pursuit of Christ. This admiration for a wife’s love for Christ is an encouragement that has the potential to lead her toward even greater intimacy with the Lord.

Men can have a profound impact on their wives by leading in this manner. Encouragement is an important part of spiritual leadership because it reinforces that valuing a relationship with Christ matters deeply. A husband’s Christ-focused, encouraging words and respect will remind his wife to ignore the distractions of the world and “lay up

²⁴ Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home*, 64.

for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matt 6:20).

As men strive to faithfully encourage, they should also look for ways to authentically praise their wives for actions that demonstrate their commitment to Christ. It is a tremendous blessing when a man identifies something specific his wife has done that glorifies God. Spiritual leaders are quick to let others know the goodness they see in them. Jesus models building others up for goodness when he praises a woman of ill repute for expending her expensive ointment for his sake (Luke 7:37). He also praises Nathaniel for being an Israelite “in whom there is no deceit” (John 1:47) and verbally recognizes the faith of the centurion (Matt 8:13). Since Christ went out of his way to encourage his disciples and followers, spiritual leaders should follow his example by praising those they lead and calling attention to small victories that are sure to please God. This encouragement is inspiring and reinforces actions that demonstrate obedience and faith.

Additionally, a man might encourage his wife by taking notice of what she is reading in the Word, and asking what God is teaching her. His interest in what she is discovering in her study will likely be a subtle encouragement and provide an outlet for his wife to reflect on what she is learning alongside someone she loves. In a similar manner, spiritual leaders should encourage a robust prayer life and frequently pray over their wives. Lifting a woman before the Lord and praying diligently for her and her children can be a tremendous encouragement.

Scott advocates for the importance of a man’s intentionality with his wife, challenging men to encourage their wives “toward the goal of glorifying God.”²⁵ He calls men to celebrate when wives draw upon biblical principles in their decision-making, and he suggests men encourage their wives to use their spiritual gifts in serving. A man can

²⁵ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1762.

celebrate his wife's expression of her faith in many ways, and spiritual leadership requires that husbands recognize them and take action. While Scott is clear that leaders are to reinforce godly behavior in others, husbands must never try to take on the role of the Holy Spirit. The sanctifying work of the Lord occurs through his sovereignty and in his timing. Thus, a man can point and encourage a woman but should carefully exercise self-control so his encouragement does not come across as manipulative or controlling.²⁶

Spiritual Leaders Guide

While observing and encouraging are important aspects of spiritual leadership, perhaps the most difficult task in leading is providing godly guidance. Scott notes, "An observant overseer will see areas where the Lord might already be working in his wife's life and look for ways to be of assistance in that area."²⁷ Guiding others spiritually requires assessing where someone might be challenged or biblically enlightened in order to remove stumbling blocks that impede greater trust in Christ. A man's leadership in this area should be rooted in a faith that gives him wisdom as well as courage to gently exhort and teach. Most importantly, spiritual leaders must trust God above self and demonstrate a humility and healthy fear of the Lord as they guide. Providing spiritual guidance demands the surrendered spirit of a servant.

Since guiding others entails discernment and an understanding of biblical principles, spiritual leaders must dedicate themselves to a life-long study of the Word. Those who are newer to the faith will struggle in their effort to guide but should not lose heart. Growing in biblical wisdom is a journey, and men must simply accept the challenge to always be growing in their proficiency and reliance upon the Holy Spirit to provide as they lead.

²⁶ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1763.

²⁷ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 1738.

The first consideration in thinking about how to guide others is whether a man has a plan. Men should not endeavor to lead their wives and children without purpose, and thoughtful planning allows a leader to examine how he intends to invest his time purposefully. Not only should spiritual leaders have a plan for how they intend to nurture those they lead—they need to thoughtfully establish a vision and goals regarding how they plan to grow personally. How can a man guide his wife if he is unclear on where he is going himself? Establishing goals will make it easier to spiritually lead.

Unfortunately, many men are intimidated by the thought of planning. Some claim they work better without formal structure or indicate they do not care to be so intentional. Others intend to plan but fail because they procrastinate and fail to make planning a priority. However, careful planning increases the available margin in a man's life and often results in greater personal spiritual growth as well.

Scott affirms the need for planning: “As the leader of your household, you must first determine your personal and spiritual goals. What are your goals for your marriage? What are your educational and vocational goals? What are your ministry goals? You should not aimlessly drift from day to day taking things as they come.”²⁸ This level of preparedness does not need to intimidate men. Rather, they should trust that as they faithfully steward their lives God will help them grow in this important area.

A second area a spiritual leader must prioritize is the way he and his wife guide their children. Does a husband prioritize God above all and work to keep Christ at the center of the family? Is his leadership such that his wife feels empowered and united as they raise their children? Husbands and wives are to nurture their children in partnership, each bringing complementary gifts to bear as they teach them God's ways. The important role each parent plays is evident in Proverbs 1:8: “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.” Yet, while child rearing is a joint effort between

²⁸ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 43.

husbands and wives, it is ultimately the husband's duty to ensure his family's spiritual health is vibrant. Fathers must do this in a godly manner as Ephesians 6:4 instructs: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." As "head of the wife" (Eph 5:22) a husband bears responsibility for spiritual leadership and is appointed by God to "manage his own household well" (1 Titus 3:4). A man must think deeply about his level of spiritual engagement with his children. Often, men allocate discipling the children to their wives. A man has a responsibility to model biblical decision making, lead study and prayer, manage financial resources, establish priorities, and many other duties that should not be abdicated. By faithfully participating in leading the children, men demonstrate their commitment to headship.

In addition to thoughtful planning and leading their children, men should also spiritually lead by ensuring biblical conflict resolution with their wives. Husbands and wives will inevitably sin against one another. While this is certain to cause pain and challenge, the potential for permanent damage is dramatically lessened if a husband guides his marriage in the area of godly reconciliation. This modeling and leading in repentance and forgiveness is at the heart of the Christian life. Therefore, a husband must model humility when he sins against his wife and seek forgiveness quickly and genuinely. He is also wise to help his wife cultivate the same sense of urgency regarding reconciliation. As husbands guide their marriage toward obedience, they must do so considering all they have observed in their wives and teach with gentleness that it is out of a love for Christ that debts are fully cleared.

Robert Jones suggests a God-centered, three-pronged approach in conflict resolution that includes pleasing God, repentance, and love. This approach keeps Christ central and properly frames the deeper purpose undergirding why a husband and wife

must keep current (Eph 4:26) and regularly pursue reconciliation.²⁹ By focusing on pleasing God regardless of circumstances or a spouse's response, a husband leads by example and demonstrates his love for Christ through his obedience (Jn 14:15). It is important to remember the impact a spiritual leader can have when he points to the purpose for his obedient action. Husbands need to encourage rather than foster a spirit of criticism and correction as they encourage their wives to "be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1). This encouragement should be accompanied by guidance that will empower a married couple to grow in their ability to demonstrate godly reconciliation.

Another way a spiritual leader should guide his wife is to teach her how to identify idols within her heart. Husbands should first demonstrate a sober self-assessment and understand the idols with which they themselves struggle. Recognizing false idols and working to repent for the things that take priority over God are critical if a person is to grow in their love for the Lord. Spiritual leaders, therefore, observe where those they lead might be struggling with passions that compete with God and help them process how they can put off those passionate desires.

A sound spiritual leader will encourage his wife to surrender desires that threaten her relationship with Christ. A godly husband will also pray faithfully for his wife regarding worldly attachments and will encourage her by demonstrating vulnerability by sharing his own struggles. Helping someone grow is greatly enhanced when a godly companion accompanies them to help them identify idolatry. When this is done in a spirit of humility, as a fellow sinner, a deeper relationship with Christ is likely to result.³⁰

²⁹ Robert D. Jones, *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide to Handling Our Conflicts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 43.

³⁰ See Jones, *Pursuing Peace*, chap. 4 for a helpful illustration regarding how godly desires can grow in intensity and become false idols. His "Throne-Staircase Diagram" guides readers to see how as desires increase, they ascend the stairs and ultimately compete for God's position on the throne. The first step in mortifying the sin of idolatry is recognizing the threat of growing passions within the heart.

As spiritual leaders experience success in the fundamental areas of planning, guiding children, reconciling, and rooting out idols, they will establish a foundation from which they can more effectively lead from a position of strength. It is important to remain humble and recognize it is God who raises up men to be leaders. As Chambers points out, “There is no such thing as a self-made spiritual leader. A true leader influences others spiritually only because the Spirit works in and through him to a greater degree than in those he leads.”³¹ If men will cultivate the humble heart of a loving shepherd and yield to the Spirit as they guide others, they will likely find great success as they come alongside their wives. Quoting Matthew Henry, Harvey summarizes the way spiritual leaders must guide others: “The three qualifications of a good surgeon are requisite in a reprov-er: He should have an eagle’s eye, a lion’s heart, and a lady’s hand; in short, he should be endued with wisdom, courage, and meekness.”³² Spiritual leadership includes the skillful guidance, prayerful wisdom, and loving nurture of a person endeavoring to help another grow in relationship with Christ.

Husbands Must Understand How to Use Spiritual Disciplines to Lead their Wives

As men think about their responsibility to lead their wives spiritually, they will certainly want to consider how they can encourage their spouse to cultivate a deeper relationship with Jesus by embracing spiritual disciplines. The apostle Paul reminds readers, “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6). This passage notes that change is inevitable in a believer’s life, but that it will not occur fully until Christ’s return. However, there are things Christians can do to cultivate greater Christlikeness and a deeper faith. Richard Foster affirms the patience

³¹ Oswald J. Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: A Commitment to Excellence for Every Believer* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 543.

³² Dave Harvey, *When Sinners Say I Do: Discovering the Power of the Gospel for Marriage* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2011), 166.

required in the sanctification process, yet advocates for disciplines that facilitate greater maturity: “The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people. The classical disciplines of the spiritual life call us to move beyond surface living into the depths.”³³ How might men be instrumental in moving to greater depths of spiritual vitality, as well as help their wives grow, as Foster suggests?

Many disciplines can lead to a deeper faith. While spiritual leaders might advocate for fasting, meditation, solitude, and worship, among other disciplines, perhaps a man is best served to focus keenly on a few and cultivate them faithfully. Husbands are wise to consider three foundational disciplines and work to instill them deeply into their own lives as well as the lives of those they lead. Spiritual leaders should practice and encourage a commitment to devoted study of the Word, prayer, and serving others.

Importance of Study

Since the Word of God teaches, reproves, corrects, and trains in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16), faithful Bible study is a discipline that is sure to strengthen believers. Psalm 1 presents an image of the man who “meditates day and night” on the Word. Scripture is clear that the mind is “transformed by the Word” (Rom 12:2) and promises that those whose “delight is in the law” (Ps 1:2) will not wither but will prosper, yielding fruit in God’s sovereign season. Therefore, a spiritual leader should commit to spending time in the Word and can faithfully lead by paying attention to how his wife prioritizes her study of the Word.

Foster affirms that Bible study is vital: “The purpose of the Spiritual Disciplines is the total transformation of the person. They aim at replacing old destructive habits of thought with new life-giving habits. Nowhere is this purpose more clearly seen than in

³³ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins, 2018), 1.

the Discipline of study.”³⁴ Clearly, a husband should lead his wife by making meditating on the Word of primary importance. Yet, men must be careful not to judge or criticize their wives in this important area of spiritual development. Husbands have a unique opportunity to observe their wives’ love for the Word and to encourage them.

One way a husband might encourage his wife is by taking an interest in what she is learning in the Word or by offering to simultaneously read through the same book on account of how she has inspired him through her faithful study. Husbands might invite their wives to discuss a daily devotion over coffee in the mornings or offer to work their way through a yearly Bible reading plan together. Wives are also blessed when their husbands set an example for the family through their own faithful devotion to spending time in the Word. Sometimes silent leadership and leading by example make a dramatic impact.

Some husbands offer to study together with their wives or perhaps sit quietly in the same room as they each pursue their own individual study. If this approach is not appealing to a wife, a man might spiritually lead her by simply sharing what he is learning from the Word and invite her to converse with him about Scripture. Perhaps a woman prefers not to read together but would be encouraged by her husband temporarily relieving her of some responsibilities so she can find a free hour to spend time in the Word. Regardless of method, a husband should prayerfully consider how he can celebrate Bible study with his family.

Men can lead in this area in many ways, so a husband must carefully consider what will be most helpful and supportive of his wife based on where she is in her walk with the Lord. If a woman is not engaged in reading the Word, a husband should prayerfully consider how he can encourage and guide without pressuring her to feel guilty. The aim is to find ways to support and affirm with the purpose of glorifying God through

³⁴ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 62.

careful nurture and love. Regardless of the situation, husbands are positioned to be champions of this important discipline and should not miss the opportunity to encourage their wives to experience the rich blessing of time in the Word.

Importance of Prayer

Another discipline men must consider embracing fully is prayer. Keller shares how it took a physical illness to force him to think differently about how he led his wife in prayer. Speaking of his cancer diagnosis, he writes, “At one point during all this, my wife urged me to do something with her we had never been able to muster the self-discipline to do regularly. She asked me to pray with her every night.”³⁵ Why do men claim to be spiritual leaders yet neglect praying regularly and faithfully for and with their wives?

Perhaps men feel self-conscious, embarrassed, or inferior. Or, it could be that some men are simply slothful in their zeal for prayer. Whatever the reason for a man’s lack of commitment to praying with his wife, his plan ought to call for an increasingly robust prayer life alongside his wife if he intends to lead her spiritually. This is a common struggle among men, and yet it presents a tremendous opportunity for husbands to lead with greater passion and faithfulness.

Christ frequently demonstrated his commitment to prayer. Jesus proclaims God’s faithfulness in answering prayer: “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:24). The apostle Paul encourages readers to pray as well when he tells the Philippians, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Phil 4:6). Yet, husbands and wives often fail to embrace the discipline of prayer. The Lord wants to

³⁵ Timothy Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Penguin Random, 2014), 6.

provide abundantly and commands believers to ask, believing they will receive if their prayers are in accordance with his will.

Husbands serving as faithful spiritual leaders will dedicate themselves to the task of cultivating a deeper prayer life and encouraging their wives to do the same. However, this is difficult because prayer is personal. Prayer should not be viewed only as making petitions and lifting praise, but rather the means through which believers grow in their understanding of God. Monte Cline speaks of “radical prayer” and encourages readers to think differently about how they limit their prayer and to reflect upon the purpose of their conversation with God. Quoting Andrew Murray, he writes “Take time. Give God time to reveal Himself to you. Give yourself time to be silent and quiet before Him, waiting to receive, through the Spirit, the assurance of His presence with you, His power working in you.”³⁶ Spiritual leaders should cast this vision for those they lead encouraging them to “be still” as the Psalmist says and to simply spend time with the Lord (Ps 46:10).

Prayer too often becomes rote and self-focused, and husbands have a great opportunity to shape prayer as they lead their wives. Under the leadership of a godly man, a wife can learn how to broaden her view of prayer as well as open her heart to the way in which she connects with God through prayer. One way to accomplish expanding upon prayer is to pray through a passage of Scripture. Whitney addresses the problem of prayer that has become stale: “So what is the simple solution to the boring routine of saying the same old things about the same old things? Here it is: when you pray, pray through a passage of Scripture, particularly a psalm.”³⁷

Additionally, men desiring to fulfill their duty to lead spiritually will follow the apostle Paul’s directive to “pray without ceasing,” and make a regular practice of

³⁶ Monte Kline, *Radical Prayer: 9 Biblical Concepts That Will Forever Change the Way You Pray* (Sahuarita, AZ: Pacific Health Center, 2017), 9.

³⁷ Donald S. Whitney, *Praying the Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 26.

encouraging all within their sphere of influence to continually commune with God (1 Thess 5:17).

Some might consider prayer an option rather than a necessity. Busy lives crowd out essentials, which lead to prayer being neglected. However, prayer is paramount to those who take up the armor of God. They are called to be “praying at all times in the Spirit” (Eph 6:18), and a man’s willingness to observe the health of his prayer life is therefore of great value. Additionally, a man should desire his wife’s protection and be in tune with her dependence upon prayer. By careful observance, encouragement, and guidance men can lead their wives faithfully toward deepening their commitment to prayer. Spiritual leadership requires husbands to help those they lead guard against culture’s temptations through prayer. Charles Spurgeon notes the vital importance of prioritizing prayer: “God’s own people need—or else they would not have been given it—a command to pray, because we are very subject to periods of worldliness.”³⁸ If a husband expects to protect his wife, his most powerful defense is establishing a robust commitment to prayer for her and with her.

Importance of Service

In addition to study and prayer, men will find the discipline of service to be a tremendous opportunity to lead their wives toward greater maturity in Christ. Growing as a Christian requires practicing the commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Loving others is sharpened keenly through the act of serving, and husbands must lead in the area of service. The discipline of service takes humility and a willingness to put others first. Through this personal sacrifice a man becomes more like Christ. Men desiring to lead must model service for their families and, in so doing, encourage those they lead.

³⁸ Charles Spurgeon, *The Power of Prayer in a Believer's Life* (Lynnwood, WA: Emerald Books, 1993), 614.

If a man's wife loves to serve, he should be alongside her every opportunity he gets, or cheer her on in her faithfulness to the Lord when he cannot accompany her. Additionally, spiritual leaders will look for opportunities to serve Christ by serving others and will invite their wives to join them in this endeavor.

Serving is hard work and will require encouragement if it is to increase during one's lifetime. As a result, men need to hold this spiritual discipline in high regard and lead their wives through a total commitment to mission and a focus on others. Whitney remarks, "Serving God is not a job for the casually interested. It's costly service. God asks for your life. He requires that service to Him become a priority, not a pastime."³⁹ Thus, men need to evaluate if they are truly giving of themselves in the manner to which Jesus calls followers. If not, a husband must reestablish his priorities to allow this critical spiritual discipline to be a more robust part of his plan.

Conclusion

Spiritual leadership requires that a husband have a firm grasp on his God-given role and the biblical purpose for his marriage as foundational elements that undergird his leadership. Additionally, he needs to understand what spiritual leadership entails if he intends to faithfully lead with the objective of nurturing his wife in her faith. Finally, husbands should embrace spiritual disciplines as they lead spiritually in order to establish habits intended to help deepen the faith of those they guide. A man's God-given role is to lead his family and, in particular, he is to lead the woman God gave him as a companion for life. Men must consider God's design for their marriage and reflect upon how they were uniquely created. As head of the wife, a husband has a biblical call upon his life to take the initiative to lead. When men respond to God's call faithfully, they bring glory to God and their families stand to prosper.

³⁹ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 142.

CHAPTER 4
EQUIPPING MEN TO LEAD SPIRITUALLY
WITHIN THE HOME WORKSHOP

Introduction

This project was designed to provide the men of CBC with two workshops aimed at challenging them to think more intentionally about how they spiritually lead their families. While not exhaustive, the curriculum was comprised of foundational information to help men grow in their confidence and ability as spiritual leaders in the home. This chapter outlines the project's implementation and highlights observations as the workshops were conducted. More specific detail regarding the curriculum is included in appendix 3.

Preliminary Matters

The workshops were preceded by three preliminary matters that occurred prior to the project commencing: theological and practical research that informed teaching methodology, curriculum that conveyed the research was developed, and candidates willing to participate in the project were identified and recruited.

Research and Teaching Methodology

The design of the workshops was informed by the preceding chapters of this project. Chapter 1 outlined five goals intended to help men grow in their role as spiritual leaders in the home. Chapters 2 and 3 respectively explored theological and practical principles for husbands to consider in their leadership. Close examination of the project goals, coupled with research on the topic, led to the methodology that resulted in the workshop structure. The workshops were a balance of lecture, case studies, independent application, and reflection aimed at developing a plan for growth as spiritual leaders.

Content was primarily delivered in a lecture format, but case studies were used to allow men to practice some of the concepts introduced. In addition to this classroom instruction, men also received assignments designed to help them apply the content. While acquiring content is of great value, it needs to be practiced. Therefore, men were challenged to complete some exercises between workshops to encourage them to put what they learned into practice.

Spiritual maturity usually occurs over time and is often enhanced through accountability. The practical research conducted for this project led me to believe that for progress to be sustainable, men should walk with others able to challenge and encourage them. Thus, the project methodology included me individually reaching out to the men between workshops to encourage and challenge them to identify a mentor able to come alongside them in the upcoming year as they applied workshop principles.

Curriculum Development

The curriculum for eight lessons was developed over the course of many weeks and submitted to an expert panel for review. Upon receiving feedback from the expert panel, curriculum was adjusted, further reviewed, and finalized. Eight lessons were completed with the intent of teaching four individual lessons in each workshop. Where materials developed by others benefited the workshops, they were incorporated into the curriculum rather than creating entirely unique content. For instance, material from Ken Sande's book *The Peacemaker* and content from Robert Jones's book *Pursuing Peace* were utilized to teach men godly reconciliation. *How People Change*, written by Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp, provided a basis for teaching men how to identify idols and embrace the process of biblical change. Additionally, materials from College Park Church and Faith Community Ministries, based in Lafayette, Indiana, were incorporated into the workshop to help facilitate case studies that would allow men to practice skills taught in each workshop. The initial four lessons focused on the following four primary topics: assessment of spiritual condition, planning, biblical purpose for marriage and role of a

husband, and idols of the heart. The second four lessons, taught in workshop 2, focused on four additional topics: an examination of Genesis 2:18-25, Ephesians 5:25-33, 1 Peter 3:7, and Galatians 5:16-25; biblical communication, reconciliation, and spiritual disciplines.

Candidate Selection and Recruitment

While not every man will serve as an overseer, it is CBC's desire to equip men who might be called to the role of elder. Scripture indicates men must first demonstrate an ability to "manage their own household well" (1 Tim 3:12) if they are to one day serve as overseers within the church. As men were recruited for this project, they were informed that participating would help them lead more effectively at home as well as better equip them to serve within the body.

Regardless of whether men serve as overseers, certainly there is much to gain if they grow in their role as husbands and fathers. With this goal in mind, married men who were members or regular attenders of CBC¹ were invited to participate in two workshops intended to help them grow in their understanding of what it means to lead biblically. Church leaders were instrumental in publicizing the upcoming training and affirmed its value for men desiring to lead their families well. Additionally, information regarding the workshops was conveyed at the annual men's conference, and men were invited to express interest if they wished to participate.

The project originally anticipated participation of ten men. However, CBC's outreach resulted in generating interest that exceeded expectations. Twenty-two men asked to participate, and the elders of the church requested this larger group be accommodated. Therefore, the originally anticipated attendance of ten men was lifted, and the twenty-two

¹ Regular attenders were considered to be men who had not gone through the formal membership process but who were known by the elders or pastoral staff as active participants in the life of the church. The project invited men considered capable of eventually mentoring others. Incidentally, no men who participated in the workshops had attended the church regularly for less than one year.

men who expressed interest in the project were confirmed. Those intending to participate were asked to sign commitment cards indicating they would meet the project requirements of attending both workshops and completing assigned homework.

Lessons

Lesson 1

The first workshop was conducted on November 23, 2019 and consisted of four, one-hour lessons. Prior to giving the men a summary of the topics to be covered, I distributed a diagnostic that consisted of pre-workshop surveys and provided time for them to evaluate their spiritual leadership in several areas. This diagnostic, included as appendix 2, examined how confident men felt about their leadership at home. The diagnostic provided a baseline assessment that would be revisited at the close of workshop 2 to determine if men's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions changed.

The men then examined an overview of the two workshops and given a general roadmap of what would be taught in each of the upcoming eight lessons. Spiritual leadership requires that a husband have a firm grasp on his and his wife's spiritual condition. He must also understand how to plan for his family, the biblical purpose for marriage and the role of a husband as foundational elements that undergird his leadership. Additionally, a husband will benefit by understanding four key passages in Scripture that inform how a man should lead. Men should be equipped to recognize idols of the heart so they can grow personally and help others grow. Since leadership is aided by relational equity, men need to know how to communicate biblically and reconcile quickly. Finally, husbands should embrace spiritual disciplines as they lead spiritually in order to establish habits intended to help deepen the faith of those they guide. These broad concepts provided the group with a high-level summary of material that would be covered in the two workshops so they could better visualize how each lesson related to the topic of spiritual leadership.

After the course overview was complete, the remainder of lesson 1 focused on making spiritual assessments of self and spouse. This lesson defined spiritual leadership and emphasized the importance of observing, encouraging, and guiding others toward greater spiritual maturity. Additionally, it presented a pyramid intended to help men think about strengths and weaknesses in their spiritual foundation. At the conclusion of lesson 1, the handout “Leadership in the Home”² was given to the men with specific instructions regarding how to utilize it between workshops. The men also received the worksheet “Observe, Encourage, and Guide,”³ which challenged men toward deeper connection with their wives in the upcoming weeks.

Lesson 1 challenged men to think about their God-given role to lead their families and, in particular, how to assess the spiritual condition of the women God gave them as companions for life. Men were asked to consider God’s design for their marriage and reflect upon how they can better encourage their wives in the faith. When men respond to God’s call faithfully, they bring glory to God and their families stand to prosper.

This lesson focused on several passages to help men consider their spiritual foundation. The group examined 2 Timothy 3:16, John 3:16, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 14:15, and Matthew 20:28. This provided a foundational pyramid for the men to consider regarding how they viewed the sufficiency of Scripture, God’s identity, their personal identity, the importance of obeying God, and the need to serve others.

Summary of lesson 1 material covered:

1. Overview of objectives for workshops one and two
2. Completion of initial diagnostic survey
3. Making a self-assessment of spiritual maturity

² See appendix 5.

³ See appendix 6.

4. Evaluating how to strengthen a spouse's spiritual foundation
5. Numerous Bible passages were taught⁴

Lesson 2

After a break the men were given time to ask questions regarding lesson 1, which provided an opportunity for the group to engage in meaningful dialogue and revealed that they had some questions regarding how to lead their wives spiritually while remaining sensitive to the possibility of coming across as judgmental. Lesson 2 built upon the prior topic of spiritual assessment and focused upon helping men establish a vision and plan for their family.

Without a thoughtful plan, it is difficult for men to know how to maximize their leadership efforts. Most men in the workshop did not seem to have a formal method of planning, and this lesson gave a framework they could utilize to think about their lifetime goals and the more immediate goals necessary to accomplish the things they deemed most important. The men were directed to 2 Corinthians 5:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:31, and were challenged to think through plans according to what most pleases God.⁵ Additionally, Luke 14:28-30 was examined in considering the importance of the cost of making great sacrifices for Christ's sake. The men discussed Galatians 6:7-10 and were challenged to think about the reality of reaping what they sow. This teaching intended to solidify men's desire to sow thoughtfully. The group considered the importance of how planning might lead to God's pleasure as expressed in Matthew 25:21.

It is not uncommon for men to have few, if any, goals for themselves and for their family or for their planning to be primarily centered upon their careers. In this lesson men learned how to make plans intended to foster greater spiritual growth. At the

⁴ See appendices for greater detail regarding passages used as foundational support for the curriculum taught. The curriculum was closely tied to Scripture, and while Eph 5, 1 Pet 3, Gen 2, and Gal 5 were fundamental to this project, a number of additional passages were referred to as the lessons unfolded.

⁵ For greater detail regarding Scripture discussed in this lesson, see appendix 7, which memorializes the use of Scripture relevant to "three planning buckets" for men to consider.

conclusion of lesson 2, a “Personal Planning Tool” was provided to the men with specific instructions regarding how to utilize it to plan for 2020.⁶ This handout was a three-page resource that included a page of scripture to guide their thoughts regarding planning, a page of planning warmups intended to give them ideas as they considered their vision and plan, and a planner to think through plans in one, five, and ten-year increments as well as lifetime goals. The intent with this lesson was to help men specifically focus on how to become more intentional about investing their time in nurturing the spiritual lives of those they lead at home. At the end of the session, the men broke into small groups to discuss their preliminary thoughts and were challenged to establish a loose outline of some ideas they believed would be good to include in their plans.

Summary of lesson 2 material covered:

1. Overview of how planning can guide a spiritual leader
2. Methods of planning
3. Considerations of fundamentals to include in a godly plan

Lesson 3

Lesson 3 covered five biblical purposes for marriage: companionship, helper, sexual union, reflection of Christ’s love for the church, and bearing fruit through ministry together. Stuart Scott’s *Exemplary Husband* was used as a helpful resource and men were given a brief overview of applicable exegetical passages to be covered in greater depth. These included Genesis 2:18 to discuss companionship and assistance, Ephesians 5:22-32 to reflect upon demonstrating Christ’s love for the church, Genesis 2:24 to explore the purpose for sexual union, and Ephesians 4:12 to consider how husbands and wives might minister effectively together. Men were also instructed regarding three roles of a husband: to love, to learn, and to lead as a servant. This lesson walked through specific examples of how men are to care for and nurture their wives. In particular, men participated in a

⁶ See appendix 7.

discussion of how spiritual leadership is impacted when a marital relationship is rooted in love, understanding, and service. John 13:1-20 was discussed as an example of how Jesus led as a servant. Ephesians 5:25-33 and 1 Peter 3:7 were introduced as passages that specifically address a husband's role. The men were exposed to both passages and informed that a more thorough exposition was forthcoming in the second workshop. The men were given the handout "A Loving Husband,"⁷ developed by Zionsville Fellowship Church, and Wayne Mack's "Scorecard for Husbands,"⁸ to use as aids in thinking about areas of weakness to include in their plans as leaders. They developed several ways in which they might grow in their role as husbands: studying the Word with their wives more regularly, praying more intentionally with and for their spouse, listening to their companion in an effort to better understand her, parenting together as a team, and taking a more proactive role managing finances. At the end of this lesson, they watched a video case study of a young married couple and worked to critique the husband's demonstration of leadership in the midst of their crisis. Weaknesses of each spouse in the case study were noted, and the men brainstormed how they might advise the husband in how to lead more effectively. Additionally, the men were asked to evaluate how the couple was doing in their demonstration of the five biblical purposes of marriage outlined in lesson 3.

Summary of lesson 3 material covered:

1. How biblical purpose for marriage and a husband's role impact leadership
2. Review Scripture regarding the purpose for marriage
3. Review and discuss Scripture regarding the role of a husband

Lesson 4

Lesson 4 provided instruction regarding how to recognize false idols and the process of biblical change. The men were introduced to Jeremiah 17:5-10 and Psalm 1

⁷ See appendix 8.

⁸ See appendix 9.

and asked to consider the condition of the heart. Additionally, the lesson incorporated Proverbs 4:23 and Luke 6:43-45 to illustrate how actions flow from the heart. The intent of this lesson was to guide men in their ability to grow spiritually by rooting out idols and leading their families in this same endeavor. This lesson relied upon resources from *How People Change* written by Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp. Men were also presented with Robert Jones's Throne-Staircase diagram from his book *Pursuing Peace* and learned to examine how godly desires grow into sinful demands. Examples of reactions that resembled thorns were presented and appropriate put ones were suggested. This resulted in a robust discussion of areas of ungodly fruit the men could identify in their own lives. The men were given the "Big Picture Model"⁹ handout and were taught how to think about putting off ungodly desires, thoughts, and actions so they might replace them with offsetting, godly alternative behaviors. In addition to the "Big Picture Model" the men received the "Y-Diagram"¹⁰ and examined how sowing to the Spirit is initially more difficult but leads to fewer challenging consequences in the future. Brad Bigney's "Idols of the Heart"¹¹ worksheet was given to the men so they could prayerfully reflect upon and document idols of the heart they frequently find a struggle.

Time was set aside at the end of this lesson to summarize and review the primary points in each of the four lessons. Men reviewed the homework they were to do between workshops and were given an opportunity to ask questions. Additionally, I discussed the benefit of finding a mentor to provide accountability in the upcoming year as men further explore some of the concepts covered in the workshops. I provided some direction regarding how men might identify another man to come alongside them, and the workshop concluded.

⁹ See appendix 10.

¹⁰ See appendix 11.

¹¹ See appendix 12.

Summary of lesson 4 material covered:

1. Review of importance of identifying and rooting out false idols
2. Recognizing false idols and mortifying sin
3. The process of biblical change
4. The value and benefit of growing alongside a mentor

Lesson 5

The second workshop was conducted on December 7, 2019, and began with a discussion of the men's insights as a result of the homework. The men had many interesting questions and observations based on the work they did between workshops. Some were surprised by their discoveries and several were greatly encouraged. It was clear that the men were excited about what they learned interacting with their wives between workshops. In particular, the concept of idols of the heart was new for nearly all the men and a lively dialogue ensued regarding how they were beginning to think about the way their ungodly desires hindered them as spiritual leaders.

The men also demonstrated an increased awareness of how important it is to understand those they spiritually lead. I reaffirmed their role is not to judge or criticize, but rather to help others find victory in putting to death desires that compete with their passion to faithfully obey Christ. As we reviewed, the men shared that they were positively impacted by the conversation regarding the biblical purpose for marriage. This lesson addressed the importance of men observing with discernment and using Scripture to encourage and guide.

Lesson 5 transitioned to theological truths and focused on passages related to men serving as spiritual leaders. The men looked in-depth at four passages: Genesis 2:18-25, 1 Peter 3:7, Ephesians 5:25-33, and Galatians 5:16-25. These passages were incorporated into the workshop to encourage the men to think biblically about marriage. The passages taught the importance of the one-flesh relationship, the need to understand their spouse, the opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love to the world, and the fruit that

should be apparent in the men's lives as a result of their faith. I explored each passage by looking at its hermeneutical context and how it fit within the broader text. This portion of the teaching provided an opportunity to discuss principles of exegetical study that might be especially helpful to the men who were less confident in their ability to lead their wives in the Word. I explained the danger of using passages out of context and looked at the flow of thought leading up to each passage as well as authorship and setting. In addition, an overview of perspectives from various commentaries was presented and points of application for spiritual leaders discussed. Finally, conversation ensued regarding the importance of walking by the Spirit as a leader.

Summary of lesson 5 material covered:

1. Review of workshop 1 and overview workshop 2
2. Observing and encouraging with Scripture
3. Exegetical study of four biblical passages helpful to leaders
4. Importance of walking by the Spirit as a spiritual leader

Lesson 6

Lesson 6 provided practical insight regarding the biblical rules of communication found in Ephesians 4:25-32. The men examined four rules to follow: be honest (Eph 4:25), keep current (Eph 4:26), attack the problem instead of the person (Eph 4:29), and act rather than react (Eph 4:31).¹² Examples were given of successes and failures in each area, and they discussed behaviors to put on in place of ungodly behaviors that should be put off relating to their communication. The men were invited to engage in a group discussion exploring the benefits of faithfulness in communicating biblically and shared stories of painful consequences when communicating selfishly.

¹² I adapted the four rules of communication from material taught by Bob Smith at Faith Community Ministries in Lafayette, Indiana; however, these are thought to be attributed to John Bettler, former Executive Director, Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation.

Additionally, the men were taught how to evaluate when and how to bring up difficult issues. These important considerations were intended to help men process how they approach their wives. Do they have the facts right before bringing up an issue or are they biased in their view? Should love cover the issue they intend to confront? Is their timing right, or should they wait to let things settle down? Men were encouraged to evaluate their attitude and think about whether their words were loving when addressing their wives. They were challenged to increase their commitment to pray about their communication prior to stepping into a thorny conversation.

Summary of lesson 6 material covered:

1. How biblical communication impacts spiritual leadership
2. The four rules of biblical communication
3. Fundamentals to consider when deciding how to communicate
4. Challenges and pitfalls when communication is self-focused

Lesson 7

Lesson 7 provided practical insight regarding confession, repentance, and forgiveness found in Ken Sande's book *The Peacemaker*. Robert Jones's book *Pursuing Peace* reinforced the importance of how a person's view of God impacts their ability to forgive.

The men examined the "Seven A's" of confession and the "Four Promises" made when forgiving. This teaching helped men develop practical steps toward reconciling as spiritual leaders. Because relational restoration is called for in Scripture, men must be willing to reconcile quickly and humbly. Sande's "Seven A's" teach men things to consider as they repent for sin against their wives. In a similar manner, this lesson helped the men come alongside their wives and teach constructive ways to help them practice godly reconciliation. Men were introduced to some nuances of forgiveness and were challenged to grow in their ability to not let past offences lead to bitterness.

In addition to Sande's material, the men examined five passages from the Bible regarding forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15; Mark 11:25; Luke 17:3-4; Matt 18:15-17; Eph 4:32) and discussed attitudinal and transactional forgiveness. This deeper topical study provided biblical context regarding how to forgive and was intended to help men think about how they can biblically lead their wives in this important topic.

Summary of lesson 7 material covered:

1. How biblical reconciliation impacts spiritual leadership
2. Fundamentals of biblical confession and repentance
3. The four promises made when extending forgiveness

Lesson 8

Lesson 8 summarized all the content delivered in workshop 1 and workshop 2 and provided an overarching view of how men can use the principles learned to better lead their wives spiritually. The men were reminded that leadership in the home is essentially a form of intimate discipleship. Since discipleship often occurs in the context of relationship, men were encouraged to think about how they leverage the most intimate relationship of all—marriage. Some of the men shared that they had never thought much about their responsibility to lead their wives spiritually. Rather than paying attention to their wives' spiritual vitality, some of the men confessed to being preoccupied with providing for the family.

The men then examined spiritual disciplines and discussed how they can be utilized to grow the men personally as well as help the entire family. The men were asked how they currently engage in spiritual disciplines, and the group discussed some themes from *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* by Don Whitney. The men shared thoughts with one another regarding how they agreed or disagreed that spiritual disciplines might be essential in the Christian life. Finally, I outlined three disciplines more thoroughly: Bible intake, prayer, and service. The men were challenged to think about how they could more fruitfully engage in these three disciplines in the upcoming

year and how they might thoughtfully include them in their planning. We discussed how Jesus made prayer an integral part of his life and looked at Matthew 14:23, Luke 6:12, Mark 1:35, and Matthew 26:36 as a few examples of Christ making time to intentionally commune with the Father. Men were challenged to reflect upon how they incorporate prayer into their daily life and into their marriage.

As the lesson came to a close, the men were encouraged and some specifics regarding “where to go from here.” The men were challenged to take next steps provided in their homework from the prior workshop and invited to identify a mentor to spend time with them to reflect on the information provided in the workshops.

At the end of the time, the men completed a follow-up diagnostic survey to determine their thoughts and perceptions regarding spiritual leadership at the conclusion of the project.

Summary of lesson 8 material covered:

1. Review of workshop 1 and workshop 2
2. Recognizing how to embrace spiritual disciplines as a spiritual leader
3. Completion of final diagnostic survey
4. Encouragement regarding growth as a spiritual leader in the upcoming year ahead

Conclusion

The curriculum was developed to help men grow as spiritual leaders in the home. While there are many facets to spiritual leadership, the workshops were designed to establish a foundation upon which men could further build. Spiritual leadership was clearly defined and discussed, some foundational objectives were addressed, and practical application was utilized to guide men toward putting theory into practice. As men were exposed to new possibilities regarding how they might lead differently, excitement grew. It was clear that the men felt somewhat deficient in the area of spiritual leadership, but with a little encouragement and a clear path toward growth they quickly embraced the possibilities of leading with greater zeal. In chapter 5, the results of the workshops are

examined in detail to determine strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities regarding how to improve this training in the future.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT EVALUATION

Introduction

According to Scripture, “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 5:23). While a man does not serve as his wife’s pastor, Holy Spirit, or Savior, he is uniquely positioned to lead his spouse in a manner that nurtures her spiritually. This project was developed to help husbands grow in their awareness of how to come alongside their wives as spiritual leaders.

Evaluation of Project Purpose

The purpose of this project was to equip the men of Cornerstone Bible Church, Westfield, Indiana, to serve as spiritual leaders in the home. Spiritual leadership is a broad topic encompassing many areas of opportunity. Thus, determining how to approach the content required careful consideration.

This project accomplished its purpose as evidenced by the feedback from the men who participated. This positive response leads me to believe that offering these workshops to additional men in the future will be fruitful for the church. The success of this project is marked by two clearly identifiable factors: the men responded positively to the curriculum, and the project’s five goals were satisfactorily met.

Subjective feedback received from the men and their responses regarding what they learned were significantly positive. The men expressed that the workshops helped them rethink their responsibilities at home and that the content covered would help them grow as spiritual leaders. Predominantly, men expressed that they had never considered many of the things taught in the workshops and admitted frequent failure communicating according to biblical principles. Most men shared that they did not spend much time

planning how to help their families grow spiritually. Additionally, the concepts regarding idols of the heart and the process of biblical change were new to most of the men. At the close of our time together, a resounding number of men expressed they felt much more competent in their approach to spiritual leadership.

Since the men who participated had not studied biblical counseling, materials from Ken Sande, Robert Jones, Timothy Lane, and Paul Tripp were foreign to them, and they found this content to be of great value. I am encouraged that the content selected helped the men establish a firm foundation upon which to build. Many edifying topics could have been taught, but the curriculum successfully encouraged and equipped the men who participated, which fulfilled the intended purpose.

A second indication of success was the accomplishment of the project goals. Initially I was concerned about the degree of participation but was encouraged by the number of men desiring to participate. Additionally, I was uncertain whether men would commit to both workshops and faithfully complete the homework. However, the men were diligent in attendance and completed their homework faithfully. Upon completion of the project, the men were excited about growing as spiritual leaders. Their interest extended beyond the home and, in some instances, was expressed as a desire to one day lead as overseers within the church. This further affirmed the project purpose. Men grew in confidence as a result of participating and I was pleased to witness their understanding of how the project served them.

Evaluation of Project Goals

Five goals were identified as critical to the success of this project. These goals served as a guide leading to the creation of curriculum as well as evaluation of the content delivered. Success was measured through pre-workshop and post-workshop surveys that compared men's attitudes toward spiritual leadership before and after the curriculum was taught.

Since our church has not offered equipping of this sort in the past, the elders were engaged in the process. Their involvement led to a dialogue regarding the possibility of expanding upon this project by developing additional curriculum intended to help men disciple and lead using biblical principles. In addition to casting a vision for what might be possible in the future regarding the equipping of men as leaders, the project also exposed the church to ways a biblical counseling ministry might strengthen the body.

The first goal of the project was to develop a diagnostic instrument that would allow the assessment of husbands' current attitudes toward leading their wives spiritually. The diagnostic created was comprised of twenty questions that surveyed men's thoughts regarding various aspects of leadership. This survey inquired how men approach planning, their understanding of a husband's role, their commitment to praying with their wives, and various other items related to leading spiritually. The survey asked men to rate themselves on a Likert scale so the results could be compared to a reassessment at the end of the project. Upon completion of the survey, review by fifteen "beta testers," and assimilating their feedback into a revised survey, the first goal was successfully achieved.¹

The second goal of the project was to recruit Christian men with committed, Christian wives to participate in two workshops on spiritual leadership in the home. The men recruited were either members or regular attenders of CBC.² While many men are interested in growing as leaders, it can be challenging to get men to commit to classroom instruction. I anticipated that it might be difficult to recruit men to give up two Saturdays to study this material together and to be accountable to completing homework between workshops. Since I am relatively new to CBC, and I do not hold a position on staff,

¹ Elders, small group leaders, and other spiritually mature men within the church took the survey to help evaluate its effectiveness in assessing the spiritual health of men considered to be sound leaders. This feedback led to some changes that proved helpful in dividing the survey into thematic areas of spiritual leadership.

² Regular attenders were considered to be men who have not gone through the formal membership process but who were known by the elders or pastoral staff as active participants in the life of the church. The project objective was to invite men considered capable of eventually mentoring others.

generating enthusiasm and obtaining buy-in was a perceived barrier. Accordingly, I worked hard to educate the elders and senior pastor to garner their support. For a period of one month, the project was advertised in the weekly bulletin. Additionally, email blasts were sent each week to the entire church body detailing the nature and intent of the project. Men were invited to express interest, and those who responded were informed that they would receive personal follow-up to discuss the project commitment. Engaging men in this personal manner proved to be invaluable and generated more interest than planned. Twenty-two men expressed a willingness to commit to both weekends, and after confirming that each man was married and leading a Christian spouse, men were asked to sign commitment cards, and the roster was set. The second goal was considered a success.

The third goal in this project entailed developing curriculum that would appropriately instruct men in key areas of spiritual leadership. This task was challenging because there are many aspects of spiritual leadership and they cannot possibly all be covered in two workshops. Thus, discernment regarding what not to include became critically important. I began with a broad collection of topics that my research led me to believe impact a man's leadership. The content was then narrowed down to topics that promised to provide the best foundation upon which men could build. The teaching could have focused upon many elements, but priority was given to eight foundational basics: assessing spiritual vitality, planning, purpose of marriage and role of a husband, idols of the heart, biblical teaching, communication, reconciliation, and spiritual disciplines. The objective in selecting content was to focus on topics that would have the greatest impact on men. For example, biblical communication and reconciliation are important in building trust and deepening relationships. If a man cannot lead in these key areas, then it is difficult to garner the relational equity required to encourage his wife to follow. In a similar manner, men benefit from learning how to assess their spiritual health and identify idols in their lives. These skills can then be used to guide others toward recognizing and putting to death

idols that impede spiritual growth. After careful deliberation, eight hours of curriculum was completed, and the final draft was provided to an expert panel for recommendations. The expert panel was comprised of one thought leader in the biblical counseling movement, one overseer of biblical counselors, and one pastor with experience in family ministry. Following the expert panel review, suggestions were taken into consideration and revisions were made. Upon completion, the third goal was successfully accomplished.

The fourth goal consisted of teaching the curriculum. This goal was accomplished upon completion of two workshops, held two weeks apart, in November and December. These workshops were comprised of four one-hour lessons each and provided the men with a wealth of information designed to help them grow as spiritual leaders in the home. The time between workshops allowed an opportunity for men to complete exercises and apply some of what they learned at home.

Finally, the fifth goal was to reassess the men with the same diagnostic to determine if a change occurred in their understanding, practice, and assessment of spiritual leadership in the home. The intent with this goal was to gather data that would allow church leadership to assess the efficacy of this project in developing men.

The methodology underlying this research was quantitative in nature, and the questions were divided into three themes as outlined in the table 1. The Likert Scale allowed me to consider the men’s growth linearly. Seeing the incremental growth in each area was useful to understand where growth occurred most significantly.

Table 1. Survey themes

Areas of Interest Regarding Leadership	Questions
Understanding of biblical leadership	2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14
Practices of biblical leadership	1, 4, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20
Assessment of biblical leadership	3, 5, 7, 12, 19

The themes of understanding, practice, and assessment of biblical leadership were represented by 6, 9 and 5 questions respectively. Each question allowed men to score from 1 to 5 possible points, resulting in a total possible score of 30 points for theme 1, 45 points for theme 2, and 25 points for theme 3. To assess the impact of the project, pre-workshop and post-workshop, surveys were compared and demonstrated an increase in all three themes related to biblical leadership.

The tables provided as appendix 4 memorialize pre-workshop and post-workshop response scores for all twenty-two participants. Each participant was assigned a number so that their two scores could be anonymously compared.

I used a one mean t-test with one tail to evaluate the significance of the change. Given the sample size of twenty-two and assuming a population mean of zero change (from pre-test to post-test), the t-value was calculated to be 4.315512 and the value of p was .000153. The result was considered significant considering $p < .05$. The null hypothesis can be rejected with confidence. A summarization of the two surveys is outlined in table 2.

Table 2. Summary of survey results

<i>Survey</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Pre-workshop</i>	490	620	383	1493
<i>Post-workshop</i>	535	634	433	1602

I was encouraged with the results of the project upon completion. Twenty-two men out of a total church population of ninety-eight married men participated. The initial survey indicated that participants were at significantly different places regarding their understanding of biblical leadership, as evidenced by scores that ranged from 11 to 28, out of 35 possible points in this thematic category. Participants also scored between 11 and 41 regarding their “practices of biblical leadership” out of a total of 45. Even those participants at the top of the range acknowledged a need to personally grow in their practice of leadership at home.

Since the workshops were focused upon teaching men about biblical leadership, I anticipated that the questions involving “knowledge of biblical leadership” would have had the most significant change. Though knowledge did improve by 8 percent, participants grew more in their personal assessment of how they were doing. The responses that assessed personal leadership increased by 13 percent. This change is important because it reflects a change that extends beyond gaining knowledge and indicates that the men grew in confidence almost immediately as they began doing some simple things to take steps toward leading spiritually. Having the ability to assess behavior accurately is a critical step toward change because a man must understand what needs to be put off to take steps toward putting on godly behavior that leads to change. It was encouraging to see results that indicated the men grew in the area personal assessment and self-awareness.

The questions that targeted “practices of biblical leadership” demonstrated the least amount of improvement rising just 2 percent from 62 percent to 64 percent. This smaller improvement may have been due to the use of the word “regularly” in many of the questions and the men’s hesitancy to consider their “new” practices “regular.” Another factor impacting this result is that the men have not had enough time to put new practices into action. It would be a useful piece of data to survey the same participants six months after the classes to determine if scores continued to increase or if they plateaued or declined.

When I considered the data in its entirety from all three content areas, I found the results encouraging. One important statistic I noted was the shift in the variance and standard deviation from the intake to the follow-up results. The survey prior to the classes indicated a standard deviation of 11.038 and a variance of 121.84, yet after the workshops the standard deviation decreased to 9.20 and the variance to 84.63. This 17 percent decrease in standard deviation and 31 percent decrease in variance indicates that the spread of the scores away from the mean shrank significantly. Therefore, the men who scored low initially moved closer to the mean.

The overall mean also improved from 67.86 to 72.82. This 7 percent increase reflects positive growth within a brief time period. Positive verbal feedback from many of the men in recent weeks has indicated a new pattern of growth in their lives. The biblical leadership workshops seemed to serve as a catalyst for growth for men as they lead their wives and families according to God's word.

This sample size of almost 25 percent of the married men provided our senior pastor, Kirk Welch, with a good indication of the spiritual maturity of his congregation and the impact that purposeful training can have on those men who have been called to lead their families.

Evaluation of Project Strengths

This project demonstrated several strengths. One strength of great significance was the manner in which awareness of the need for men to spiritually lead their families grew. An early concern was that men might not grasp the need to grow in their spiritual leadership, but the conversations that ensued once the project began to be publicized were of great value. Clearly, visibility regarding the opportunity resulted in men talking throughout the church about the need to grow as leaders at home. It was evident that the importance of men leading spiritually was elevated, and the project served as a clarion call to men to be intentional in their role.

Another strength of this project was that the men who participated in the workshops came away determined to identify and engage with a mentor. Men were encouraged by the lessons and excited to put things they had learned into practice. The workshops impressed upon the men the value of walking with an accountability partner who is able to discuss successes and failures. Men connected with this challenge, which likely will benefit those who follow through.

This project also helped men learn valuable concepts that provide a strong foundation for leading at home. Participants demonstrated their understanding through group discussion, case studies, and homework, and the level of engagement throughout

both workshops was high. Four hours of content, delivered in each workshop, represents a significant volume of material, but men did not show signs of fatigue or disinterest. The curriculum resonated with men, and they demonstrated great interest and participated with a high degree of energy.

In addition to equipping men, relationships were formed as a result of engaging with transparency, authenticity, and empathy. This community interaction strengthened the church. Despite higher attendance than originally planned, the workshops had the intimate feel of a small group Bible study rather than a classroom. Thus, meaningful dialogue resulted in men encouraging one another. Husbands shared disappointments and successes as spiritual leaders in a safe environment and this transparency provided an opportunity for men to feel they were not alone in their struggles. It was evident during the breaks that men would continue this dialogue long after the project's completion, which is likely to benefit the church, as well as these men, in many ways.

Additionally, a strength of this project was that it left men inspired and hungry for more. Men learned simple concepts that were entirely new, which led to a desire to further explore. The men were introduced to the work of several current thought leaders in the field of biblical counseling, and this exposure resulted in men requesting additional resources as well as further training and equipping.

A final strength of the project was the impact it had on church leadership. As a result of the survey findings, elders realized that our men do not have a firm grasp on what is required of them as biblical leaders. This discovery is an encouragement because the benefits of the project were clear, and new understanding will certainly result in opportunities for further teaching. Discoveries also included identifying some men who are leading well in the home, and this provides opportunity for the church to find ways to involve those men further in the life of the congregation. The project allowed me to identify some men who would make excellent marriage mentors, small group leaders, and perhaps

elders. This visibility into the leadership potential of the men involved is beneficial to CBC's leadership team.

Evaluation of Project Weaknesses

In addition to the apparent strengths of the project, there were also some weaknesses. The first weakness was the timing of the workshops. Since I am not a part of the staff or planning team at CBC, I had little influence over the timeline for this project and it needed to fit it within their ongoing programming. The elders wanted to offer this training between the men's conference and marriage retreat and that forced things into a timeline that was not ideal. This curriculum would have been absorbed more fruitfully over eight weeks as it would have allowed the men to digest what they were learning more gradually. Delivering this content in two half-day workshops resulted in a missed opportunity for men to work with lesson content over a longer period of time. Stretching the teaching out would have likely resulted in greater success with practical application at home and would have strengthened the project.

A second weakness was that we enrolled too many men to practically engage with them between workshops. Ideally, the project should include mentorship as a way to further support the men. While delivering the material and assigning homework between workshops was sufficient, it would have been significantly stronger for men to go through the curriculum with a mentor equipped to reinforce concepts and provide encouragement. Teaching a man to lead spiritually is a form of discipleship and one-on-one relationships are a tremendous benefit to that process. In the future, we need to mentor men along with the content delivery. However, finding more than twenty mentors in a church our size was not possible given the time constraints.

A third weakness was that I failed to convey that spiritual leadership contains many nuances. The project curriculum addressed some foundational elements intended to lead men toward growth as spiritual leaders, but the content was in no way exhaustive. This should have been more clearly identified and communicated to the men. It would be

unfortunate if men erroneously believed these workshops were all they needed to become godly, spiritual leaders. The project should have included better instruction regarding next steps and made it clearer that the workshops were simply an opportunity to begin a journey. A preferable outcome for this project would have been for men to understand that the content covered was simply a step toward growing in a vast area requiring a deep desire to obey the Lord.

A final weakness of the project might be expressed as a need for further clarification between biblical and spiritual leadership. As I researched how men are to lead their wives, differentiating between the two became increasingly unclear. Additionally, some authors referred to men as shepherd within the home while Scripture does not refer to husbands in this way. Strengthening this project requires further study in how biblical leadership differs from spiritual leadership. For instance, a husband might demonstrate biblical leadership in how he stewards family finances or discipline his children according to Scripture but fails to do much to nurture the faith of those he has been called to lead. Thus, biblical leadership is comprised of many facets of leading while spiritual leadership is perhaps focused on nurturing the spiritual vitality of the family.

Proposed Project Changes

A few changes would strengthen this project significantly prior to revisiting it in the spring. The first change required is to cultivate mentors in advance. Preparing mentors would require some work, but it would be tremendous to develop a group of men desiring to help others grow as husbands. It is highly likely that some of the men who participated in this initial project could, with additional training and equipping, make excellent mentors. This change would have the added benefit of helping the mentors continue their growth trajectory in addition to helping new men desiring to grow as spiritual leaders. I would like to develop a review session and identify a resource to study with mentors a few months prior to initiating the project again. I would then invite those mentors to support and encourage a new group of men in the upcoming workshops.

In addition to needing mentors, the survey did not capture the degree to which progress was made. The diagnostic needs improvement and could be rewritten in a way that better provides objective evidence that men were sufficiently equipped. One encouraging observation was that some men indicated that they learned they were not spiritually leading simply by completing the diagnostic. While I am pleased that it was thought provoking, convicting men was not the intended purpose. Assessing project efficacy needs to improve.

Another change I would make to this project would be to move away from the workshop format and simply deliver the curriculum in eight weekly lessons of ninety-minutes each. This change would allow me to give the men more assignments and would provide opportunities for them to engage their wives more fruitfully. In addition, this would allow better assessment of progress and hopefully give the men a better understanding of how sustained effort over time impacts their ability to lead.

Change is also needed in the area of curriculum refinement. The men were highly engaged with the curriculum that I developed, but more is needed in the area of leading a spouse in her faith. While this curriculum set men up for the kind of spiritual nurture I hoped to achieve, deeper development is required if men are to truly tend to their wives' spiritual growth. If men cannot communicate well with their wives or resolve conflict in a godly manner, then it will be difficult to lead their wives spiritually. However, once we establish that foundation, greater instruction is required in helping men learn how to be spiritual guides. This curriculum accomplished much but can be improved.

Another change is that further study is needed in this area so wives can participate in a more engaged manner. I would like to make adjustments that allow me to solicit greater feedback and involvement from spouses. It would be interesting to even include the wives in one of the eight sessions, allowing interaction as a couple and an opportunity to work together on some skills. Lengthening the delivery timeline would allow this as a possibility. If wives are not included physically, then they can certainly

have a greater voice through some of the exercises the men work through over eight weeks. There are multiple ways to include spouses in the process, but regardless of how it is achieved, it would likely strengthen the outcome tremendously.

A final change would be to conduct this teaching during times of the year that are easier on the church calendar. It was challenging to work this project in during such a busy season in the life of the congregation. I would avoid the Christmas season because families are sometimes stressed, and their schedules are busy. Making sure teaching is conducted when husbands can give it their full attention would be more ideal.

Theological Reflections

Scripture calls overseers to demonstrate competency in “managing their households well” prior to leading in the church (1 Tim 3:4). It is, therefore, clear that if a man is to lead the flock, he must first succeed at home. Additionally, the Bible has much to say about how men are to love and care for their wives. Husbands are to love selflessly as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25), and men must recognize the importance of understanding their wives and value them as coheirs (1 Pet 3:7). However, these truths are not always properly emphasized. It was a humbling experience to study Scripture and think deeply about my responsibility as a husband. While it is God who brings his good work to completion in my wife (Phil 1:6), I have a role to play in his sanctifying work. This is challenging and should convict men who have made the commitment to walk faithfully in the covenant of marriage.

This project sought to help men reflect upon the biblical purposes for marriage and God’s intended role that husbands are to play. A man’s responsibility to serve his wife is clear in the Word. In particular, Scripture advocates for men to be mindful of ways they can cultivate an environment conducive to nurturing wives spiritually. It was a joy to see men take interest in how they might better reconcile conflict or communicate biblically with their wives. Faithfully adhering to this biblical instruction results in relational

wholeness that empowers men to more fruitfully lead because spiritual integrity lends credibility to a man's leadership.

I also learned that men are not resolute in their understanding of what it means to lead spiritually. Their lack of commitment to prayer, understanding of spiritual vitality, and general apathy toward spiritual disciplines are just a few indicators of where they have opportunities to grow. It was interesting to see that men wanted to adhere to theological truths but were unclear on how to practically take next steps related to leading their wives. What does it mean for a man to take the time to understand his wife? Why is the fruit of self-control of vital importance if a man hopes to be someone his wife willingly submits to? These questions are representative of the meaningful conversations the project evoked because God's Word is convicting.

It was a blessing to see men engage in meaningful dialogue and push back on one another regarding how a man's commitment to rooting out idols impacts spiritual leadership. I was encouraged as we reflected upon four passages together and worked to discover their meaning in the context of the broader message. The men demonstrated a desire to understand what God wanted them to do, and this is unlike secular teaching. The Word is indeed "living and active" (Heb 4:12), and it was apparent that minds were being "transformed" (Rom 12:2) as we digested the responsibility of husbands according to the Bible.

Personal Reflections

As I conducted research for this project, I was awakened to some deficits in my life regarding my awareness of my wife's spiritual health. If a man's wife demonstrated signs of a physical disease, he would likely be attentive and involved in guiding her toward skilled treatment. However, this is not always the case with spiritual vitality. My work on this project convicted me that I have not served my spouse well as an encourager and accountability partner in her pursuit of God.

One of the greatest blessings of conducting this project has been its profoundly positive impact on my marriage. Since I have spent hundreds of hours counseling married couples, I made the false assumption that I would be primarily teaching familiar material. However, as I conducted my research, I began to see my biblical responsibility more fully. My study led me to consider how I might grow in more deeply understanding my wife's fears, joys, and hopes. As I considered how to challenge men as spiritual leaders, my personal understanding of what it means to lead and nurture developed. Additionally, I grew in my desire to take a deeper interest in my wife's spiritual health and vitality. The thought required to develop exercises intended to help the men attending the workshops forced me to closely examine how husbands can be faithful to the Word in how they lead at home.

I should not be surprised by the discoveries I made regarding some shortcomings in my life. It is not uncommon for husbands to fail to recognize the great gift of marriage. Rather than treasuring this relationship appropriately and caring for every aspect of a woman's health, many husbands focus upon self and take their companions for granted. I realized as this project unfolded that I have missed many opportunities to live obediently as I care for my wife. It was a joy to wrestle with how I might take a greater interest in helping my spouse as she pursues the Lord. This project convicted me to assess whether the environment I promote at home is conducive to leading and encouraging her, and my conclusion was that I had many opportunities for change.

This project has also had a positive impact on my spouse. As I studied and considered the ways I might shift my focus from self to spouse, I saw my wife respond positively to my leadership—particularly my efforts to guide her spiritually. At one point in my preparation, my wife shared that she was grateful for the area of focus I chose because she noticed I was becoming more receptive to her perspectives and increasingly tender-hearted. This is wonderful feedback for a man to hear and a great blessing. I was encouraged as well as challenged by the realization that I had as much to learn as the men

I would be leading, so conducting these workshops took on greater purpose. My hope is that the men who participated will receive positive feedback from their spouses as well as they apply biblical principles to their leadership at home. I now value the pursuit of spiritual disciplines in partnership with my wife more highly because I have experienced the benefit of sharing thoughts as we strive to deepen our relationship with the Lord. I am more intentional in the interest I take in what my wife is learning from her time in the Word. And, I have cultivated the habit of being vigilant in guarding against idolatry that edges out God-focused worship. These are all changes that my wife expressed have blessed her greatly.

Finally, this project confirmed the need for continuing to educate men on their responsibility as husbands. The research, study of the Word, and workshops caused me to become more resolute in my desire to challenge men in this area, and it will inform my biblical counseling in the future. As a result of this project, my data gathering as I counsel will include a deeper exploration of what a husband is doing to take interest in his wife's spiritual growth. This project convicted me that healthy marriages need to consider how a man is leading spiritually.

As CBC works to cultivate future overseers, the church will benefit greatly from an increased focus on how we are training our men to succeed in leading their families. A man must first demonstrate his ability to nurture those God has called him to lead at home before he can expect to fruitfully serve within the body. This project helped me realize the need for more intentional equipping of men in the area of leading at home if the church intends to raise up future shepherds.

Conclusion

God calls overseers to care for the spiritual health of the flock and indicates in Hebrews 13:17 that leaders must give account for those under their authority. Leadership must begin within the home because God has given men authority over his family. Since marriage is a covenant relationship, husbands should prioritize leading their wives

spiritually, and then care for their children in the context of a healthy marital relationship. Thus, it is of vital importance that a man knows how to lead his wife spiritually and that he follows through in obedience to the Lord. This project endeavored to awaken men regarding God's call to spiritually lead their families and to equip them to more faithfully carry out that task. My hope is that the men who participated in this project recognize their growth in this area as a journey rather than a destination and that they have been both encouraged and challenged. As CBC builds upon this foundational curriculum, men will continue to be strengthened in a manner that benefits the church as well as their families. I pray that this work has been pleasing and glorifying to God.

APPENDIX 1
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Curriculum Evaluation								
Lesson Evaluated (<i>Circle One</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1= Insufficient		2=Requires Attention		3=Sufficient		4=Exemplary	
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments			
The material is relevant to the issue of helping men grow spiritually.								
The material covered is likely to equip men to better lead their wives.								
The material is likely to cause a man to consider making some personal changes.								
The material is biblical and theologically consistent.								
The material is sufficiently thorough in covering each topic.								
The material contains points of practical application.								
The material seems likely to increase a man's confidence as a leader in the home.								
The lessons are clear and easy to follow.								
<p>Please provide any additional feedback outlining strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum as well as insights regarding things that have been omitted that could have value to this project.</p>								

APPENDIX 2

PRE-WORKSHOP AND POST-WORKSHOP DIAGNOSTIC SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to help husbands assess their ability to spiritually lead their wives. This research is being conducted by Andrew Miller for purposes of better understanding the perspectives of the men regarding spiritual leadership. In this research, you will be asked to consider ways in which you currently lead your wife and how you nurture her spiritually. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name be identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Instructions

Please answer all questions by circling the response that most closely characterizes your thoughts, and do not leave any questions blank.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
1. I regularly study the Word with my wife	1	2	3	4	5
2. I can clearly articulate the biblical role of a husband	1	2	3	4	5
3. I feel confident writing a plan for my family's spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5
4. My love for my wife exemplifies Christ's love for the church	1	2	3	4	5
5. I can clearly identify idols that I struggle with in my life	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have identified some ways to lead my wife spiritually	1	2	3	4	5

7. I am confident in my approach to confession and repentance	1	2	3	4	5
8. I fully understand the promises made when forgiving	1	2	3	4	5
9. I regularly practice spiritual disciplines in my home	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am aware of the specific steps of biblical confession	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am confident in my definition of spiritual leadership	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel fully equipped to discuss idols in my wife's life	1	2	3	4	5
13. My wife would likely say I honor her well	1	2	3	4	5
14. I am confident explaining biblical purposes for marriage	1	2	3	4	5
15. I regularly seek to understand my wife better	1	2	3	4	5
16. I demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit in my leadership	1	2	3	4	5
17. I clearly demonstrate that I value praying with my wife	1	2	3	4	5
18. I clearly recognize and praise my wife's gifts as a helper	1	2	3	4	5
19. I have a clear understanding of my wife	1	2	3	4	5
20. My wife would say I look to her interests above my own	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 3

WORKSHOP CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Curriculum Summary

Copyright and Acknowledgement of Sources

The curriculum utilized for these workshops includes material from various sources. Permission should be obtained prior to utilizing or reproducing included material.

The attached curriculum is intended to help men acquire some basic skills related to leading within the home. Participants will be believers and who have had no training in biblical counseling and the content is to be an introduction to foundational skills that will help them better lead their wives.

The teaching is comprised of eight hours of classroom training divided into two workshops. Each workshop contains four one-hour lessons. The workshops will be spaced approximately one month apart to allow time for the men to work on assignments aimed at helping them grow as biblical leaders.

The content of the workshops is as follows:

Workshop One

- Sober Self-Assessment
- Planning
- Purpose and Role
- Idols of the Heart

The initial workshop is designed to help a husband consider his own spiritual maturity as well as that of those he leads. He will acquire some basic planning skills to guide him toward more intentionally thinking about how he invests his time leading. Additionally, the teaching provides clarity on the biblical purpose for marriage and shapes a man's understanding of his role as a husband. The workshop ends with men learning to identify idols in their lives and challenges them to consider how they might guard their hearts with greater vigilance.

Workshop Two

- Biblical Foundations
- Communication
- Reconciliation
- Spiritual Disciplines

The second workshop begins by examining four passages of Scripture intended to help men think more deeply about how they are called to lead. It then covers three areas men might consider as they guide their wives. Specifically, the workshop aims

to help men learn to communicate biblically and reconcile with humility. The workshop ends by challenging men to embrace some foundational spiritual disciplines and lead by inviting their wives to participate alongside them.

Lesson 1—Sober Self-Assessment

- I. Introduction – Objectives, Workshop Overview, Diagnostic Survey
 - A. Objectives
 1. Equip men to be godly leaders in the home
 2. Learn to disciple others to be godly leaders in the home
 - B. Workshop One Overview: (Lessons 1-4)
 1. Lesson One – Sober Self-Assessment
 - a. Explore a husband’s personal spiritual foundation
 - b. Sanctification in the midst of marriage
 - c. What is spiritual leadership?
 - d. Process of spiritual leadership: observe, encourage, guide
 2. Lesson Two – Planning for Growth
 - a. Leadership implies someone is following
 - b. Plan where you are going
 - c. Communicate your plans
 3. Lesson Three – Purpose, Role and Vision
 - a. Biblical purpose for marriage
 - b. Role of a husband
 - c. Examine Genesis 2:18-25 and 1 Peter 3:7
 4. Lesson Four – Competing Idols
 - a. Identifying idols of the heart
 - b. Dealing with idolatry
 - C. Diagnostic survey. Men will take the *Survey of Spiritual Leadership* intended to determine their level of understanding on areas related to spiritual leadership in the home.
- II. Lesson One: Sober Self-Assessment
 - A. Exploring a husband’s personal spiritual foundation¹
 1. No one comes for counsel with too high a view of God
 2. Equipping yourself must begin with your trust in the Word (2 Tim 3:16)
 3. Do you trust God is who he says he is? (Jn 3:16)
 4. Identity is rooted in our spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph 1:3-14)
 5. How evident is the fruit of obedience and service in your life? (Jn 14:15)

¹ The pyramid diagram was adapted from teaching curriculum utilized at College Park Church for teaching *Growing 200: Why Theology Matters* taught in 2016 for preparation for the ACBC certification exams.

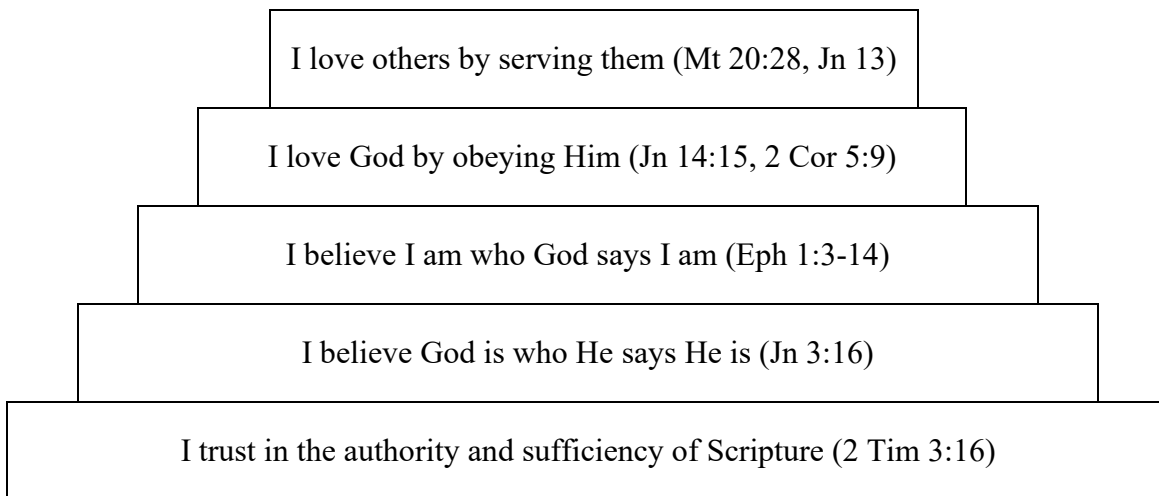


Diagram Commentary:

This pyramid might provide a helpful construct for men to think about their spiritual foundation. It is also a tool to use in relationship with other men or those seeking counsel. What does a man or a counselee believe to be true about Scripture? Are they committed to inerrancy, believing the Word is both human and divine? The Word must be a believer's ultimate authority, and they need to acknowledge its full sufficiency. 1 Cor 1:18-25 indicates that it is unsafe and folly to wander outside the truths of the Word. Second, a man or counselee must explore what they believe to be true of God and the Trinity. Is God all-powerful as he says he is? Does he demonstrate both love and justice? How are omniscience and omnipresence a comfort to the believer? Additionally, how does one see their identity in Christ? Do they grasp the spiritual blessings they have been given, and do they understand what it means to be a child of God? If so, does obedience follow? Finally, what flows from this foundational understanding? If believers are "blessed to be a blessing" (Gen 12:2), how does this manifest in the way they love and serve others?

With a firm foundation in place, men can take stock in their sanctification and come to a greater awareness of how they and their family are changing more into the likeness of Christ. Are they loving their neighbor more faithfully? Are they loving God with all their heart more fully? Where is God at work in their lives? How is their spouse growing and where might they be supportive?

ILL: Use illustration of a little league team borrowed from Andrew Rogers. When justified, we are on the team but do not look much like players—yet we are chosen members, nonetheless. In time, growth and maturity occurs and true players appear.²

B. Sanctification in the midst of marriage

1. Positional sanctification and our awareness of our family's condition
2. Christian wives are coheirs of equal standing before God. (Gal 3:26-29)
3. God uses us to sharpen one another
4. We are not our wife's Holy Spirit

² The illustration and instruction provided regarding the process of sanctification are adapted from the teaching of Andrew Rogers in his class *Growing 101: The Doctrine of Progressive Sanctification* taught at College Park Church, Indianapolis, IN, in 2016.

5. Jesus says remove the log in our own eye so we can be helpful to another
6. Can you identify one or two ways you have come alongside your wife?
7. In what ways do you lead by being vulnerable, asking good questions, and listening well in the area of where God is working in each of your lives?
8. In what ways might your wife say you have been helpful or hurtful in this area?

C. What is spiritual leadership?

1. What it is
2. What it is not

“I define spiritual leadership as knowing where God wants people to be and taking the initiative to use God’s methods to get them there in reliance on God’s power. The answer to where God wants people to be is in a spiritual condition and in a lifestyle that display his glory and honor his name.” – John Piper³

D. Some considerations regarding leadership

“The husband’s leadership is a mandate from God, and as such is a privilege and responsibility.” – Stuart Scott⁴

1. How confident are you that you know how to lead?
 - a. Assess personal strengths and weaknesses in your leadership
 - b. Rate your leadership from grossly lacking to highly proficient?
 - c. Can you point to some experiences of pain by leading incorrectly?
 - d. What are some successes you have had and how might you leverage them?
 - e. Addressing weaknesses that hinder a man’s leadership being accepted
 - f. Establish a growth plan for your leadership
2. How have you learned?
 - a. How have you learned through on the job training, books, others?
 - b. Who has mentored or discipled you and how did it help?
 - c. How can you identify, invite, and engage with a mentor?
 - d. The role of the church in coming alongside

E. Process of spiritual leadership

1. Observe, encourage and guide your wife
2. Considerations for observing your wife
3. Considerations for encouraging your wife
4. Considerations for guiding you wife (for discussion in Lesson 4-8)
 - a. Idols of the heart (Introduce tree diagram)
 - b. Four rules for biblical communication (Eph 4:25, 26, 29, 31)

³ John Piper, “The Marks of a Spiritual Leader,” accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/the-marks-of-a-spiritual-leader>.

⁴ Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2002), 1534.

- c. Confession, repentance, and forgiveness (7 A's, 4 promises)
 - d. Spiritual disciplines (focus on the Word, prayer, service)
5. Considerations on how godly men think and lead differently⁵

The Natural Man	The Spiritual Man
Self-confident	Confident in God
Knows men	Also knows God
Makes own decisions	Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious	Self-effacing (to make self inconspicuous)
Originates own methods	Finds and follows Gods methods
Enjoys commanding others	Delights to obey God
Motivated by personal considerations	Motivated by love for God and man
Independent	God dependent

“For those of us who seek to be leaders and teachers of God’s people, Jesus Christ repeatedly insisted that we first be humble minded, that we not strive for prominence of place or reputation. He calls us to sacrificially serve one another, to forgive those who hurt us, and to treat one another as brothers and sisters in the family of God. We could summarize all these things in one word—love.” – R. C. Chapman⁶

⁵ The above chart credited by Stuart Scott in *The Exemplary Husband* as the work of J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody, 1967), 21.

⁶ Robert Peterson and Alexander Strauch, *Agape Leadership: Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R.C. Chapman* (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1995), 66-68.

Lesson 2—Planning

- I. Introduction—What does planning have to do with spiritual leadership?
 - A. Careful planning helps husbands evaluate how their time is invested
 1. We must steward the responsibility of headship God has given us
 2. We want to guide our own spiritual growth as well as that of others
 3. Commitment— “Who does not count the cost before building?” (Lk 14:28)
 - B. Thoughtful plans can help keep the focus centered upon what pleases God
 1. Defining a godly outcome helps us consider what is important in the end
 2. Spiritual leadership is greatly aided by the intentionality a plan can produce
 3. Vision and planning must align with Scripture and include discipling others
 - C. Planning should take into consideration impediments to a man’s leadership
 1. Leadership implies someone is willing to follow
 2. Reasons your sober self-assessment is vital to someone following
 3. Planning should include spiritual growth that eliminates barriers to leadership

III. Lesson Two: Planning

- A. How to plan
 1. Begin with a few lifetime goals that embody 2 Cor 5:9.
 2. Keep your focus narrowed to the few things of greatest impact and importance
 3. Examine the “warmup questions” in order to refine your thoughts
 4. Establish some milestones in 3, 5 and 10 years that support your final vision
 5. Assess the upcoming year and make some meaningful plans and goals
 6. Consider identifying a Family Mission and Family Verse

ILL: Walk through an example of the lifetime goal of building a God-honoring marriage and work back through 10, 5, 3-year milestones. Discuss with the men how those milestones might then evolve into some current practical steps to take in the upcoming year to love and disciple their wives more faithfully.
- B. Planning can look different for each husband
 1. Broad spectrum of styles and personalities in planning—not one right way
 2. God made some creative and fluid and others systematic and detailed
 3. The body is comprised of many members and men should help one another
 4. We can leave room for God and spontaneity while still raising the bar
 5. Adapt the method that will follow to fit your unique gifts
 6. But be intentional and take next steps
 7. Five degree shift implemented early on yields huge lifetime impact

- C. Incorporate growing your awareness of the Fruit of the Spirit in your life
 - 1. Make a personal inventory of how the Fruit manifests in your life
 - 2. Where do you see the greatest need for growth?
 - 3. What seems to inhibit the Fruit being more abundant?
 - 4. What plans might you consider to best cultivate these traits further?

- D. Some possible buckets of planning to consider
 - 1. Spiritual growth and development
Always be growing personally so you are better prepared as a spiritual leader
 - a. How are you approaching a deeper understanding of the Word?
 - b. What are some ways to grow your prayer life?
 - c. Have you considered journaling as a way to meditate on the Word?
 - d. Are you engaged in church life beyond Sunday worship?
 - e. Where are you serving outside the church?
 - f. How are you helping your wife grow in her spiritual growth and development?

 - 2. Family and relationships
Be thinking of goals that lead others into a deeper relationship with Christ
 - a. How does our planning reflect the weight of the marital covenant?
 - b. Do we think of ourselves as being entrusted with caring for God's daughter?
 - c. What other discipling and mentoring relationships has God called us to?
 - d. Could your planning incorporate some of the "one anothers" in Scripture?
 - e. Are there relationships in your life that need to be reconciled?
 - f. How are you deepening your relationship with your wife?
 - g. How are you helping your wife grow in the area of family and friendships?

 - 3. Stewardship of finances, career and health
Spiritual leadership requires keeping career and temporal things in perspective
 - a. In what ways does your giving reflect what you value?
 - b. What changes would lead to greater unity with family finances?
 - c. How do the hours invested at work bear fruit for the Kingdom?
 - d. What would be one or two changes you might consider regarding priorities?
 - e. How are you caring for the body God has given you?
 - f. How are you serving and leading your wife in the area of stewardship?

- E. Further thoughts on planning with your wife's spiritual vibrancy in mind
 - 1. Reflect on her overall spiritual condition and sense of hope
 - 2. Consider the spiritual foundation pyramid in her life

- a. How would you describe what she believes about the Word?
- b. In what ways have you seen her grow in her understanding of God?
- c. How can you encourage her in her pursuit of growing closer to God?
- d. Where does she struggle most with her identity in Christ?
- e. How have you observed her find victory in “doing of the Word?”
- f. Where is she serving and using her gifts most fruitfully?

F. Putting the plan into action

1. Refer to *Men's Accountability Questions* as a regular guide
2. Communicate your plans so the companion God has given you can help
3. Review your plan frequently and make some notes to yourself
4. Be willing to change plans and remain encouraged and trusting of God
5. Celebrate along the way and be willing to make course corrections as needed
6. Embrace failure as an opportunity to learn and grow
7. Use your plan as a tool to help you reflect on the upcoming year's plan

Lesson 3—Purpose and Role⁷

I. Introduction—How does purpose and role impact spiritual leadership?

II. Lesson Three: Biblical Purpose and Role

A. Biblical purpose for marriage⁸

1. Companionship

“Now both God and man were anticipating someone more than just a presence (any animal) and someone more than just a helper (like an ox). God was going to provide a companion. Only someone like him (or “comparable” to him) could be a companion.”- Stuart Scott⁹

“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone;...’” (Gen 2:18a)

ILL: Provide illustration of Alex and Heidi at Little Eagle Creek Cemetery and challenge the men to reflect upon whether or not they have established habits that set aside intentional time to talk with and listen to their wives.

- a. What are ways you experience companionship?
- b. Are they a worthy response to the gift you have been given in marriage?
- c. What would be two changes you believe your wife would like in this area?
- d. What changes do you see that might improve how you live as companions?
- e. How might you plan to take proactive steps to impact this purpose positively?

2. Assistant and helper

“Then the Lord God said, ‘...I will make him a helper fit for him.’” (Gen 2:18b)

ILL: Play the “*Helper in the Car*” video. Discuss how we as men neglect to see the ways our wife blesses us in her gift of helping. How does our selfishness or the need to control get in the way? Do we have an accurate lens through which we view the heart behind all the ways our wives try to be helpful? What to do when a woman may be misguided or providing less than her best?

⁷ Some of the following material is adapted from the teaching and equipping ministries of College Park Church in Indianapolis, and Faith Church in Lafayette, IN.

⁸ Adapted from Stuart Scott’s book *The Exemplary Husband* and the teaching of Robert Jones in his course *Methodology in Biblical Counseling* taught January 16-19, 2018, at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville

⁹ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 865.

- a. Consider the Hebrew translation of “helper” (God as our helper in Psalms)
- b. Can you clearly articulate how your wife’s helping gifts impact the marriage?
- c. What are some ways that you encourage and celebrate her helping gifts?
- d. What helping gifts would your wife say you often praise?
- e. How might you plan to take proactive steps to impact this purpose positively?

3. Reflect God’s love for the church

“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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. 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.” (Eph 5:22-32)

- a. This passage will be studied in depth in the second workshop
- b. What about your interaction with your wife would cause others to say, “If that is how Jesus shows love for his church—I want to know Jesus?”
- c. Can you identify some things that currently occur within your marriage that tarnish the vision God intends to cast through the two of you?
- d. How do you currently discuss this purpose for marriage with your wife?
- e. What are a couple changes you could make and work into your plans to grow in fulfilling God’s purpose of showing the world how he loves his people?

4. Sexual union

“God did not make this massive capacity for pleasure merely to make sure there would be a new generation. It works that way. But God could have arranged it so that we get no pleasure in it, but get nauseated if we

don't have sex twice a week. That would have worked too. There is more to this pleasure than procreation.”¹⁰ - John Piper

“...they shall become one flesh.” (Gen 2:24c)

- a. Pleasure as well as procreation
 - b. Serving one another—your body is not your own. Discuss 1 Cor 7.
 - c. How do you know your life of intimacy is healthy?
 - d. How would your wife describe the health of your sexual intimacy as a couple?
 - e. In what ways do you protect yourself from pornography, lust, temptation?
5. Ministry and bearing fruit together
- a. Consider the work of Priscilla and Aquila
 - b. An opposing view regarding how Ananias and Sapphira failed one another
 - c. Ways a team effort can augment ministry or increase individual margin
 - d. The importance of independence as well as unity in serving ministries

B. Husband's Role

“Every time we look at each other or talk to each other as men and women, we should remember that the person we are talking to is a creature of God who is more like God than anything else in the universe, and men and women share that status equally.” – Wayne Grudem¹¹

ILL: Paul Anthony in the Special Forces working with women and the way they distributed work in combat. Discuss with the men how we must recognize that although we differ in role, we have the same value and standing before God as coheirs. We are all “ambassadors for Christ” (2 Cor 5:20)

1. Lover

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

"A popular view today is that woman's subordinate role is a result of the Fall. Since God reversed the effects of the curse through Christ, some argue, He abolished differing male and female roles. Paul, however, grounds woman's subordinate role in the order of Creation, not in the Fall: "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:13). Eve was created after Adam to be his helper (Gen. 2:18) - she was

¹⁰ John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2009), 1729.

¹¹ Wayne Grudem, “The Key Issues in the Manhood-Womanhood Controversy, and the Way Forward,” in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 20.

designed to follow his lead, live on his provisions, and find safety in this strength. Such tendencies were from that point on built into all women, but with the Fall came conflict.”- John MacArthur¹²

- a. Husbands must think about how they love as compared to 1 Cor 13
- b. Your relationship with God will define the love you show your wife (Jn 15:5)
- c. Some views from commentators regarding Paul’s reference to “washing” and “sanctifying” and how this is to be interpreted.
- d. Ideas regarding how a husband is to love (Handout: *Loving Husband*)
- e. What are ways you most effectively show love to your wife in a sacrificial manner that exemplifies the love of Christ?

2. Learner

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Pet 3:7)

“The idea here is that a husband must live with this wife in accordance with the things he should know. He should live with her while taking into consideration information that is crucial.”- Stuart Scott¹³

- a. Some views from commentators regarding “knowing” your wife
- b. Ideas regarding how to grow in your understanding of your wife (Handout: *50 Questions for Wives*)
- c. What does it mean to honor her?
- d. Majority view of commentators is that “weaker” refers to physical nature and social standing in Greco-Roman times. How we are to see women.
- e. What are ways you demonstrate your desire to better understand your wife?

3. Servant Leader

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (Phil 2:3-8)

¹² John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Different by Design* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 141.

¹³ Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, 198.

“Biblical headship is a divine calling of a husband to take primary responsibility for Christlike servant leadership, protection, and provision in the home.”- John Piper¹⁴

- a. Some thoughts on why men often focus on provision and protection and neglect serving as a mandated priority.
- b. Some ways leadership is abused when servanthood is not at the center.
- c. Leading wives with biblical wisdom and a obedience mindset.
- d. Husbands commanded to manage their households well in Titus and 1 Timothy.
- e. Men are to look to the interests of their spouse above themselves.
- f. What are ways you experience confidence in and blessing from your leadership?

¹⁴ John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 52-53.

Lesson 4—Idols of the Heart¹⁵

I. Introduction – What do idols of the heart have to do with spiritual leadership?

- A. Our idolatry damages our ability to spiritually lead
- B. We want to be equipped to help our family self-examine

II. Lesson Four: Idols of the Heart

A. Benign desires can become idolatrous and damage our ability to lead.

1. What is the thing I must have to live a meaningful life?
2. What I desperately want is the following thing.
3. You must give me this or I will be angry or withdraw from you.
4. If only this circumstance would change, I would be content.
5. If I do not get this that I want, I will become anxious or depressed.

The Throne-Staircase Diagram: How legitimate desires become ruling demands:

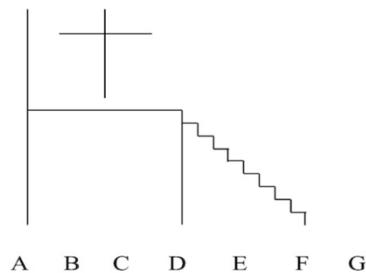


Diagram Commentary: Things that begin as reasonable desires (A, B, C, etc.) can grow. As they do, they metaphorically sprout legs and begin to ascend the stairs to the throne. A man might have a reasonable desire to “be respected,” but if that desire becomes inordinately important it can develop into a sinful lust or a “must have.”¹⁶

B. What entangles us and why?

1. Behavior comes from the heart

ILL: The check engine light reveals trouble under the hood
“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered

¹⁵ Much of the following material is adapted from Timothy Lane and Paul David Tripp’s teaching and their book *How People Change*

¹⁶ See Robert D. Jones, *Pursuing Peace: A Christian Guide for Handling Our Conflicts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), chap. 4; also Jones, “How Good Desires Go Bad,” *Journal of Biblical Counseling* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 42-46.

from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:43-45)

- a. Biblical image in Luke provides an illustration of the human heart
- b. Apple tree most easily identified by presence of apples. Apple-istic to its roots
- c. Lasting change must travel through the heart

C. Hard to recognize your own thorns

“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye?” (Mt 7:5)

ILL: Consider how a carnival mirror distorts your image. Our opinion of self is distorted. Opinions of friends distort or mislead. Cultural or family values impede.

1. Biblical example of Joseph
2. Blind to our spiritual blindness
 - a. Blind but I think I see
 - b. Illustration: Vernon at Lawson fundamentally aware he is blind
 - c. Importance of Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:4

D. Must take steps to assess and address

1. Accurate diagnosis always precedes the cure
2. Pray for God to expose your thorns through the Word
3. Pray for him to enable you to own what is exposed
 - a. Not defensive
 - b. Don’t rationalize
 - c. Not self-righteous
 - d. No excuses and avoid blame shifting
4. Pray that he would give you an understanding of thorns
5. Cannot do it alone. Ecclesiology and the power of community

E. Begin by confessing righteousness rather than sin

F. Paul says transformation is concrete. Sin is never general. Consider Ephesians

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. (Eph 4:17-24)

Ungodly vs. Godly Behavior

Thorn Responses	Fruit Reactions
Deny, Avoid, Escape	Face Reality
Pretend all is Okay	Appropriate Intensity
Put on a Front	Emotions Reasonable
Magnify, Expand, Catastrophize	Live Alertly
Prickly and Hypersensitive	Constructive Activity
Let Everyone Know I'm Upset	Godly Habits
Return Evil for Evil	Remember God's Promises
Get Bugged Down or Paralyzed	Hope in Christ

G. Guiding Recognizing Idols of the Heart

1. Examine Jer 17:5-8 and discuss the *Big Picture Model* as presented by Lane and Tripp
2. Recognizing personal idols and establishing “Put Offs” and “Put Ons” of Eph 4
3. Walk through the Three Tree Diagram and discuss heat, thorns, Cross, fruit.¹⁷

ILL: Video case study utilized to illustrate how the tree diagram can help assess the heart

¹⁷ Lane and Tripp, *How People Change: Study Guide*, 51.

Lesson 5—Biblical Foundations

- I. Workshop One Review and Workshop Two Overview
 - A. Objectives
 1. Equip men to be godly leaders in the home
 2. Learn to disciple others to be godly leaders in the home
 - B. Review of Workshop One (Lessons 1-4)
 1. Sober Self-Assessment
 - a. What do you believe about the Word, God, yourself, others?
 - b. How are you loving God and people through obedience and service?
 2. Biblical purpose for marriage
 - a. Companion, assistant, reflect God's love, sexual union, bear fruit
 - b. Two areas of focus you have selected as a result of last week's discussion
 3. Role of a husband
 - a. Lover, learner, servant leader
 - b. Two areas of focus you have selected as a result of last week's discussion
 4. Idols of the heart
 - a. Review and feedback on completing personal tree diagram this week
 - b. Reflections on conversation with wives
 - C. Workshop Two Overview (Lessons 5-8)
 1. Lesson Five—Biblical Foundations
 - a. Observing, encouraging and the use of Scripture
 - b. Discuss observation questions from Workshop One
 - c. Discuss encouragement questions from Workshop One
 - d. Practical application and next steps
 - e. Four passages for reflection as husbands
 - i. Genesis 2:18-25
 - ii. 1 Peter 3:7
 - iii. Ephesians 5:25-33
 - iv. Galatians 5:16-25
 2. Lesson Six—Biblical Communication
 - a. Four rules of communication in Ephesians
 - b. Practical steps for leading through communication struggles
 3. Lesson Seven—Biblical Reconciliation
 - a. Biblical passages to consider regarding forgiveness
 - b. Seven A's of confession
 - c. Practical steps of forgiveness
 4. Lesson Eight – Spiritual Disciplines
 - a. Overview of spiritual disciplines

- b. Practical steps in embracing spiritual disciplines in the home
- c. Three disciplines to consider in building a strong foundation
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Bible study
 - iii. Service

II. Lesson Five: Biblical Foundations

- A. Observing, encouraging and the use of Scripture
 - 1. Observe where you see places your wife might benefit from turning to the Word in her decision making and daily life
 - 2. Exercise caution not to become legalistic or overbearing: grow in awareness
 - 3. Discern gaps and gain understanding where you might guide your wife
 - 4. Understand the difference between the role of the church and your role in helping think through how the Word applies
 - 5. Notice strengths regarding your wife's use of the Word and look for opportunities to encourage and engage in fruitful learning but do so with sensitivity so as not to overwhelm
- B. Four passages for reflection as husbands
 - 1. Genesis 2:18-25
 - a. Broad hermeneutical context of the passage
 - b. Understanding of authorship, timeline and setting
 - c. More immediate context and flow of thought being conveyed
 - d. Original language nuances and word studies of particular words of interest
 - e. Commentator consensus on message to husbands
 - f. Application for men as spiritual leaders
 - 2. 1 Peter 3:7
 - a. Broad hermeneutical context of the passage
 - b. Understanding of authorship, timeline and setting
 - c. More immediate context and flow of thought being conveyed
 - d. Original language nuances and word studies of particular words of interest
 - e. Commentator consensus on message to husbands
 - f. Application for men as spiritual leaders
 - 3. Ephesians 5:25-33
 - a. Broad hermeneutical context of the passage
 - b. Understanding of authorship, timeline and setting
 - c. More immediate context and flow of thought being conveyed
 - d. Original language nuances and word studies of particular words of interest
 - e. Commentator consensus on message to husbands
 - f. Application for men as spiritual leaders

4. Galatians 5:16-25
 - a. Broad hermeneutical context of the passage
 - b. Understanding of authorship, timeline and setting
 - c. More immediate context and flow of thought being conveyed
 - d. Original language nuances and word studies of particular words of interest
 - e. Commentator consensus on message to husbands
 - f. Application for men as spiritual leaders

C. Importance of walking by the Spirit as a spiritual leader

“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Gal 5:17-18)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Gal 5:22-24)

1. Identify where you see the Fruit of the Spirit in your life
2. Where do you need to put to death fruit that is ungodly?
3. How can you encourage your wife as she sows to the Spirit? (Handout: Y-Diagram)
4. Assess how you rely upon the Spirit in your leadership and decision making

Paul presents a clear message that applies to husbands. If a man is to be successful in leading his wife spiritually, then he must listen for conviction from the Spirit and demonstrate a willingness to yield to God’s guidance. Men cannot do this apart from an authentic relationship with Jesus and a willingness to listen for the prompting of the Spirit. Men who desire to grow as spiritual leaders must cultivate a rich relationship with Christ that leads them to a robust awareness of the Spirit’s direction. Faithful husbands should not only work at this personally but, as spiritual leaders, encourage their wives to do the same because being in step with the Spirit is a critical part of the Christian life.

Lesson 6—Communication

I. Introduction—How does biblical communication impact spiritual leadership?

II. The Lesson Six: Biblical Communication

A. Four rules of communication in Ephesians¹⁸

1. Be honest — Eph 4:25

“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor for we are members one of another” (Eph 4:25)

“Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices” (Col 3:9)

a. Falsehood must be put off

- i. Blatant deceit
- ii. Information withheld that clearly should be disclosed
- iii. Pattern of exaggeration
- iv. Speaking in innuendos

b. Truthfulness must be put on

- i. Facts are presented in a straightforward manner
- ii. Sufficient information is provided to allow others to understand
- iii. People are not expected to guess details (1 Cor 2:11)

“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:11)

iv. We obey in communication because we are members of one another

v. This must be done in the context of love

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15)

“We instinctively think about our own needs and wants. We are primarily committed to our own welfare. But as we humbly admit our selfishness, we can begin to appreciate and rely upon the enabling grace of Christ.”¹⁹

vi. This should be a personal defining character trait as a Christian

¹⁸ Adapted from teaching conducted in 2010 at Faith Ministries, Lafayette, IN, and the mentorship and teaching of Bob Smith

¹⁹ Paul David Tripp, *War of Words* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2000), 209.

- c. Group discussion
 - i. Benefits of faithfulness in this area
 - ii. Consequences of not adhering to this tenant of godly communication
2. Keep current — Eph 4:26
- “Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Eph 4:26)*
- a. Solve today’s problems today rather than brooding
 - b. Do not justify poor behavior or use it to avoid timely communication
 - i. Leaving the scene
 - ii. Outbursts
 - iii. Ultimatums
 - iv. Tearful breakdowns
 - c. Consider potential issues prior to working through an issue
 - i. Do I have the facts right?

“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame” (Prov 18:13)
 - ii. Should love cover this?

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pt 4:8)
 - iii. Is the timing right?

“To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!” (Prov 15:23)
 - iv. Is my attitude focused on the other person?
 - v. Are my words loving?

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph 4:15)
 - vi. Have I faithfully prayed for God’s help?

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding” (Prov 3:5)
3. Attack the problem, not the person — Eph 4:29
- “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (Eph 4:29)*

- a. Avoid words that attack or harm the other person

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’²² But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire” (Mt 5:21-22)

“So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell” (Jas 3:5-6)

- b. Use language that encourages and builds up
- c. Focus on finding solutions that benefit everyone

4. Act, don't react — Eph 4:31

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice” (Eph 4:31)

- a. Guard against sinful responses
 - i. Root out any root of bitterness
 - ii. Define wrath, anger, clamor, slander, and malice
- b. Avoid defensiveness
 - i. Consider Adam and Eve in The Garden. “The serpent made me do it”
 - ii. How do we lessen our need to defend?
- c. It takes two to create a sinful argument
 - i. James 4:1-2 points to desires in our own heart
 - ii. Proverbs 4:23 calls us to guard our hearts with vigilance
- d. Pursue godly actions and attitudes
- e. Kindness
- f. Tenderhearted spirit
- g. Forgiving as God forgave us

Lesson 7—Reconciliation

- I. Introduction—How does biblical reconciliation impact spiritual leadership
 - A. Failure to confess, repent, and seek forgiveness damages unity
 - B. Leadership thrives in an environment that lacks bitterness and brokenness.

II. Lesson Seven—Reconciliation

- A. What is repentance?²⁰
 - 1. Inseparable from faith
 - 2. Turning from sin to God
 - 3. Rendered in the heart producing outward effects
 - 4. Not just at conversion, but a lifelong process
- B. The importance of a solid confession and solid declaration of forgiveness²¹
- C. Biblical passages for consideration and discussion
 - 1. Matthew 6:14-15 and attitudinal forgiveness from the heart
 - 2. Mark 11:25 and attitudinal forgiveness from the heart
 - 3. Luke 17:3-4 transactional forgiveness of the sinner
 - 4. Matthew 18:15-17 transactional forgiveness and release of the sinner
 - 5. Psalm 51 and David’s understanding of his sin against God
- D. Attitudinal vs. transactional forgiveness

“God calls us in some sense to confront or rebuke. At the minimum we can conclude that this is an option—even a command—for a Christian to carry out, at least on some occasions.”²²

- 1. The cross diagram and the responsibility to be in a forgiving posture
- 2. Possibilities and responsibility to call others to repentance
 - a. Rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge Prov 19:25
 - b. Wounds from a friend can be trusted Prov 27:5-6
 - c. If your brother sins go and show him his fault Mt 18:15
- 3. When to let love cover something
 - a. Hatred stirs up dissension, love covers wrongs Prov 10:12
 - b. He who covers an offense promotes love Prov 17:9
 - c. Be merciful as you Father is merciful Luke 6:36, Jas 2:13

“Overlooking, of course, does not mean denial. To overlook means recognizing that a sin has been committed but choosing to forgive that sin attitudinally and to absorb the consequence. To deny means

²⁰ Sinclair Ferguson, *The Christian Life* (East Peoria, IL: Versa Press, 1981), 65.

²¹ Jones, *Pursuing Peace*, 75.

²² Jones, *Pursuing Peace*, 154.

refusing to even evaluate the other person's words or actions. When I overlook your sin, however, I conclude that you have sinned, but I determine to treat you graciously anyway.”²³

E. The seven A's of confession²⁴

1. Address everyone involved
 - a. Some considerations on who this might be
 - b. Reflection on why this is helpful
 - c. Biblical support for the need to “go and be reconciled” with all
2. Avoid if, but, maybe
 - a. Comments about apologies that were not apologies
 - b. Discussion of how justification might actually be sinful self-righteousness
3. Admit specifics
 - a. Thoughts on the importance of demonstrating you understand
 - b. Discussion of how forgiving one who doesn't understand might be unhelpful
4. Acknowledge the hurt
 - a. Reflection on how empathy might demonstrate biblical love
 - b. Examination of how unacknowledged hurt might lead to bitterness
5. Accept the consequences
 - a. Acknowledgment of how God uses consequences in sanctification
 - b. Discussion of how embracing consequences require a high view of God
6. Alter your behavior
 - a. Biblical support for the importance of obedience in loving Christ
 - b. Reflection on how repentance cannot be separated from “turning”
7. Ask forgiveness
 - a. Consideration of why the way we ask might be important
 - b. Thinking about the Prodigal Son and closing comments

F. Authentic repentance

“There is a genuine sorrow that accompanies true repentance, but many who have known the flood of tears and racking sobs have never come anywhere near repentance and faith.”²⁵

²³ Jones, *Pursuing Peace*, 154.

²⁴ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 126.

²⁵ Richard Owens Roberts, *Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 122.

1. Some considerations regarding the genuineness of repentance²⁶
 - a. Earnest (2 Cor 7:11a, Psalm 139:23-24)
 - b. Fear (2 Cor 7:11, Ps 19:13)
 - c. Zeal (2 Cor 7:11, Titus 2:11-14, Rev 3:19)
 - d. Avenging wrong (2 Cor 7:11, Luke 19:1-9)
 - e. Eager to vindicate (2 Cor 7:11)
 - f. Indignation (2 Cor 7:11, 2 Sam 12, Ps 51:3, Prov 13:1, 17:10)
 - g. Longing (2 Cor 7:11, 5:2-4)
 2. The fruit of repentance
 3. Godly grief vs worldly sorrow
- G. Ken Sande's four promises of forgiveness
1. I will not dwell on this in my mind
 2. I will not bring this up again and use it against you
 3. I will not talk with other people about this
 4. I will not let this to come between us
- H. Practical steps for leading toward godly reconciliation

²⁶ The following thoughts are from a collection of teaching principles obtained while teaching at College Park Church.

Lesson 8—Spiritual Disciplines²⁷

I. Review of Workshop One and Two Objectives

- A. Equip men to be godly leaders in the home
- B. Learn to disciple others to be godly leaders in the home

II. Lesson Eight: Spiritual Disciplines

A. The importance of leading in the area of spiritual disciplines

We aren't merely to wait for holiness; we're to pursue it. "Strive for peace with everyone," we're commanded in Hebrews 12:14, "and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." - Whitney²⁸

"So holy desire, exercised in longings, hungerings, and thirstings after God and holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important part of true religion." - Edwards²⁹

1. In what way are these passions and desires evident within you home?
2. If they not part of the fabric of your family—how might you begin to shape that?
3. In what ways do you agree or disagree with Whitney's call for proactive action?
4. Where do you note Scripture identifying a hunger as Edwards suggests?
5. Consider Whitney's comment below: how do you experience God currently?
6. How does your wife best encounter God: how do you encourage her in this area?

"The spiritual disciplines are the God-ordained means by which we bring ourselves before God, experience Him, and are changed into Christlikeness. The Lord is omnipresent and we often encounter Him in unexpected places and surprising ways. Nevertheless, it has pleased Him to establish specific means—the spiritual disciplines—whereby we may

²⁷ There are differences of opinion regarding what constitutes a spiritual discipline. Foster divides disciplines into inward, outward and corporate. Calhoun recognizes disciplines through the lens of how they promote worship of God. Adele Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005); Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998). This study does not present an exhaustive list of disciplines, but simply provides some practices commonly recognized as behaviors that edify the spiritual life.

²⁸ Don S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014), 2-3.

²⁹ Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections: In Three Parts* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996), 8.

expect to encounter Him regularly and be transformed by Him.” - Whitney³⁰

B. Spiritual disciplines should not be legalistic or become idols

“Disciplines are intentional ways we open space in our lives for the worship of God. They are not harsh but grace-filled ways of responding to the presence of Christ with our bodies.” - Calhoun³¹

1. What are some ways spiritual disciplines might be improperly embraced?
2. How can we guard against placing focus on the discipline rather than Christ?

C. Three spiritual disciplines to consider more carefully

1. Bible intake

“No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God’s Word. Nothing can substitute” - Whitney³²

- a. Identify ways to take an interest in what your spouse is learning
- b. Find strategies and opportunities to study with your wife
- c. Set objectives and working them intentionally into your “Family Plan”
- d. Meditate on the Word rather than accumulating knowledge
- e. Use journaling as a tool for better study and reflection

2. Prayer

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thes 5:16-18).

“Of all the Spiritual Disciplines prayer is the most central because it ushers us into perpetual communion with the Father. Meditation introduces us to the inner life, fasting is an accompanying means, study transforms our minds, but it is the Discipline of prayer that brings us into the deepest and highest work of the human spirit” - Foster³³

- a. Observations regarding the practice of prayer seen in marriage counseling
- b. The importance of how prayer impacts intimacy
- c. Some promises regarding prayer

³⁰ Don S. Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001), 1232.

³¹ Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*, 20.

³² Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 22.

³³ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 33.

- i. “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.” (1 Jn 5:14)
 - ii. “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” (Mk 11:24)
 - iii. “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.” (Rom 12:12)
 - iv. “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)
 - v. “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (Jn 14:13)
- d. Ways to make prayer together inviting and comfortable for your wife
 - e. Commit to faithfully pray for your wife as well as with her
 - f. Possibilities for growth
 - i. Consider the use of a prayer calendar
 - ii. List individuals and families together you both are praying for regularly
 - iii. Keep a journal and look back with your spouse at how God was faithful
 - iv. Establish some themes or seasons of concentration on particular needs

“To discover the real you, look at what you spend time thinking about when no one is looking, when nothing is forcing you to think about anything in particular. At such moments, do your thoughts go toward God? You may want to be seen as a humble, unassuming person, but do you take the initiative to confess your sins before God? You wish to be perceived as a positive, cheerful person, but do you habitually thank God for everything you have and praise him for who he is? You may speak a great deal about what a “blessing” your faith is and how you “just really love the Lord,” but if you are prayerless—is that really true? If you aren’t joyful, humble, and faithful in private before God, then what you want to appear to be on the outside won’t match what you truly are.” - Keller³⁴

3. Service

“Of all the classical Spiritual Disciplines, service is the most conducive to the growth of humility. When we set out on a consciously chosen course of action that accents the good of others and is, for the most part, a hidden work, a deep change occurs in our spirits” – Foster³⁵

³⁴ Timothy J. Keller, *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2016), 22-23.

³⁵ Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, 130.

- a. What is it like to be loved by someone as they love themselves?
- b. When do you live out an entitlement mentality rather than dying to self?
- c. Begin to identify and thank God for how you were served throughout the day
- d. Establish a 30-day habit of asking your wife how you can serve her today.
- e. Put serving locally alongside your wife into your “Family Plan”
- f. Identify one way in which you can serve an overseas missionary

D. Some other disciplines for further consideration

1. Worship

“Jesus Himself reemphasized and obeyed the Old Testament command, ‘Worship the Lord your God’ (see Matthew 4:10). It is the duty (and privilege) of all people to worship their Creator. ‘Oh come, let us worship and bow down,’ says Psalm 95:6, ‘let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!’ God clearly expects us to worship. It’s our purpose!”- Whitney³⁶

2. Confession
3. Stewardship
4. Fasting
5. Silence
6. Solitude

“It is in deep solitude and silence that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brother and sister.”- Merton³⁷

7. Journaling

“Journaling blends the Bible and daily living, like the confluence of two great rivers into one.”- Whitney³⁸

8. Simplicity

E. Some excellent books and resources for further study on spiritual disciplines

- F. Diagnostic survey. Men will retake the *Survey of Spiritual Leadership* they completed prior to Session One of the initial Workshop. This reassessment is intended to determine their level of understanding on areas related to spiritual leadership in the home after the conclusion of both workshops.

³⁶ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, 102.

³⁷ Thomas Merton, *A Retreat with Thomas Merton* (Norwich, CT: Canterbury Press, 2011), 9.

³⁸ Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines*, 249.

G. Closing comments

1. Identify some ways to continue your study in this area
2. Seek out a more spiritually mature mentor and be discipled
3. Find an opportunity to teach or disciple someone else

APPENDIX 4

PRE-WORKSHOP SURVEY RESULTS

Table A1. Pre-workshop series totals by themes

<i>Participant</i>	<i>T1¹</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	25	32	17	74
2	24	41	21	86
3	22	37	22	81
4	28	28	16	72
5	26	35	19	80
6	26	30	18	74
7	20	29	16	65
8	18	29	17	64
9	18	26	16	60
10	26	33	20	79
11	11	11	11	33
12	23	27	19	69
13	23	27	17	67
14	19	24	17	60
15	19	27	13	59
16	26	30	21	77
17	27	25	19	71
18	25	25	20	70
19	23	29	16	68
20	22	25	18	65
21	22	25	14	61
22	17	25	16	58
<i>Total²</i>	490	620	383	1493

¹ The columns report results for three themes examined in the diagnostic administered before and after the workshops were conducted. Column themes are as follows: (T1) understanding of biblical leadership, (T2) practices of biblical leadership, (T3) assessment of biblical leadership.

² Theme T1, T2, and T3 were measured with six, nine and five questions respectively.

Table A2. Post-workshop series totals by themes

<i>Participant</i>	<i>T1</i>	<i>T2</i>	<i>T3</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	27	43	21	82
2	24	41	27	92
3	24	39	24	87
4	29	32	16	77
5	27	35	18	80
6	26	32	19	77
7	24	31	21	76
8	24	28	18	70
9	22	30	20	72
10	26	35	21	82
11	18	17	16	51
12	25	24	21	70
13	23	25	18	66
14	21	24	16	61
15	24	29	17	70
16	27	31	20	78
17	25	22	19	66
18	25	24	21	70
19	21	29	19	69
20	28	27	22	77
21	24	24	18	66
22	21	21	21	63
<i>Total</i>	535	634	433	1602

APPENDIX 5

LEADERSHIP IN THE HOME

1.) **What is your goal in life? 2 Cor 5:9...we are living to please Him!**

- Paul said, live a life worthy of what you've been given Col 1:10 by: Pleasing God, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in knowledge of God
- Greatest commandment is to love God Mt 22:36-40
- Jesus said "If you love me you will keep my commandments" Jn 14:15
- James said, "Be doers of the Word, and not hearers only" Jas 1:22

Some things we might think about in the upcoming year

- Are we talking to God? What does my prayer life look like?
- Are we listening for God? What does my time in the Word look like?
- Do we know God? Which of God's attributes do I reflect upon most often?

Some practical suggestions

- Read Tozer's *Knowledge of the Holy* slowly and reflect on God's attributes in your prayer life
- Keep a prayer journal and make note of time spent and things you bring to God
- Focus for three months on a couple chapters in the Bible and really work to apply them
- Identify one new area where you could serve and bear fruit in the upcoming year

2.) **How do we please God as husbands?**

- **Lover** of his wife Eph 5:25...Christ loved the Church and *gave* Himself for her
- **Learner** of his wife 1 Pt 3:7...live in an understanding way, showing honor to her
- **Servant Leader** of his wife Jn 13...if I your Lord have washed feet than so should you

Some ways Christ loves that we might think about in the upcoming year

- Are we **sacrificial** in our love? Can I identify when I'm being selfish? Eph 5:25
- Are we the ones who **initiate**? How might I take initiative in showing love? 1 Jn 4:19
- Are we **humble**? When did I last put my wife first despite my desires? Phil 2:3-4
- Are we **forgiving**? What would it take to grow in forgiveness as a couple? Col 3:13
- Are we **purifying**? What do I do to help her grow in her faith? Eph 5:26-27

Some practical suggestions

- Tell her you love her and appreciate her (both verbal and non-verbal)
- Schedule time for her and get it on the calendar: dates, focused conversation, prayer together
- Establish a time to read or study the Word with her. Pray with her every day
- Find a few ways you can support her in her personal interests, growth, and development
- Consider reading Sande's *The Peacemakers* this year to learn about conflict resolution

3.) How do we please God as fathers?

- **Relational** with his children Eph 6:4...do not exasperate them
- **Teacher and Discipler** of his children Dt 6:7...teach while you sit, walk, lie down and rise

Some things we might think about in the upcoming year

- What can I be doing right now to plant seeds for the future?
- How do I guard against my love being conditional?
- Can I disciple in a way that promotes curiosity and interest on their part?
- What one or two changes will yield the most fruit this year?

Some practical suggestions

- Be thinking about a Dad's Day Out each month that is focused fully on them
- Find one thing you can do to grow them in their familiarity with the Bible
- Pray with them every day no matter what else competes for your time
- Think through with your wife how you will handle discipline consistently as a team
- Let them see you loving their mom often so they develop a healthy understanding of love
- Take the initiative to get into a parenting class with your wife or identify a mentor couple
- Consider reading Tripp's *Shepherding a Child's Heart* with you wife this year

Discussion Questions

- 1.) As you think about pleasing God as your goal in life, which area needs most attention in your life this year – your prayer life, your time in the Word, your obedience in putting to death a particular pattern of sin?
- 2.) As you reflect on how you please God in the way you interact with your wife, how are you best succeeding as a husband right now? What do you think you need to change in order to improve the area of your marriage that is in greatest need of improvement?

- 3.) As you consider pleasing God in your role as a father, which do you think will be more challenging – your ability to nurture a connected, trusting relationship or your ability to teach them about God?

- 4.) Based on our discussion today, what was the most helpful takeaway and how might you integrate it into your life this year?

- 5.) Do you have a man in your life you discuss deep things with and look to for mentoring and accountability? If so, would you be willing to discuss what you are thinking about as a result of what was discussed today? If not, how might you identify and approach someone to serve in this role in the upcoming year?

APPENDIX 6

OBSERVE, ENCOURAGE, GUIDE WORKSHEET

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Pt 3:7, ESV)

Pray about one of these each day asking God to give you a deeper understanding of your wife. Jot down a few notes on your reflection. Consider asking your wife one of these questions this week and simply listen and encourage her. Do not overwhelm her with more than one question.¹

Do you know what your wife is worried about <i>today</i> ?
Do you know her greatest concern for herself? For you? For the children?
Do you know what sin she struggles with the most?
Do you know what unmet aspirations she harbors?
When is the last time you asked, “How are <i>you</i> doing?”
When is the last time you asked, “How can I pray for you?”

¹ Timothy Z. Witmer, *The Shepherd Leader at Home: Knowing, Leading, Protecting, and Providing for Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 85.

When is the last time you asked, "How are we doing?"

"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. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. 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." (Eph 5:25-30)

Note 15 things that you love most about your wife and slowly begin to share them with her

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.

APPENDIX 7
PERSONAL PLANNING TOOL

Family Verse

Family Mission

The Planning Buckets

Spiritual Life

Am I spending time in God's Word, in prayer, and in discipling relationships with others. Am I intentionally pursuing the Lord and walking with him on a daily basis?

Psalm 1
Joshua 1:8
Psalm 119:11

Family/Relationships

Am I loving my wife the way Christ loved the church? How am I teaching my children? Am I discipling someone? Who is discipling me?

1 Peter 3:7
Ephesians 6:8
Joshua 24:15
Deuteronomy 6:1-7
Romans 12:18

Finances/Career

Am I honoring God with my finances? Have I planned well and resisted the temptation to live beyond my means? Am I using my career as a way to honor the Lord?

1 Corinthians 10:31
James 1:17
Luke 12:15
2 Corinthians 9:6-12

PLANNING THOUGHTS

Reviewing Your Plan

Look at your plan once a week to assess how you are doing with the things you set out to accomplish for the year and the places where you intended to invest your time. Make notes on the plan as you progress through the year and be willing to adjust as things change. Think of your plans as a fluid process and a general guide that will be adapted as life unfolds. Each time you review your plan, read through the of the accountability questions below as a way to sharpen yourself as a man and as the spiritual head of your household. In addition to the accountability questions, we have provided some planning warmups for you to refer to as you begin the process of thinking about how you might want to challenge yourself this year.

Planning Warmups

Personal & Spiritual

- Would a Bible reading plan help in your study of the Word?
- Would it be helpful if you listened to an audio Bible this year?
- Do you have a plan to memorize specific passages of scripture?
- Have you considered carrying verses written on index cards?
- Who do you want to pray for daily, weekly and monthly?
- Might you want to personally pray for a missionary partner?
- Will you schedule a personal prayer day for yourself?
- How about scheduling one for your wife?

Family

- Does your family have financial goals?
- Have you discussed them with your wife?
- Have you shared them as appropriate with your children?
- What is your desire for your family prayer life?
- How will you help your children grow in their prayer lives?
- What Scriptures do you want to read as a family this year?
- What other books would you like to read with your family?
- Are there helps that might enrich your family?
- Are there people that you want your children to be around more?
- Will you schedule time away for you and your wife to be refreshed?
- In what ways can you show gratitude for your family members?

Accountability Questions

Study

- How much time are you reading the Bible each day?
- What books in the Bible are you reading?
- Have you read the Bible in its entirety?
- What theological books are you reading?
- Are you reading any works of the Puritans?
- Have you read any books by Piper, Sproul, DeYoung, etc...
- What is your individual prayer life like?
- What Bible study guide do you use?
- What conferences have you attended?

Spouse

- How are you serving your wife?
- How often are you praying with your wife and for your wife?
- When was the last time you dated your wife?
- How do you show your wife she is more important than your work?
- When was the last time your surprised your wife with a special blessing such as a night out or a lunch date?

Children

- How are your serving your kids?
- Are you doing devotions?
- Have you spent individual time with each child lately and how?
- Have you engaged in spiritual conversation with your children lately?
- How do you show your kids they are more important than your work?
- How have you shown your children how much you love your wife?

Workplace

- When was the last time you prayed with a co-worker?
- How have you shared Christ with people at work?
- What books have you read on how to integrate your faith at work?
- How have you demonstrated good stewardship at work and at home?
- Are you tithing?
- How often are you meeting with men for prayer and accountability?
- What is your thought life like?
- What are you watching on TV?
- What are you looking at on the internet?
- How have you built in accountability when you travel?

APPENDIX 8

A LOVING HUSBAND

Christian marriage is intended to be an intimate and trusting relationship rooted in mutual devotion, companionship, and service. Called to reflect Christ's relationship with the church, a husband is asked to exercise, with love, a headship over his wife. What are ways he can show respect and a loving headship that cherishes and nourishes his wife? The following suggestions are intended to be encouraging reminders and a source for discussion.¹

Be a servant leader

Pray for your wife

Accept spiritual responsibility for your family

Honor the scriptures at home by reading them yourself, together, and in simple conversation

Invite Jesus Christ into your marriage as the Leader and Director of your lives

Discuss with your wife the spiritual development of each family member

Initiate a meaningful family tradition

Let your wife into the interior of your life

Encourage your wife to grow as a person

Make the time to set some specific goals with her to achieve together

Pray with her. If you aren't comfortable doing this, tell her and begin with short, simple prayers

Be in close relationship with men who follow Christ so they will hold you to account

Honor her body, physical condition and needs

Listen well, not only to give advice or "solve a problem"

Sincerely thank her for the work she does

Value her opinions even if they differ from yours

Stay in touch throughout the day if possible with an occasional text, email, or phone call

Pray for her every day and make it a point to pray with her when she is troubled.

Communicate with her instead of talking at her or shutting her out emotionally

Compliment her for the giftedness you see in her. Be specific

Express to her that you need and value her

Show enthusiasm for the things that she's excited about—let your actions show it

Find something that makes you laugh together

Put your arms around her when she needs comfort, holding her silently

¹ This handout for men was developed the pastoral staff at Zionsville Fellowship Church, Zionsville, IN.

Surprise her by doing something you think she would want done before she asks.
 Allow your wife to teach you things without being defensive.
 Give her grace when she offends you and forgive (even as you want to be forgiven)
 Be polite, courteous, and mannerly with her—not taking her for granted
 Exhibit humility, admit your mistakes, and ask for forgiveness
 Defend her to others—especially to your family
 Be especially helpful when she is not feeling well
 When she asks how your day went, don't just say "fine" —actually give her details
 Make eye contact when she is talking to you and when you are talking with her
 Refuse to compare her unfavorably with others
 Pro-actively do things that makes her feel cherished as a woman and as a wife
 Anticipate the different stages your marriage will pass through
 Go out of your way to help her feel valued over everyone else
 If you have children make sure they speak to her and treat her in respectful ways
 Express your love and appreciation in a note to her.

Consider these questions and discuss them with your wife:

What things do I love about my wife?
 How do I think I am doing in showing loving leadership for my wife?
 Ask your wife about the meaningful ways you are cherish her.
 Have her tell you how you are doing in providing warmth and nurture in the relationship.
 Ask her what it's like for her to have you be the head of the home.
 What hinders me from offering the leadership and love that is due her?
 Review the above list and purpose to work on one or two of the suggestions.

Paul writes to husbands, telling them to "love their wives, just as Christ also loved the church" (Ephesians 5:25). Meditate on how Jesus cares for His bride so you may emulate Him.

Offers life and strength	<i>I am the Vine</i>
Prays	<i>Christ... also makes intercession for us</i>
Serves	<i>The Son of Man did not come to be served</i>
Protects	<i>I am the good Shepherd</i>
Promises steadfast devotion	<i>I will never leave you nor forsake you</i>
Nourishes	<i>I am the bread of life</i>
Sacrifices	<i>He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross</i>
Supplies wisdom	<i>I am the truth</i>
Models a proper life	<i>Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example</i>
Invites the weary one into a relationship of rest and comfort	<i>Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy and I will give you rest for your soul</i>

APPENDIX 9

SCORECARD FOR HUSBANDS

If you honestly evaluate yourself by this score card, you will be able to discern where you are failing and need to improve to be the husband God wants you to be. Suggestion: If you really want to know how you are doing, ask your wife to rate you.

Rating Scale: never =1; seldom =2; frequently =3; regularly =4.

1. Do I love my wife and am I expressing Biblical (unselfish) love to her as I should?	1	2	3	4
Do I love her even when I don't feel like it?	1	2	3	4
Do I regularly express my love in words?	1	2	3	4
Do I seek to provide for her varying desires (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, recreational, spiritual: for worth, appreciation, security, etc.)?	1	2	3	4
Do I protect her (physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally)?	1	2	3	4
Do I assist her with chores and responsibilities?	1	2	3	4
Do I sacrifice for her?	1	2	3	4
Do I freely share my life, my concerns, etc., with her?	1	2	3	4
Do I regularly show appreciation?	1	2	3	4
Do I put her first in my life after my relationship with God?	1	2	3	4
Do I treat her with tenderness, respect, and courtesy?	1	2	3	4
Do I fulfill her implied or unspoken desires and wishes?	1	2	3	4
Do I frequently talk about her favorably in front of the children and other people?	1	2	3	4
Do I remember birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions?	1	2	3	4
Do I ask her advice frequently?	1	2	3	4
Do I ask forgiveness for failures quickly?	1	2	3	4

The Scorecard for Husbands was presented at Faith Community Ministries in Lafayette, IN, and it was noted that it was prepared by Dr. Wayne Mack.

Do I accept her suggestions without becoming upset?	1	2	3	4
Do I change when she makes a suggestion?	1	2	3	4
Do I handle the finances responsibly?	1	2	3	4
Do I give her money to spend as she wishes?	1	2	3	4
Do I run errands gladly?	1	2	3	4
Do I take care of the children and let her do what she wants frequently?	1	2	3	4
Do I give her my undivided attention when she wants to talk?	1	2	3	4
Do I comfort and encourage her when she is hurt, fearful, anxious and weary?	1	2	3	4
Do I support her in her concerns and interests?	1	2	3	4
Do I plan to spend some time alone with her every day?	1	2	3	4
Do I change personal habits that annoy her?	1	2	3	4
Do I encourage her initiative and creativity?	1	2	3	4
Do I treat her as a very worthwhile person who is as important or more important than I am?	1	2	3	4
Do I really make my relationship with her a priority matter?	1	2	3	4

2. Take at least 10 of the questions that you have answers with a 3 or 4 and give one or two examples of times you manifested love to our wife in these ways.

3. Select at least five ways in which you need to improve your expression of love to your wife. List these ways and plan what you will do to improve.

4. Am I a good manager? (1 Tim.3:4,5; Eph.5:23). Answer using 1-4 scale.

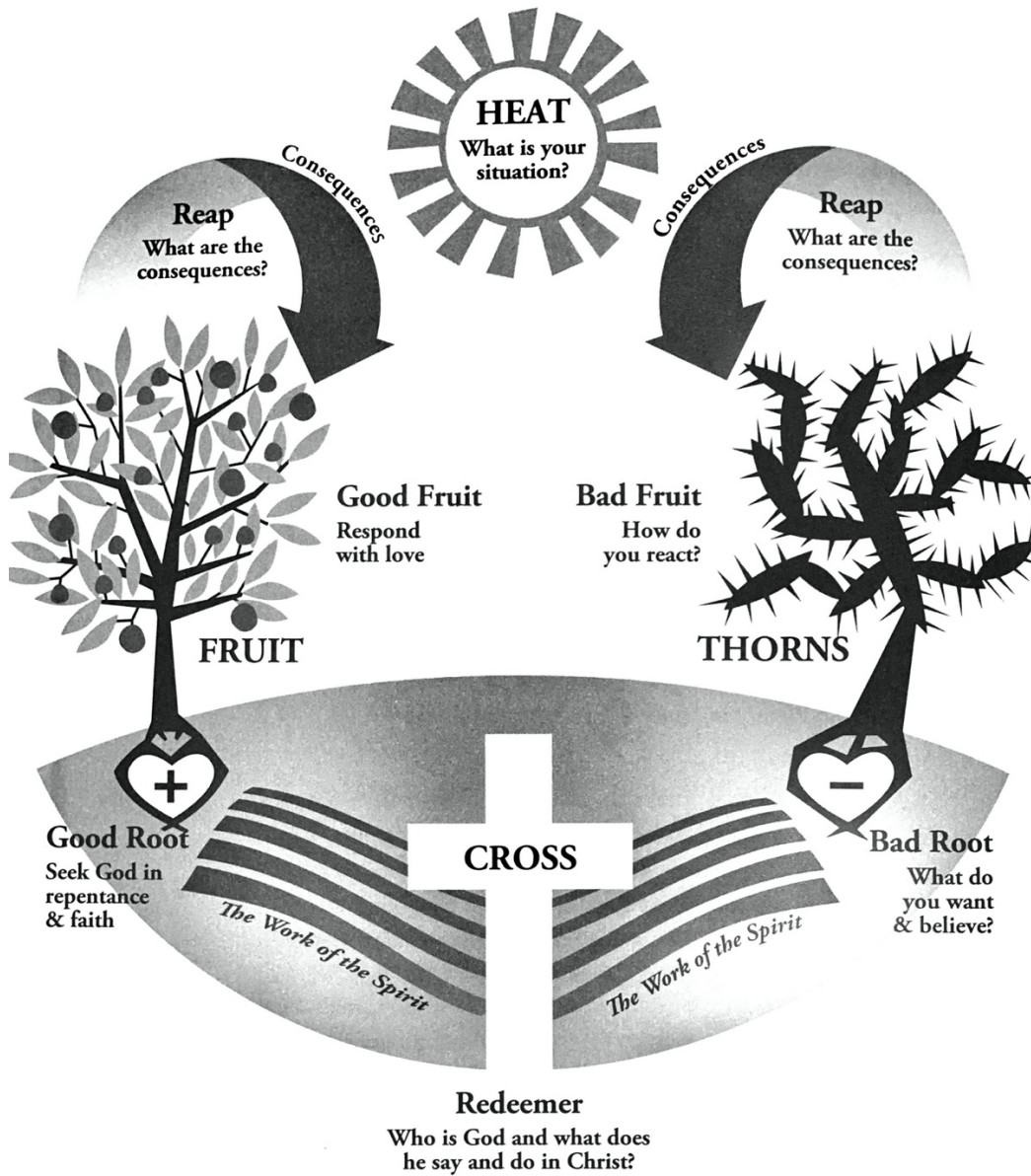
Do I know what is going on in my home from day to day?	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Am I leading my family in the direction it is going?	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Do I know the skills and abilities, strengths and weaknesses, problems and concerns of family members?	1	2	3	4
Do I use the skills of family members?	1	2	3	4
Do I have clearly defined goals for my family?	1	2	3	4
Do I motivate family members to use their skills and develop their abilities?	1	2	3	4
Do I lead in family worship regularly?	1	2	3	4
Do I spontaneously talk about spiritual matters?	1	2	3	4
Do I delegate responsibilities clearly?	1	2	3	4
Do I hold family members accountable for their responsibilities?	1	2	3	4
Do I have clear Biblical convictions?	1	2	3	4
Have I made these convictions known in a specific way?	1	2	3	4
Do I set an example for my family in these convictions?	1	2	3	4
Do I have foresight in seeing potential problems and prepare my family for them?	1	2	3	4
Do I get along well with other family and help them to get along with each other?	1	2	3	4
Do I spend time with family members regularly, listening to them, playing with,encouraging them, communicating goals and directions to them?	1	2	3	4
Do I provide order and organization that give security?	1	2	3	4
Do I commend family members regularly?	1	2	3	4
Am I really in control of what is happening in my family?	1	2	3	4
Do I lead my family in church attendance and involvement?	1	2	3	4
Do I plan fun and recreational times for my family regularly?	1	2	3	4
Do I make decisions in a Biblical way?	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX 10

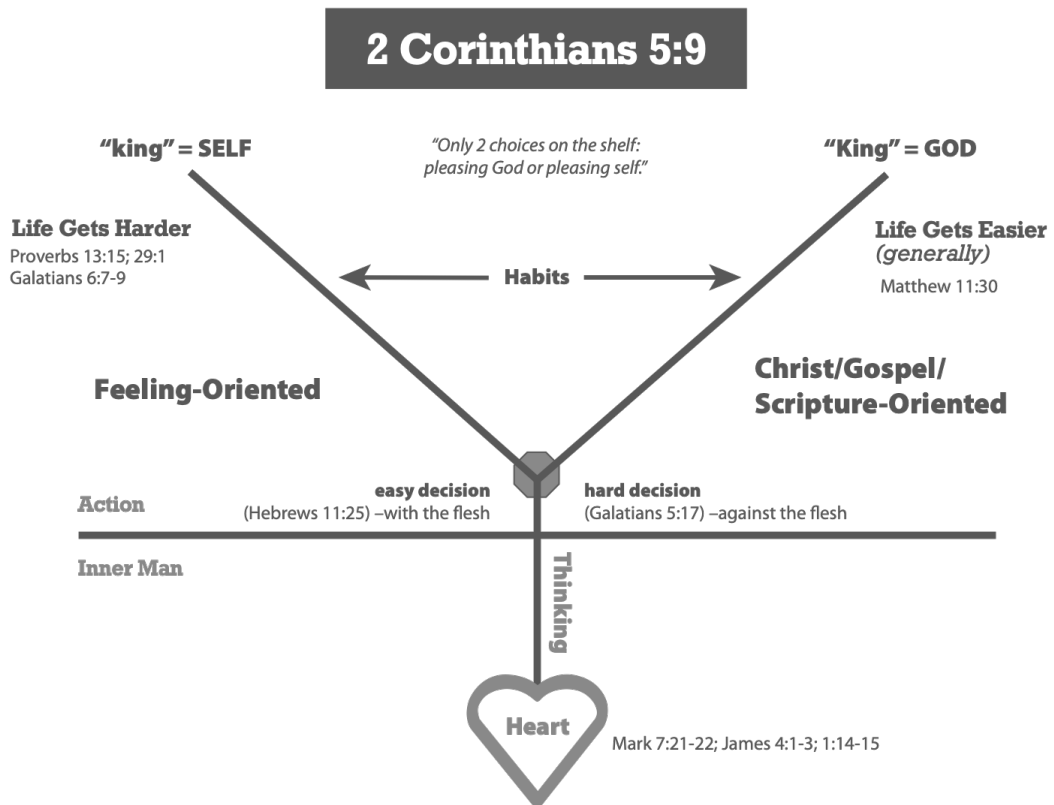
BIG PICTURE MODEL



Big Picture Model from Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2008), 84.

APPENDIX 11

Y DIAGRAM

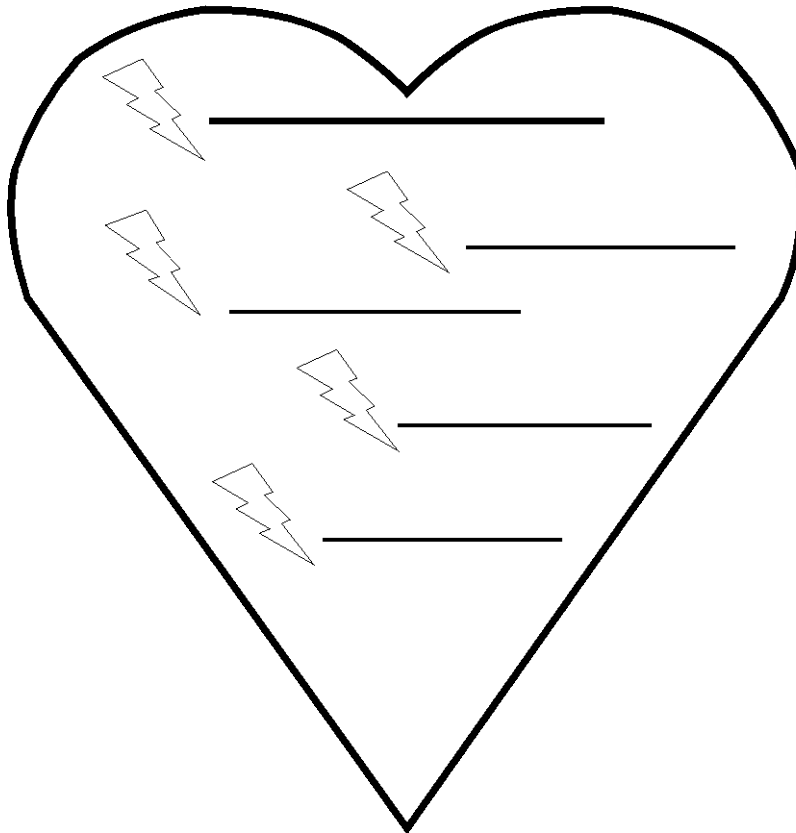


This graphic was used in the counseling ministry of College Park Church in 2017, but its source is unknown. It is reflective of graphics used in the presentation Mark Dutton, "Idols of the Heart," by NANC On-the-Road-Training, Track 1, Module 2, November 2003, Houston.

APPENDIX 12

IDOLS OF THE HEART

Now write the top 5 present or potential 'idols' from your check-list onto this heart



Helpful Diagrams in Counseling - © Pastor Brad Bigney | Grace Fellowship Church 9379 Gunpowder Rd., Florence, KY, 41042 | bradbigney@graceky.org | graceky.org | For any additional handouts, visit bradbigney.com | Follow on Twitter @bradbigney

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING HUSBANDS AT CORNERSTONE BIBLE CHURCH IN WESTFIELD, INDIANA, TO GROW AS SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE HOME

Andrew Edward Miller, DEdMin
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Robert D. Jones

This project examines Scripture to establish a biblical theology for spiritual leadership within the home and equips men to become better leaders through content delivered in a workshop format.

Chapter 1 provides context for the project and outlines goals, rationale, and methods undergirding the proposed training. Chapter 2 examines four passages men should consider as they think about leading in the home and develops a biblical theology for how husbands might approach growing as spiritual leaders. This chapter impresses upon men the importance of understanding their spouse and the need to lead as a servant. Chapter 3 surveys the writings of various thought leaders on the topic of leading biblically. Specifically, materials related to the marital relationship are examined and compared. Chapter 4 puts forth a summary of curriculum to be utilized for eight hours of training and equipping. Chapter 5 offers a summary of findings, an assessment of results, and a reflection upon proposed changes in future iterations of the project.

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