

THE HERALD

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3 Practical Steps to Biblical Leadership in Your Home

By Bob Lepine

I spoke recently with a husband who had been separated from his wife a year earlier. Although both the man and his wife were angry and bitter toward each other, they attended a Weekend to Remember® marriage getaway to see if they could find any help for their struggling marriage.

The getaway had a profound spiritual impact on both of them. They began to understand the issues that had pushed them toward isolation, and they heard the practical steps taught in Scripture that could lead them back toward intimacy. For this husband, one of those steps involved a daily time of prayer and study with his wife.

By the time I met this husband, it was nearly a year since he had initiated that regular activity with his wife. "Since the getaway," he told me, "we have started each day with a devotional time together. We read a passage of Scripture and we pray together. That one

simple step has had a profound impact on our marriage."

This was a husband who took a courageous step to lead his family. And it paid off.

Servant vs. leader

Much has been written in our day about the paradox of servant-leadership. When two of the disciples asked for positions of prestige in the coming kingdom, Jesus explained a different plan in Matthew 20:25-28: "...You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

As pastor and author Robert Lewis points out in his book *Rocking the Roles*, the husband's responsibility to be "head" of his wife does not give him the right to be a selfish, "lording" leader. Nor does it allow him the option of shirking his responsibility by becoming a "passive" leader. The divine design is for a husband to follow the road of loving leadership in his marriage.

Because many men have abused their

authority as husbands and as leaders, we have tended to emphasize his role as a servant. Slowly, men are shaking off the passive detachment that has defined a generation of husbands. Men are beginning to assume their biblical responsibility to serve their wives, demonstrating their service through sacrificial action.

But in the process of emphasizing service, we may have oversold our case. Unless that sacrificial love is expressed by bold, biblically-ordered husbands who assume both leadership and responsibility for their homes, we will have simply traded one grievous error for another less obvious one.

As counter-cultural as this will sound, God has designed marriage so that a woman is to be under the authority of her husband. It's not because she is inferior to her husband in her decision-making abilities. She is gifted by God in very special ways as a woman. She has been created with equal value and equal worth. We're not talking about ability or about value. We're talking about function. God's design is that a wife should look to her husband for leadership and direction for her life. She should want him to lead her, and should be ready to submit to his leadership as unto Christ.

Three steps to leadership

For the sake of our wives, we must once again assume our role as leaders who execute leadership with humble hearts and loving service for our wives. Here are some practical steps a husband can take as he seeks to take on the mantle of a servant-leader:

1. Start leading!

As husband and wife, it's time for the two of you to sit down and begin discussing areas in your marriage where you need to start showing some leadership. Ask your wife to point out where you can be leading her and your family. It may be something as simple as initiating daily prayer with your wife. It may involve setting up a savings account to plan for future needs, and then making regular deposits.

Examine the major areas of your family and your life—your faith, your marriage, your family, your job, your relationships with friends, your service to the community, your physical health and well-being, your stewardship over the resources God has given you, and your recreational time—and decide where you need to take some initiative and begin leading.

2. Learn to judge in righteousness.

If your leadership in the home is characterized by righteousness and by the fear of God, it will be like a beautiful spring morning to all who live in your home. That makes it incumbent on you as a husband to be a disciplined student of God's Word, so that you might exercise your authority in wisdom. To the extent that you lean on your own wisdom and understanding as the source of your authority, you will be abusing your role.

Again, it's no wonder why our culture has given up on the concept of men leading in their homes. Not only have men used their authority for selfish gain, but we have also failed to lead in seeking the wisdom and counsel of God. It's easy to understand why women have judged our leadership at home as a failure and have looked for a way to

reinterpret the command of Scripture.

3. Do some strategic planning.

Most successful business executives develop a strategic plan, mapping out where the company is headed over the next five to 10 years. Yet many of those same businessmen are clueless when it's time to think strategically about the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of their wives. Ask these men about their five-year plan for their marriages, and you're likely to get a "deer-in-the-headlights" look.

During a FamilyLife Today radio interview, author Dan Allender described how he wrote a short-term mission statement for his wife. When he began explaining the idea, I thought it sounded presumptuous. But as Dan talked about encouraging and exhorting his wife to become all God wants her to be as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother, it was clear he was not being presumptuous. He was being the kind of leader his wife ultimately wants and needs him to be.

Gentlemen, it's up to us. God has put us in charge. Have we prayerfully sought to map out a plan for the next five years of our marriage? It's time to look ahead and make some plans.

As husbands, we have been assigned the task of leading our wives on our pilgrimage through earth to heaven. We serve them not when we do everything they ask us to do, but when we understand and cooperate with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. We never see our role as an opportunity for privilege, but as a divine responsibility to lead our wives as they grow in grace.

The Stupendous Reality of Being "in Christ Jesus"

By John Piper

Being "in Christ Jesus" is a stupendous reality. It is breathtaking what it means to be in Christ. United to Christ. Bound to Christ. If you are "in Christ" listen to what it means for you:

1. In Christ Jesus you were given grace before the world was created. "He gave us grace in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Timothy 1:9).
2. In Christ Jesus you were chosen by God before creation. "God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph.1:4).
3. In Christ Jesus you are loved by God with an inseparable love. "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).
4. In Christ Jesus you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins. In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Ephesians 1:7).
5. In Christ Jesus you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to you. "For our sake God made Christ to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).
6. In Christ Jesus you have become a new creation and a son of God. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith" (Galatians 3:26).
7. In Christ Jesus you have been seated in the heavenly places even while he lived on earth.

“God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 2:6)

8. In Christ Jesus all the promises of God are Yes for you. “All the promises of God find their Yes in Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

9. In Christ Jesus you are being sanctified and made holy. “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus” (1 Corinthians 1:2).

10. In Christ Jesus everything you really need will be supplied. “My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

11. In Christ Jesus the peace of God will guard your heart and mind. “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

12. In Christ Jesus you have eternal life. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

13. And in Christ Jesus you will be raised from the dead at the coming of the Lord. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). All those united to Adam in the first humanity die. All those united to Christ in the new humanity rise to live again. How do we get into Christ?

At the unconscious and decisive level, it is God’s sovereign work: “From God are you in Christ Jesus” (1 Corinthians 1:30, my translation). But at the conscious level of our own action, it is through faith. Christ dwells in our hearts “through faith” (Ephesians 3:17). The life we live in union with his death and life we “live by faith in the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20). We are united in his death and resurrection “through faith” (Colossians 2:12).

This is a wonderful truth. Union with Christ is the ground of everlasting joy, and it is free.

How Many Can You Find?

There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much he passed it on to some friends. One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing from his john boat. Another friend studied it while playing his banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was so intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving the puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That’s a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsible for the difficulty we have in seeing books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, the Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, “The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight.” Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus; there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found. God Bless.