

The Chapel Authority



CLEARCREEK
C H A P E L

The Leading Man

The Elders

Savoring the Supremacy of God
Studying the Word of God
Shaping the People of God
Spreading the Gospel of God

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Introduction

Our Conference

This morning we launch our 2007 Family Enrichment Conference entitled, The Leading Man. The aim of the series is to enable men practically to become godly and effective leaders.

Strategy

In the morning services we will be focusing on exposition from selected texts on the topic of the day with clear but principled application.

In the evening services we will be working out the principles in plain, practical and personal application with clear steps of action and illustration.

The conference will culminate in the Weekend Retreat followed by John Crott's message in the last AM message and an Open Forum in the evening.

Schedule

Sunday		Title	Text	Theme
Jan 7	AM	The School of Leadership	1 Peter 3:7-17	Biblical Leadership at Home
	PM	The Skills of Leadership		Practical Leadership at Home
Jan 14	AM	The Scope of Leadership	Ephesians 6:5-9	Biblical Leadership at Work
	PM	The Struggles of Leadership		Practical Leadership at Work
Jan 21	AM	The Standards of Leadership	1 Timothy 3:1-13	Biblical Leadership at Church
	PM	The Service of Leadership		Practical Leadership at Church
Jan 28	AM	TBA		
	PM	Open Forum on the Series		

The School of Leadership

2007 Family Enrichment Conference-17

Russ Kennedy

Introduction Illustration of a leading man in a movie...

Our Concepts

We live out of WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE TRUE. How we lead as men will be shaped by what we affirm and what we deny leadership to be. The mix of thoughts about what leadership is will be the main tap-root from which our leadership emerges.

We live out of WHAT WE WANT. We will desire in our souls, we will move toward what we have defined as true and valuable. How we lead will be an expression of what we truly desire.

We live out of THE COMPLEX INTERACTION OF OUR HEART'S ORGANIZATION AND OUR HEART'S ORIENTATION. How we lead is not just about what we believe and want in leadership. Other truths and treasures will grapple with our thinking about leadership and sometimes overcome it. For example, we know that we ought to take initiative to organize and get a project done. However, our love for ease and comfort holds us fast to our sofas and TV's.

We live out of THE THEMATIC SUM OF OUR EXPRESSIONS AND EXPERIENCES. As our heart's beliefs and wants cause us to do and feel things in life, they create consequences. Those consequences tend to reinforce our heart or cause us to reevaluate our beliefs and wants. Wrong beliefs about leadership will be reinforced when, over and over again, it gets us what we want. This becomes a habitual or thematic heart/behavior action which eventually we do automatically; not recognizing what is causing it.

Our Challenges

What are some of the various "stunning insights" that are supposed to help us in our leadership? What kind of challenges do we face in thinking Biblically about our leadership? How do we think about leadership in all our relationships but particularly with our spouses?

- In *primarily* IGNORED TERMS – In other words, we don't think about it much at all. We do not give thought, attention or effort to our leadership. When this is true, we will probably lead through a worldly grid placed in our hearts, undiscerned and unevaluated.
- In *primarily* MYSTICAL TERMS – We think of leadership as how we experience the authority of God. We see ourselves as the extension of God's authority in whatever sphere we happen to be in. So in your home, you become the function god of that home. While this is less common in our circles, the popular "experiencing God" movement is moving leadership in this direction.

- In *primarily* DISREGARDED TERMS – Leadership becomes something we are forced to do only when things start to so fall apart, we have to make a decision.
- In *primarily* AUTHORITATIVE TERMS – Our approach to our leadership is that of exercising authority that God has given in a way that authorizes any decision we make. It sounds like this in the heart. “God has given me this authority. I have a made a decision. They should not question it. They should simply do what I say.” The effect over time is to become dictatorial.
- In *primarily* SELF-FOCUSED TERMS – Our approach to leadership is to get out of it all we want, usually couched in “needs” language. Leadership is primarily about how those under me meet (or don’t meet) my needs. Certainly then, our ruling wants will drive our leadership and often destroy it.
- In *primarily* HORIZONTAL TERMS – We see leadership as how we can acceptance and affirmation from our peers, who are also leaders. In other words, you see yourself as a strong leader when you are heartily approved by those whose leadership you prize. The good desire for approval can become a vicious master of fear so that we are no longer leading, we are a part of a pack of leaders craving each other’s affirmation.

Our Connections and Context

The verse opens with a connective, *likewise*. We find that 3:1 opens with the same word. So we look back and see that 1 Peter 2:25 defines Christians as the chosen, new people of God living in exile, owned and mastered by God so that we might proclaim his worth and excellence. Thus verses 9-12 are very important to our context:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. [ESV]

Here is the overarching context of all that follows in 1 Peter 2:1-3:17. Our submission and suffering are shaped by WHO WE ARE and WHERE WE ARE – we are the people of God and we are not at home. The immediate context is submission: to governments (v.13-17), to masters and employers (v.18-25) and wives in the context of disobedient husbands (3:1-6).

Then Peter brings us, not to a husband’s submission to his wife – that would be a violation of roles, but rather to the strength of a husband’s gentle leadership. Thus, in verses 7-12, we are brought into the school of leadership.

In our Roles, Considerate Leadership (v.7)

First, we need to learn, with our wives, to be considerate in our leadership.

Its Precept

The command here is how to live with your wives in terms of leadership. You need to know in order to understand. This means two things for you as a husband:

YOU MUST KNOW YOUR BIBLE. The Bible defines, describes, and illustrates the landscape of your life and marriage. The Bible says that you are in a covenantal relationship with a sister in Christ, in the context of a called out community of believers, who has been given to you for companionship and to complete you. You are both sinner and saint. You need grace and the accountability of others. You tend to serve idols and be ruled by wants. You must know these truths and many others in order to be pleasing to God in your leadership.

YOU MUST KNOW YOUR SPOUSE. While knowing her favorite color and restaurant and that you must not use her toothbrush are involved in this, I believe that Peter has more in mind. It is useful to remember that Peter is himself married as attested to by both the gospel writers and Paul. You need to know her spiritual strengths and weaknesses. You need to know her physical strengths and weaknesses. You need to know where she is vulnerable to temptation and has patterns of sinful thoughts and wants. You need to know how to cultivate her walk with God, her ministry in the church, her mentoring of children and younger women. You need to learn and understand both how her gender and how her role affects her way of thinking and wanting.

Brothers, I find most men are often baffled by their wives. But, it is not true that they are impenetrable mysteries. The Bible gives you the lens, if you will but love and care enough to ask, listen, and evaluate. There are the common elements of our fallenness and our redemption – that we are all, husbands and wives, sinners and saints. We serve idols, masters and spiritual adulteries. We are indwelt by the Spirit and growing in grace. We are struggling to love God and neighbor. And there are the unique aspects of our personhood – that we are shaped by our experiences and live out of the unique mix of “I believe...” and “I want...” that make up our hearts. Further, there are the unique aspects of our gender and role. We are made in God’s image and we are male and female. So you must learn how that affects and to what degree it affects your spouse.

What emerges from knowing your Bible and knowing your wife is a husband full of understanding and gentleness who lovingly leads as head, the wonderful helper he has been given. The love that fuels your desire to know will emerge in a way of living that is full of sacrificial understanding, sympathy, compassion, gentleness that draws out a woman’s loving submission.

Remember, the immediate context is a wife’s submission even to a disobedient husband that is in verse 6, “without fear.” In other words, the man is in a position to abuse a lady – a feminine woman who exhibits the Biblical characteristics of womanhood. Generally, a man is stronger physically. He is less vulnerable emotionally. Further, his headship places him in a position to dominate and dictate

his wife. The answer to all this is not egalitarianism – that is, to deny that the woman is weaker and more vulnerable and to deny the headship of man. The solution is to require that a man honor and respect her in a way that recognizes her vulnerability and restrains his strength and authority.

So, what does that mean? It means husbands, that you respect your wife by not lording it over her in your leading of her. That you respect your wife by not demeaning her or destroying her in your correcting of her. That you respect your wife by not demanding from her what is inappropriate for her. That you respect your wife by acknowledging and affirming her femininity and womanhood. That you respect your wife by putting her interests ahead of your own. That you respect your wife by never ever criticizing her or demeaning her in public.

Let me emphasize this again. The Bible is holding out a third way for us. Not down slope into harsh, driving, self-serving, uncaring dictatorship nor down slope into passive, wimpy, self-serving, leaderlessness, but rather, loving, understanding, respectful leadership that honors while exercises headship.

Why should we do this? What are the underlying principles and reasons for this?

Its Premise

Here it is – husbands, in your leadership, live with your wives in a way that understands her vulnerability *because she is your sister in Christ*.

First, WE ARE JOINT-HEIRS IN HEAVEN. This language always points us to our being adopted and given full standing as heirs with Jesus. This is meant to focus our relationship in eternity. I am related to this woman in ways that transcend this moment in time and history. Esther and I will not be married in heaven – but we will always be brother and sister in Christ, standing together as full joint heirs with our Lord. Wives do not enter into their spiritual inheritance by virtue of their earthly union to their husbands in marriage, but by virtue of their spiritual union to the Lord Jesus in salvation.

We are PARTAKERS IN THE GRACE OF LIFE. Notice the appeal here. It is not to the fact of our being partners in marriage, but to the fact of our being partners in grace. Brothers, in all respects in all ways treat your wife as your Christian sister. She is your temporal earthly partner and she is your eternal spiritual partner.

Why does the Bible think this way? Because the Bible sees the community of believers, the church, as the primary context in which all of your life as a believer exists. If you think of your home as the primary context and you add the church to it as appendage (and maybe even a very important addition), you will simply not understand why this is important nor how the Bible is thinking. 1 Peter 2 makes clear what a Christian is in relationship – in relationship to God and to brothers and sisters.

I want to stress this again and again. It will radically change the way you lead your wife. It will open wide ranges of Scripture to affect your walk with her in every area. Now instead of three major texts, every text that speaks to horizontal relationships now is clearly brought to bear. It is my observation that we are in deep need of repentance – many Christian men would NEVER treat another Christian lady the way they treat their wives. This, brothers, is terrible. This is

evidence that you are not seeing your wife as your Christian sister. Imagine what would happen if you consistently treated the women in this congregation that way you treat your wife.

Its Purpose

What is our aim in leading and living with our spouses in this way? So that prayers are not hindered...

If we do not treat our wives as we should, our prayers will be hindered. We will not have freedom of conscience nor access. This is not just the hindering of our praying together as husbands and wives, but it does include that. You simply cannot treat your sister in Christ sinfully and then hold her hand and pray with her. Your hypocrisy will be pretty evident. Our guilt will rob our joy, empty our fellowship and wound our walk with God. Wonder how much praying by men is snarled on the thorns of their poor treatment of their spouses.

It seems to me that it is appropriate to consider that our prayers are not helped by godly relationships with our wives, but actually thrive in that context. What freedom of access we have to God, what hearing we have in God's presence, what hope of help from God when we can come out of holiness of a God-pleasing marriage.

In our Relationships, Humble Leadership (v.8-9)

To wrap this discussion up, Peter points us to humble leadership which will be cultivated and built in our relationships. It provides the context in which we can flourish within our roles as leaders.

Heart Attitudes (v.8)

These core heart attitudes have a powerful affect on our leadership and on our submission. These attitudes cluster around being focused on others first. They are a reversal of self-focus and self-serving. All true, godly leadership, whether in home, work or ministry, will be shaped and motivated by affirming these truths and valuing them.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Harmony | We are to live and lead with an aim to produce harmony. Leadership intending to produce disharmony in order to gain power is wicked. Sometimes, those who refuse to follow leadership will be out of harmony, but godly leadership them must work to bring repentance and restore harmony through submission. |
| Sympathy | We are live and lead with a heart identifying with the struggles and sufferings of those we are responsible for. Verse 7 is rooted in this heart attitude. Detached and distant leaders will never know others well enough to care for their troubles. |
| Love | We are to live and lead with brotherly love. This is a single adjective used to describe our relationship with others. Always we are to have hearts trusting and treasuring people as an expression of familial love. In our leadership, being related |

to one another as Christians means that brotherly love guides and guards our leading.

Kind hearted We are to live and lead with a tender heart. Leaders with callused, hard hearts will be unwilling to show compassion. We must have broken hearts before God so that we will have kind hearts toward those we lead.

Humility We are to live and lead with a lowly mindedness that looks like courtesy. The word here is an adjective that describes a way of thinking of oneself that causes us to be courteous. It is a lowliness of heart that will open the door for those we lead and not expect that we will be publicly acknowledged and announced.

Is this the way you think? Do you affirm these characteristics as being essential to godly leadership? Do you see them as valuable and worthwhile, not just in those who lead you, but in your own leadership? This I think is a great self-test. Would I want this kind of leadership over me? So, will I become this kind of leader?

Holy Actions

(v.9)

When faced with difficulty in leadership and submission, we must be careful in our responses. Peter warns us about how we are to respond when we are opposed or attacked. As brothers and sisters, when we are in conflict, particularly in the context submission, then this is how we must respond.

Negatively – Put Away

First, we are warned about how not to respond. **DO NOT REPAY IN KIND.** When you are sinned against, do not respond by doing sin against them. Other people's sins do excuse your responses. In the school of leadership, we learn that we are limited in what we can do to get others to respond to us. We are held accountable for how we lead and in what way. We are not necessarily accountable for how others follow. So, we are not allowed to respond sinfully *no matter what the provocation.*

DO NOT RETURN INSULTS. God's people have always had a bent to place verbal interaction in a different category. We tend to think that if a person attacks us verbally, we are allowed to attack them. If they revile us, we can revile in return. You insult me; I'm going to let you have it. This is ungodly in our living and leading together. Godly leadership must put away all forms of ungodly talk about those who are not submitting. This is true at home, at work and in ministry.

Positively – Put On

Rather, we are to respond positively. We bless. This is a verb. In what we do and what we say, we aim for the good of the other. Even in the midst of their sinning against us, we point them through our actions and our words to the good God has promised and the glory He has purposed.

Honorable Aim

Why do we cultivate these attitudes and actions? So that we may inherit a blessing. The ESV leaves the impression that something is being acquired or purchased. The word here always refers to a bequest upon death, an inheritance. So we will lead in a godly, humble way, with a heart for others and careful, measured response to opposition with the aim to be qualified to inherit the blessing. And it may well require, as is discussed in the context, a Christ-like sacrifice of self.

In our Reasons, Biblical Leadership (v.10-12)

This is drawn from Psalm 34:12-16. But the whole Psalm grounds what Peter has taught. In our submission and in our leadership, we must be Psalm 34 kind of people. We must be a people who praise and fear God. We must be a people who serve and suffer well. We must be a people who trust God and treasure what He values. Peter firmly grounds his understanding of submission and leadership in the Word of God. So what he has called for in the whole of 1 Peter 2-3 is an interpretation and application of Psalm 34 to the particulars and problems we face in submission and in leadership.

The Authority of Scripture (v.10-11)

Peter connects what he has taught to the authority and direction of Scripture. As he quotes the Psalm, we are expected to think of the whole Psalm as governing the kind of people we are to become. We are also expected to locate his instruction and our own experience in the Psalm as well.

There is an appeal to our God-given (and often sinfully abused) desire for happiness (v.10a). Peter through the Psalmist re-wires what is supposed to make us happy. He does not locate happiness in our circumstances. He locates it in our response to those circumstances. If we are going to be genuinely happy, then we must be authentically holy. Those who want to love life and see good days must...

The call to holiness from the Psalm governs how we exercise Biblical leadership (v.10b-11). For this whole month, these three major precepts will be worked out in each sphere of life. You can easily see how what he has said is derived directly from what the Psalmist has written.

In our leadership and submission, we must control our tongue.

In our leadership and submission, we must do what is right.

In our leadership and submission, we must pursue peace.

Our Sunday Evening services will be unpacking in intensely personal and practical ways how this will be worked out at home, at work and in ministry.

The Accountability of Leaders (v.12)

We are living before the face of God. In whatever role you have where you are to lead, you do so before the face of God. As a husband, as a leader at work, as leading in ministry, you will give an account to God. Living before the face of

God means there are consequences now. God will hear your prayers or He may resist your efforts.

Note how this connects to verse 7. The Lord sees the quality of our leadership with our wives and He is either open to our prayers or sets His face against us. So Peter has not created a new notion that our relationship to our spouses affects our prayers. He has read this Psalm and applied to these situations, recognizing the roles and responsibilities entailed. So verse 10 connects to the first phrase of 9 and verse 11 to the second phrase of verse 9.

But don't miss it. God's ears are open to the righteous – the husbands who live with their wives according to knowledge, who respect them as weaker vessels, since we are all partners in grace, brother and sisters. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil – the husbands who are ignorant and insensitive of their wives, treating them as slaves or children, not honoring them as feminine expressions of the image of God in their womanhood, and little thinking of them as their sweet sisters in grace and partners in salvation.

In our Responses, Poised Leadership (v.13-17)

But what do we do when this way of leading is opposed by others? The opposition may come from our spouses in personal and practical ways. The opposition may come from the world in philosophical or in detrimental ways. You may well face people who are in a position to harm your reputation, to halt your advancement, to cause you real physical pain. Now what?

Have Courage in Christ (v.13-15)

Set aside Christ in your heart so that courage will fill your soul to say and do what is right. We are blessed when we suffer for doing what is right. So we must not fear what can be done to us.

Be prepared to explain why you believe and act the way you do. Unfortunately, this verse is yanked out of its context and often used as a pretext for the use of reason and logic to prove or argue for the existence of God. Peter does not have that in view at all. He is exhorting those who suffer when they submit and when they lead as Christians to be ready to explain their hope. So our poised submission and leadership may appear irrational and foolish to the world, but is to be deeply grounded in Biblical truth and godly reason.

Keep Conscience Clear (v.16)

In giving reasons and explanations, we must do so in a way that keeps our conscience clear. We therefore explain ourselves with gentleness and with respect. Harshness, hardness and ungodly forcefulness are not wise ways to express the kind of submission and leadership Peter is calling for. We must also speak respectfully, honoring the position and place of the person we are talking to. Aggression and rebellion will undermine the authenticity of our hope in suffering.

Why do we explain ourselves with careful, measured, gentle, respectful reasoning? Because we aim to shame those who speak evil against us for doing what is

right. Godly submission and leadership often provokes sinners to strike out at us verbally. So you must be poised with a clear conscience to give no one a reason to accuse you.

Be Committed to Suffer (v.17)

A poised leadership will be committed to patient perseverance even if it means being sinned against in way that brings suffering. Peter is here countering an argument that says, “If we are going to suffer anyway, let’s at least strike out and defend ourselves.” No, it is better to suffer for doing what is right than it is to be punished for doing evil.

Many of you are finding out that godly leadership in your home and in your work are often not admired nor accepted. Sometimes, it is openly opposed. What a poise is being called for. Courage, conscience and commitment – gently and respectfully explaining yourself without fear so as to leave a godly witness being ready to suffer if necessary.

Conclusion

What will all this look like in life?

Be God’s kind of leader.

Be gentle and understanding, recognizing her vulnerability.

Show her honor and respect her, as a sister in Christ.

Guard carefully what you say and what you do.

Lead from a stance of humbleness and with the strength of firmness.

Be ready to explain yourself well and suffer if necessary.

May we be good students in the school of leadership. May God change your hearts.
May God hear your prayers.

The Skills of Leadership

Greg Cook

Introduction The strategy that we are using for this Family Enrichment Conference involves focusing on exposition of selected texts with clear but principled application in the morning services.

The evening services are the times when the speakers are going to be plain, practical, and personal with clear steps of action. It is my desire to be plain, practical and personal tonight. Let's ask God to help us all in this time together tonight. <PRAY>

You have to understand. Just because I am up here presenting this material does not mean that I have done it, am a skilled practitioner of it, or am an expert at it. In fact, as I was working on this message, I told Becky that it was hard to prepare this message because it was so convicting. So don't think that because I'm up here and you're down there that I am talking as one who has it all together in these areas. That is not true. I am a beggar telling other beggars where the food is. I am not the chef who has prepared the food and is presenting it in all of its glory to you lowly beggars. I stand in just as much need as you do.

I am indebted to many authors for their insights and instructions in what I am presenting tonight. I will give credit to them as I use their ideas throughout our time tonight.

Being a God-honoring Student

As Russ said this morning, we must begin with our walk with the Lord. Without the two-way communication between God and us, we will not know how to be the leaders that God has designed for us to be.

Let's begin with our intake of God's Word.

Bible Intake

You notice that I used the word *intake*. I got this insight from Dr. Don Whitney at the annual NANC conference this year. His sessions were very challenging to me. So much so that I bought all of these books. In his book *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, he makes these two comments:

No Spiritual Discipline is more important than the intake of God's Word. Nothing can substitute for it. There simply is no healthy Christian life apart from a diet of the milk and meat of Scripture. (page 24)

Regardless of how busy we become with all things Christian, we must remember that the most transforming practice available to us is the disciplined intake of Scripture. (page 25)

I don't know about you, but there are many times that I read my Bible, close it, and say, "What did I read? I don't remember a thing." Has that ever happened to you, or am I the only one? What Dr. Whitney helped me to see is that the problem is not my age, my IQ, or my seriousness about God's Word – it is more of a problem with my method of engaging God's Word. We not only have to read the Word, we also must meditate on it.

Reading the Bible

I am a believer in reading the entire Bible through. I don't want to meet Nahum in Glory and have to confess to him that I didn't read his book. There are many Bible reading plans available. In fact, if you look in the back of your Bible, chances are you are going to find a schedule there for reading through the entire Bible in one year.

There are at least two challenges in trying to read through the Bible in one year:

#1 – How many times have you started with good intentions on January 1st, but somewhere along the way you get behind or bogged down in Numbers. Maybe you made that commitment this year. Where are you? Are you behind already? What happens when you get behind? You begin reading just to get caught up because your conscious is killing you. In fact, you skip over all of the names and the begots so that you can get caught up; and

#2 – You are so intent on getting all of the reading done for the day so that you don't get behind, you don't remember what you read, much less get anything out of it.

Is it so wrong to take two or three or five years to read through your Bible? I don't think so. I don't think that God is going to be disappointed in you when you take the time to have intake of His Word instead of just getting it done. The important thing is that you have intake, not just reading, everyday. For most of you, just reading each day is going to be a major change in your life, much less getting to the place of intake. But it must be done.

Meditation and study

But reading is only the first part of Bible intake. You must also have a method for making the Scriptures a part of you. If you will take a concordance and look up the word "meditate" and its derivations, you will find that meditation is the second key to Bible intake right behind reading.

May I make these suggestions to help you get started in your Bible intake:

#1 – If you are going to make reading the Bible through a goal – in whatever period of time you decide, then look at several plans and choose which one appeals to you.

#2 – Decide how long you are going to devote to Bible intake each day – 10 minutes, 20 minutes, a half hour. Then divide the time in half between reading and meditating. It is far better to read less and remember more, than to read more and remember nothing.

#3 – Decide when during the day you are going to do your Bible intake. Also decide where you are going to do it. I suggest that you do not do it while you are in bed. Your mind does not do well when it knows that the bed is the place to sleep, not to do important work.

#4 – Begin to meditate on God's Word. Here are some suggestions from Don Whitney to help you begin meditating. Select a verse, a part of a

verse, or a phrase from your reading. Either write it out on a 3x5 card, put it in your PDA, or memorize it. Repeat it in different ways. By that he means emphasize each word separately and think about how the truth glows in these different lights. Think carefully and deeply about each insight that comes to mind.

Don Whitney gives this example from John 11:25 in *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (page 49):

“I am the resurrection and the life.”

“I *am* the resurrection and the life.”

“I am *the* resurrection and the life.”

“I am the *resurrection* and the life.”

“I am the resurrection *and* the life.”

“I am the resurrection and *the* life.”

“I am the resurrection and the *life*.”

This is not an exercise just to repeat words, but should be done with your mind in gear and having prayed for the Holy Spirit to illumine your mind.

Other ways to meditate are to rewrite the portion in your own words. Use as many words as you need in order to get the meaning across. Or, look for applications of the text. What would God have you do, don't do, say, think, or any number of other application points. Or, you can pray through the text just like you did when you emphasized each word.

These are just a few ideas for getting you going in disciplining yourself to the splendor of regular intake of the Word of God. If you do not begin with God's Word, then the chances of your leadership not being God-honoring are increased greatly. Please see Don Whitney's books for more help in this area.

Prayer

Reading and meditating on God's Word is one part of being a God-honoring student in the school of leadership. The second part is prayer.

Problems in praying

Does anyone else here have problems in praying, or am I the only one? Once again, Don Whitney helped me at the NANC conference come to terms with this problem in my life. He contends that the problems we experience in prayer are not a problem with us as much as it is a problem with our methods. This seemed to be his theme at the conference. But as he explained, I believe he is right.

He said that the main reason we struggle in prayer is because we get bored with prayer. We say the same old things about the same old things and it gets boring. We have a great desire to pray, but our desires collide with our experiences of prayer and it doesn't make prayer something that warms our hearts. It is not something that we can't wait to do. It is a duty. And duties are not fun things to do. Dr. Whitney maintains that there are only 6 major areas in which all of our prayers can be categorized: our family, our future, our work or school, our ministry or church, our finances, and the present crises in which we find ourselves. Are these areas wrong to be praying about? No.

Should we not be praying about these areas? Of course not! This is our life and what impacts our lives. This is where our hearts are. Of course we are going to be occupied with them in our thoughts and beliefs.

Praying the Scriptures

The solution for boredom in prayer must be simple or it will never happen. So here is one method recommended by Dr. Whitney, and others, that is simple, yet effective. It is praying the Scriptures. If the problem is that we pray about the same old things saying the same old things, then using the Scriptures as our basis gives us new ways to say things. We aren't saying the same old things about these same old things. We are using the Scriptures to pray in fresh ways about these same old things.

One of the best places in Scripture to use as our basis for our prayers is the Psalms. Praying the Psalm is different from trying to interpret the text. We are using these Psalms as a prompt to think about life from a biblical perspective. We are being prompted to think in terms that bring a Godly focus to life.

Let's take an example that Don used at the conference. You all know Psalm 23. The first part of verse 1 reads, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." How can we use that to pray? "Lord, I am so thankful that you have faithfully shepherded me these many years. I am thankful for how you have taken me through so many difficult situations and how you have stood by me when times were tough. And I am asking that you would shepherd me today as I have this important presentation at work. Shepherd my thoughts and my words. Shepherd my reactions to questions and criticism. And Father, please shepherd my children today as they go to school. Shepherd them as they face the evil and the evil one. And please shepherd our pastors at church as they shepherd us."

Are you getting the picture? Whatever comes to mind is what I pray about. And yet, there is a freshness. I haven't even gotten to the second part of the 1st verse and there is still more that I can pray about as I think about the Lord being my Shepherd.

Let me recommend some resources for you. The first two books are by Don Whitney. They are *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, and *Simplify Your Spiritual Life – Spiritual Disciplines for the Overwhelmed*. The third book is *Praying the Scriptures – A Field Guide for Your Spiritual Journey* by Evan B. Howard. The first two books should be in every home.

Being a God-honoring Spouse

As we develop and grow in our understanding of God's Word and the principles of God-honoring discipleship, we are able to work on being a God-honoring spouse. As Russ taught this morning from 1 Peter 3:7, we are to live with our wives in an understanding way, showing honor, love, and grace as joint-heirs of the grace of life. I am borrowing from two books for this section: *The Exemplary Husband – A Biblical Perspective*, by Stuart Scott and *The Complete Husband – A Practical Guide to Biblical Husbanding* by Lou Priolo. Both of these men have been speakers at our annual Family Enrichment Retreat in years past.

Understanding Your Wife

How can we understand our wives? Doesn't everyone know that you can't understand women? They've even written books about men and women and Mars and Venus. But I'm sorry. That just doesn't fly. God has told us we must understand at least one woman in this world – the wife that He has given to us.

So what are some ways that I can do that? I'm glad you asked. «GreetingLine» gives three ways that you can get to know your wife: observe her, ask her questions, and experience her world.

You observe your wife by looking, listening, and learning. Just take some time and observe her in different situations. Remember how you used to observe her from afar before you were dating. Observe her again, only this time it will be different because you are not after the chase, but after the gold of knowing your wife.

Asking her questions is not like 20 questions, or the inquisition. You don't sit down with a list of questions and say, "OK, question #1, what is your favorite color? Question #2, what is your favorite food?" That is now what this is all about. Lou Priolo has two helpful lists of questions that will help you get to know and understand your wife. He also has an entire appendix dedicated to guidelines for asking questions of your wife. He suggests that you start by asking her questions about you such as: If you could change three things about me that would make me more Christ-like, what would you change? Then he suggests asking her questions about her such as your home, her friends, her family, her aspirations in life. Again, the better you are at asking questions, listening, and probing for more information, the better you will know your wife.

«GreetingLine» makes the point that even though you may initially think that this kind of thing is a big waste of time, this is precious time that is well spent as you seek to please the Lord by knowing your wife. Many wives complain that their husbands don't talk with them, unless they want something.

The last area is experiencing her world. As time allows, you should do all you can to "walk a mile in her shoes". I once saw a Dr. Phil show where he had the husband be the mother for a week-end while the wife went to a glamour place to indulge herself, courtesy of the Dr. Phil show. The outcome was a husband who could now relate to his wife in a way that was meaningful. I'm not advocating that, necessarily, but we should be doing what she does so you have her perspective on life.

But remember, when you take the time to know and understand your wife, you better use that information well in your living with her. Not only does God know your heart, but your wife will more sensitive to you. She reasons in her heart that you have no excuse for not being considerate of her. You understand her, now.

Honoring Your Wife

Peter told us that we also must honor our wives. Your wife doesn't know what is in your heart. But she will know what she means to you by your words and actions toward her. Do you tell her what she means to you? Do you tell her how thankful you are to God for her? Do you hold her hand in public? Do you prefer

her to others? Do you open and hold doors for her? Do you belittle her in public? Do you normally speak to her in a derogatory way? Are you sarcastic most of the time? Is everything a joke to you? Do you treat her as your servant? Do you focus on her character and her love for the Lord more than on her shortcomings? Do you serve her? Do you talk her up to the children?

These are the kinds of things that show you honor your wife. Granted, these can be done with a heart that is not sincere. But remember what Peter told you – your prayers will be hindered if you are not in a God-honoring relationship with your wife.

Loving Your Wife

Even though Peter did not specifically mention loving your wife in 1 Peter 3, it is implied. Love for your wife will be the natural outworking of understanding her and honoring her.

Lou Priolo devotes 2 chapters to loving your wife as well as an appendix that lists 108 ways that you can show love to your wife. «GreetingLine» devotes an entire chapter to this topic. Both men take their cues from Ephesians 5 about the husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church. Lou Priolo defines love this way:

Love is giving others what they need without having some temporal reward as the primary motive. (page 90)

«GreetingLine» defines love like this:

A selfless and enduring commitment of the will to care about and benefit another person by righteous, truthful, and compassionate thoughts, words and actions. (page 106)

Stuart goes on to say that there are hindrances to love. You can love with wrong motives. You are doing what you do for your own benefit. Pride is a hindrance to love because it focuses on you, not your wife. The fear of how your wife will respond is a hindrance to Biblical love. You are more concerned about her getting mad at you than you are about loving her enough to tell her the truth. And bitterness shows its ugly head when a husband is always finding fault with his wife. Love believes the best about another, including his wife.

What are some of the ways that Lou has listed for you to show your wife that you love her: telling her frequently that you love her. The old joke that you told her at the altar when you were getting married that you loved her and that you would let her know if it changes just doesn't get it. Writing notes and love letters to her. Calling her during the day for no particular reason except that you miss her and would rather be there with her. Admitting when you're wrong and seeking forgiveness. Noticing her appearance and complimenting her before she asks you. Reminiscing with her about the early days. Giving her your undivided attention when she wants to talk to you. There are 108 listed in Lou's appendix, so you shouldn't run out in a lifetime. But don't take a lifetime to begin!

Being a God-honoring Sustainer

I think that I can hear some of you right now. "You know Greg, this all sounds nice and right and I know that I should do it all. But you don't understand. I cannot possi-

bly do all of these things. I am so overwhelmed right now I can't see straight. I want to read my Bible. I want to pray more. I want to understand my wife, honor her, and love her. But ...”

Let me tell you – I hear your pain. And we still have 3 more Sundays of this after tonight including a 2-day retreat! You ain't seen nothin' yet!

But let me encourage you. God will sustain you. He will give you the ability to work for His glory. He doesn't expect you to make 100 changes overnight. He isn't expecting you to be a perfect leader at home by next Sunday. We are all a work in progress. But we must be at work!

May I give you some suggestions? Start out with one change that you are going to do daily. Let me suggest that you begin to read and meditate on Scripture. Choose your time when you are going to do it; choose the place where you will do it; and choose where you are going to start in the Scriptures. Then begin. Share your desire and resolve with your wife. Ask for her help. Ask her to pray for you. Ask her to encourage you when you are loosing desire or when life is busy and hectic. Share your insights from the Scriptures with your wife regularly.

And then one more change. Ask your wife if you can pray together once each week. Agree on when you will do this and where. Ask her to help to facilitate it. And then choose a Psalm and pray with her. I'm only suggesting that you start with once a week. This isn't a major commitment for right now. But I guarantee that once you develop the habit of taking this time with her, you will desire it more and more. And it will become easier. You will also find that your daily time with the Lord in His Word will become sweeter and more desirous than the TV or the newspaper as your meditation helps you to see your entire world from the perspective of Scripture . You will be loving Him more and more and wanting to bring Him more and more glory. You will be wanting to know more and understand more. It will bring a closeness to God that you have probably never had before.

As you gain success with these little changes, then you will find that making other changes will be less difficult. You will be surprised at how much you can change as you work at it for the glory of God.

And one word to you wives: please do not discourage your husbands as they begin their new journey. I remember a couple that I was counseling. I asked them to pray once in the coming week as part of their homework. The next week when they came in, I asked the husband if they had prayed once that week. He answered yes, but he would never do it again. When I questioned him he told me that his wife said he didn't know how to pray right. Wives, don't discourage your husbands. Give them all the encouragement that you can, even if he can't pray right, whatever that means!

If you haven't figured it out by now, Russ mentioned this morning about heart attitudes that were needed in order to be successful in this school of leadership. They are necessary in all areas of life, including this area of our homes. It is not possible to understand, honor, and love your wife without humility, kind-heartedness, sympathy, and desiring to live in harmony with others. Pride, selfishness, and self-centeredness are not compatible with what God requires of husbands who are in the school of leadership. So ask God to help you with the attitudes of your heart so that you can please him with your life. Work hard at being a good student in leadership at home.

I have not gone into some other areas of leadership in the home. I plan on covering them in the evening message in two weeks. This was enough for one message.

What do you need to take away from our time together tonight?

Conclusion

If you are struggling with the intake of God's Word and prayer, then you need to evaluate the methods that you are using.

The regular intake of God's Word by reading and meditating needs to become a vital part of your daily routine of life.

Your prayer times will become more meaningful and delightful as you begin to use other methods of praying.

Understanding, honoring, and loving your wife, who is your sister in Christ, must become a normal response of your heart toward her, and for God's glory.

Begin with a couple of changes and add others when those become habitual.

Let me leave you with an illustration that might help you understand one of the important issues from today.

I've heard it said by some men, that they wished their wives came with an owner's manual, as if this was some kind of explanation for their not understanding how their wives operated. If nothing else, I hope that you have seen by both this morning's and this evening's messages that we hold the owner's manual in our hands. The Creator and Designer of all of creation has told us everything we need in order to live lives that are pleasing to Him and that are pleasing to others.

This owner's manual is not optional. It is not like those Christmas presents that we think we can assemble without reading the instructions. Oh, we act as if we can get through this life without giving the owner's manual and the instructions very little attention. But, it is impossible to do so. We must know it in all of its beauty and wisdom. It's not like other owner's manuals, in that it does not contain any errors, and it has all that we need to live life and to live godly in this present world.

Someone said that the Word did not become sweet and precious to them until they were in the midst of trials. It was at that time that the light became bright and they couldn't ignore it anymore. It doesn't have to be that way. We don't have to wait until trials come.

Life is complex. People are complex. This world is complex. But the complexity is made simple with the owner's manual. Let's give ourselves during this coming year to the intake of the owner's manual and to the application of it to the operation of all of life – for the glory of God!

Let us pray and help each other as we seek to be good students in God's school of leadership.

Biblical Leadership at Work

Ephesians 6:5-9

Mark Schindler

The Concept

When you hear the word “work”, what comes to mind? For some, the word defines life aspirations and a passion to labor in a chosen field. For others, the word is full of frustrations, disappointment, and toils. Whether we find our work to be a daily delight or daily despair, as believers, scripture calls us to a higher standard; a Biblical standard of leadership in our work. Today, these standards fly above circumstances, culture, and position to encourage and enable us to rise to a God glorifying kind of leadership.

While the Leading Man series and this message is aimed at men who aspire to Biblical leadership in their work, I also recognize that with both men and many of our women in the work force, much of what we study this morning will apply to both. This morning’s text from Ephesians, though brief, provides clear principles that shape our thinking on being leaders at work. Whether you work under the authority of another, whether you work in authority over others, or even if you do both, scripture clearly and wisely addresses both sides of workplace relationships.

Last week Russ began by reminding us that we live out of “what we believe to be true.” In the context of work, this means that as men “how we lead or are led in the workplace will be shaped by what we affirm and what we deny leadership to be.” Regardless of whether we are in authority or under authority (and it is often both), we will think, behave, and react in relationship to others based upon what we believe to be true about Biblical leadership at work.

The second part of the concept that Russ brought out is that “we live out of what we want.” This means our view of workplace leadership will be shaped by the desires in our souls and we will move toward those things at work that we have defined as true and valuable.” This has tremendous implications as we make career and job decisions, struggle with adversity, handle praise and criticism, and especially how we relate to our coworkers.

In addition, our workplace leadership is lived out of an interaction with what we believe and treasure in other areas of our lives as well. For example, we know we ought to spend more time being a spiritual leader at home, but we find it easier to focus our attention and energy in our work. Again this has important consequences in how we allocate time to work relative to other spiritual priorities in life, how we interact in our work relative to financial implications, and the intersection of work with our personal spiritual walk.

One other important point to clarify is this. Understanding leadership at work is not only for those who are in positions of authority. A Biblical view of leadership applies both to those who lead and those who are under leadership. Whether you act as a leader in your work, work under the leadership of others, or do both, you are called to live out the pattern of Biblical leadership relative to all God-appointed structures

of authority. Some choose to disdain leadership principally on the grounds of experience with bad leadership. Some choose to ignore Biblical leadership because it is a path more difficult to follow. But the truths of Biblical leadership in Scripture are clear and call us to God-glorifying relationships and responsibilities regardless of our experience or situation. So it is not a question of whether you are a leader or not, it is only a question of how well you will lead or how well you will be led.

The Purpose of Work

Having a Biblical view of leadership at work first requires a Biblical view of work. What does the Bible have to say about the purpose and nature of work? We can find out much about work by going back to the very beginning. We see in Genesis 1 that God is a worker in a unique and creative way. When His work is complete he delights in it. God's work brings praise and glory to His name. Psalms 8 declares awesome majesty of the work of His hands. Psalm 145 proclaims the splendor of God's works and that one generation shall praise them to another.

John 5:17 expresses this truth, "Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.'" The sense of this verse is that the Father is continuing to work at His work and that Christ also is continuing in this work. We also know that Christ came to earth to do the work of the Father. We see this in John 4:33-34, "So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." It is wonderful to know that we are uniquely the work of God in Christ and that we are not only His created beings but we are also His re-created beings through the redemptive and sanctifying work of Christ sealed through His Spirit.

Not only is God a worker, but man was created to be a worker in the image of God. Again in Genesis we see that God gives Adam the work of cultivating the ground for food and keeping the Garden. Adam is given the work of naming the animals. And even in the creating of Eve, we see that God provides to Adam a "suitable helper" to assist in his work and to provide companionship. This idea of man as a worker is carried into the New Testament. Consider Ephesians 2:10 which says. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." I love this verse because it ties together the idea that we are God's workmanship, with the idea that man was created as a worker to do those good works which He has prepared for us to do.

Let me ask an interesting question. When was work instituted, before or after the fall? The answer is "before". This is an important truth that should shape our thinking of work. Work was ordained prior to man's fall and the subsequent to the curse upon mankind. What does this mean? This means that work was not a result of the curse, but rather was a part of God's perfect creation prior to it. Now to hear some Christians talk about their work, you might think differently. But the truth is that work is a wonderful part of God's glorious creation. And it was a part of this creation upon which He placed His stamp of approval by declaring it to be "very good".

What changes in the fall is not the essence of work, but the nature of man's work. It is important to understand that the effect of the fall did not remove the legitimacy of work nor did it destroy the design for work that God created. But it did fundamentally change man's work. Before the fall, work was a blessing. Now it becomes a

toilsome labor. Work also becomes a source of frustration and difficulty for men. Ecclesiastes speaks to the difficulty and frustration of work and depicts it as vanity and a striving after the wind. The fall also separated men from God. And thus it also separated the work of men from its God-glorifying purpose. Apart from worshipping and glorifying God in our work, we will reach the same conclusion as the Preacher of Ecclesiastes. That is, that under the sun, work is meaningless and has no purpose.

If this were the end of the story on work we would be without hope. But in Christ, man's relationship with God is restored and he is able to fulfill the original purpose of work which is to worship and glorify God. First, Christ puts the worker back in a right relationship with God. Our work now matters to God; it has eternal value; and it has the potential to please God. Second, Christ puts our work back in right relationship with God. No longer is our work the empty vapor described in Ecclesiastes, it is now full of spiritual significance, purpose, and satisfaction. Thirdly, Christ changes the worker. He frees men and women from sinful attitudes and ways of work, and transforms them into God-honoring workers. Christ, and only Christ, brings real hope to the worker and his work..

The Context

This morning I chose Ephesians 6:5 as probably one of the best places to see principles of Biblical leadership in the workplace. This passage closely parallels Chapter 3:18 of Paul's letter to the Colossians. There are two main parts of Ephesians. The first three chapters of Paul's letter instruct the Ephesians on sound doctrine and theology, describing the Church, our salvation, and our inheritance in Christ. At Chapter 4, Paul moves to the practical implications of grace in the lives of believers within the Church, our families, and as individuals. It is within these instructions regarding the walk of the believer that he speaks to the church as workers.

The context of these passages is one of household relationships. While the relationships of husbands, wives, and children are natural to us, the idea of slaves and servants does not fit into our modern cultural image of a household. In the Ephesian culture, household slaves, or bond servants, often worked along with their master in support of his occupation. It is important to understand in the economy of that day slavery was often a natural and necessary means of providing for oneself and one's family. To our civilized palate, it may seem cruel, but indentured servanthood actually formed a cultural safety net for those who had no means to provide for themselves.

With industrialization and the specialization of labor, the workplace has become less centered upon families and more around man made institutions. Due to many factors, men no longer must temporarily or permanently give up their freedom to receive provisions for life. Rather, modern employment has become, while far less restrictive, what is in essence contractual indentured services. In our modern way of thinking, we view work in a much more segmented and limited way. But the employee and employer agreement could also be characterized simply as a more civilized form of a master-slave arrangement.

Therefore, I believe that when Scripture refers to the master-servant or master-slave relationship, the general principles apply directly to the Christian worker. We cannot

try and avoid the application of these passages on the technicality that we are not masters or servants. Whether one is under the authority of others or in authority over others in the workplace, we are called to principles of Biblical leadership that must guide and direct what we believe to be true about and desire from our work. The amazing and challenging ramification here is that Scripture uses one of the most difficult settings as the context for illustrating our responsibilities at work. If obedience is expected in the context of masters and servants, then it should be expected even more within the less restrictive context of modern employment.

Leadership Under Authority

(v. 5-8)

With Obedience

(v. 5-6)

The first four verses of this passage speak to a view of Biblical leadership for those under the authority of others. Here we have the Biblical response to leadership at work. Keep in mind that Paul is writing to the Ephesian church in the context of walking “according to the power at work within us” seen in Chapter 3, verse 20 and “in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” of Chapter 4, verse 1. In other words, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to live with regard to those in authority over us in a manner worthy of our calling knowing that the power of Christ within us is able to help us.

The passage begins with an immediate comparison between the obedience shown to our earthly masters and Christ who is our heavenly and true master. A Biblical view of leadership at work begins with submissive obedience to those in authority over us. The clear command here is to obey our workplace authority with the same sincerity as we would Christ. The phrase “fear and trembling” here is probably not a sense of terror, but a great eagerness to do all you are asked with a desire not to disappoint. The result is that the Christian leads with a sincerity of effort that puts the interests of our employers first in our work.

Verse 6 continues building upon the principle of obedience shown to those in authority in our relationships at work. The emphasis here is on the motivation and attitude of our obedience. Paul strikes right to the selfishness of our hearts. We are not to obey only when we are being watched, that is to serve only the eyes of those in authority over us. Nor are we to serve to please men and seek their praise and adoration of our efforts. Rather, we to be Christ-pleasers. Our leadership at work is to be seen in obedience even when our earthly masters are not present, because it is based upon a deeper and stronger desire to please the one who calls us to submit.

The image of obedience here is a contentment with the authority structure that God has, by His sovereign plan, placed us into. To a great extent, it comes down to our trust in God’s sovereignty over our work. Even when things are not going well, do we trust God in His plans and purposes for our lives? In 1 Peter 2:18 we are challenged to be submissive and content even when it is hard. Peter writes, “Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.” This is a theme that runs through scripture as it

speaks to each sphere of leadership. Are we willing to trust God with our work even in difficulties and uncertainties?

Contentment goes against the sinful heart that is seeking to serve self rather than our employers; that pridefully believes it knows better and can do better than those in authority over us; that tends to either fear or fight back in the face of opposition. I am always amazed at how Scripture aims with perfect accuracy at the wickedness of our hearts, cutting through the excuses, rationalizations, and justifications for our disobedience and doubts. What does Biblical leadership look like at work? It is a sincere obedience to those in authority over us while looking to and trusting in God.

With Service

(v. 7)

In verse 7, Paul shifts from obedience to the service rendered our earthly masters. The principle of Biblical leadership at work here is that of serving those in authority over us as a means of serving our Lord. The emphasis here is that ultimately our service at work is rendered to the Lord. The aim of our service is to the Lord and not to man. This is freeing truth. No matter what our circumstance, job, or position, our work matters because it is offered to God, for His glory and pleasure. Your job may not be as exciting or satisfying as some; it may not be prestigious as some professions; you may not receive the financial rewards given others, but know this truth. Working for the glory of God and His pleasure is not only more deeply satisfying; its rewards will last beyond the horizon of this lifetime.

The other facet of our service Paul brings out to render it with good will. The expression here is that of the emotion or feeling of good and trust towards another. We are to serve our earthly masters in a way that makes their interests our own. Joseph in Potiphar's house is a good example of this. Genesis 39:4 says that "Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had." Joseph's service was rendered with such good will and faithfulness to the master's interest that he was given charge over all that Potiphar owned.

How would this principle be applied today? Like Joseph, how responsible are we with managing the resources of our employer. This would include not only the finances and equipment given to us to accomplish our job, but also the time we are being paid for. If the money were our own, would we spend it the same way? Do we mistreat equipment because we didn't pay for it? Do we waste time or delay getting our work done, in effect stealing our wages from our employer? Biblical leadership at work faithfully makes our master's interests our own.

In the next verse, Paul challenges the Ephesian servants to have a right focus on the rewards of their work. Their responsibilities did not end with obedience and service, even if aimed at their heavenly master. Paul moves to an underlying attitude of the reward expected for the obedience and service rendered. For slaves and servants, there was no financial remuneration for their work. Paul exhorts them to realize that whether slave or free, when they render good service to the Lord, their reward will be received back from Him. The expectation is not on the

reward and praises of men, but on the joy and blessings received from glorifying and pleasing the Lord.

It is interesting how often expectations for rewards can become an issue of discontentment at work. 1 Timothy 6:6 reminds us that “godliness with contentment is great gain.” Even when we are being treated unfairly, our conduct and speech must seek to glorify God and respect those in authority over us. Do we complain and grumble about our pay? Do we speak poorly of our employer to our co-workers? This not only dishonors our Lord but damages our witness for Him with others. In parallel with this verse, Paul reminds the Colossians in 3:24 that it is “from the Lord [they] will receive the inheritance as [their] reward.” We must see that discontentment with our earthly masters is ultimately discontentment with our heavenly Master who has sovereignly allowed us to be in the work situation we are. Biblical leadership at work has a right focus on spiritual rewards.

With Right Rewards

(v. 8)

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Leadership In Authority

(v.9)

With Service

We now turn to Biblical leadership for those who are in authority over others. In the final verse of this passage, Paul turns and speaks to Ephesian masters. Though this is just one verse it is packed. The very first phrase speaks of leadership in service. It turns us back to the previous four verses. Paul writes, “Masters, do the same to them.” At first glance, this seems odd. What does Paul mean? Should Masters obey their servants? The sense here is not to do the same in specifics but in the underlying principle of serving God. That is, believers

who are in authority over others are to remember that they have a heavenly master whom they ultimately serve. They are to show the same attention and care to doing God's will in their position of authority as the servant is to have in his position under authority.

The implication of this is that Biblical leadership for those in authority must demonstrate a care for the well-being, safety, and interests of those who work for them. The master should have a ministry mindset when it comes to those under their authority. Consideration for their position, interests, compensation, and working conditions are just a few examples of ways in which masters serve those under their authority. Managers who work in business find themselves in a dual role, being both in and under authority. This can be particularly difficult when the authority over them makes it difficult to truly have a ministry mindset. In these cases, I believe they must wisely submit to those in authority over them unless what they are being told to do is scripturally unethical or immoral. Biblical leadership at work seeks to serve those who are under their authority.

With Fairness

Not only do they seek to serve those under their authority, but the quality of leadership is to be seen in its fairness. This is seen in contrast by the command to stop threatening them. Masters are not to abuse their authority and position. Paul uses a similar thought in Colossians 3 saying treat those under your authority justly and fairly. There is an interesting parallel in the husband-wife relationship. Just as the husband is to lead, and not rule by domination, the master is to have a caring kind of leadership that makes it easier for those under their authority to be submissive to.

What does this look like? Those in authority must carefully listen to and understand those under them. They cannot play favorites nor treat people harshly. They must be faithful to their words and commitments. They must be humble and treat people with kindness and respect. Even when someone under them fails, they must deal with it with a level head and helpful words. I have heard it said that a good manager takes the blame when things go wrong and gives the credit to those under their authority when things go well. I think to some degree it speaks to a selfless style of leadership that understands the nature of its responsibility and respects those under its authority. Biblical leadership at work seeks fairness and justice.

With Equality of Position

There is one more point not to miss in Paul's instructions to masters. At the end of the verse Paul writes "that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven." Masters are to lead in service to those under their authority and it is to be measured with fairness. But above this, they are to remember that they serve in equal position before the Lord. God is the Master of both master and servant. Regardless of one's position of authority here on earth, there is no partiality with God. This serves almost as a warning to masters. Deal rightly with those under your authority just as you would have God deal with you.

It may not happen in our modern culture, but for the Ephesians, slaves and masters worshipped together as a part of a single household. For a moment, imagine

the Raus and Dieringers coming to church together and probably even sitting together every Sunday. Things may be different today, but we are still to consider ourselves first within the body of Christ. That is, our workplace relationships are secondary to the fact that we are brothers and sisters in Christ. No matter what the work relationship, before God we are equal. We are all sinners saved by God's grace; brothers and sisters in Christ. The power or prestige of our jobs does not matter. The amount of money we make does not matter. None of us have an inferior or superior position in Christ. Biblical leadership at work understands our equality in Christ.

Conclusion

So in review, what does Biblical leadership for those under the authority of others look like? First, it is a sincere obedience to those in authority over us while looking to and trusting in God. It recognizes that scripture calls us to a sincere spirit of submission even when we are treated unfairly. Second, it faithfully makes our master's interests our own. It is being a good steward of our time and those resources we are responsible for. We can ask ourselves, if the roles were reversed, how would I want those under me to work? Third, it has a right focus on spiritual rewards. The purpose of our work is not about how much money we make or how prestigious a job we have. It is about glorifying God and serving Him through serving others.

What does Biblical leadership in authority over others look like? First, it seeks to serve those who are under authority. It does not lord it over others nor abuse its position of authority. It is concerned with the interests of those under their authority. Second, it seeks fairness and justice. It is not harsh or unkind in dealing with others even when they are wrong. It listens to and understands the position of others. And last, it understands our equality in Christ. It knows that our position in Christ is not determined by wealth, status, success. Therefore it is a leadership with humility and selflessness that comes from knowing we are all sinners, saved by God's marvelous grace.

Perhaps the underlying question we should all be asking is "Why is Biblical leadership at work important?" From a practical perspective it promotes harmony and peace in our workplace relationships. Just as in our homes and in the Church, a Biblical understanding and practice of leadership at work defines roles and allows for productive and caring relationships. It also aims our wants and desires toward Christ. Rather than finding satisfaction in money, careers, or the accolades of men, which we should note will ultimately disappoint, we align our hearts with the God's will and His desires. And in this comes the reward of knowing that He is pleased and glorified. Lastly, it is important because it points others to Christ. It does this in one sense because this kind of courageous leadership is not found in the world and allows us to give the credit and glory to God who has transformed us to be workers in His image. It does this in another sense because it provides a godly pattern of Biblical leadership that applies to other spheres of life as well.

Let me encourage you to follow after the kind of Biblical leadership at work that we have seen in Scripture this morning. At times it may be very hard and it may require a level of trust in God that does not come easily. But it is the kind of leadership that

is desperately needed and so easily forsaken. I also want to encourage you to come back this evening as we look at leadership at work from a practical perspective. We will apply Biblical principles over work in several areas including success, integrity, and our witness in the workplace for employees, those in management, and business owners. Let us go in grace this morning with a heart that desires to see God glorified as we strive to be Biblical leaders at work.

Practical Leadership at Work

Selected Passages

Mark Schindler

Introduction

Review

It is unfortunate today, that Christians have adopted many secular and unbiblical views of work. Work is often seen as a means of self-fulfillment. Such views lead to selfishness, materialism, a complaining spirit, and discontentment. To the world, the measure of a man is seen almost exclusively in light of his success at work. Even in the church it seems that we are quick to judge others by their profession, apparent wealth, clothes, home, car, or smoothness of speech. The world's view makes work and leisure the ultimate priorities of life. For many men (and some women too), everything and anything is sacrificed at the altar of career. But ultimately, work can never satisfy. And when it doesn't, work becomes a source of discouragement, depression, disappointment, and delusion.

It is ironic that the more our culture values leisure and play, the more we have become enslaved to our work. Parodying the dwarves of Disney's Snow White, our cars and tee shirts unashamedly proclaim to the world "I owe, I owe, so it's off to work I go." Thus work has become an unpleasant and unsatisfying means to an end. The promises of the industrial age have increased our standard of living but not the quality of our living. And though the technology or information age is now fully upon us, our intellectual prowess has not made us any wiser, has not made us any happier, nor has it stopped suicide, divorce, or depression. These days, conscientious, obedient, diligent workers are as rare as considerate, fair, and humble leaders.

This morning we looked at Biblical Leadership at work. Let's take a quick review. The kind of Biblical leadership we saw in Ephesians was one that seeks to serve those under its authority. It is a concerned and kind style of leadership that does not seek to abuse its position. It is fair and just, but is not harsh with those under its authority. And it understands that in Christ all are equal, humbling us to seek to serve others for the glory and praise of our Lord. Should we want for an example, we need only look to the leadership that was modeled by Jesus Christ as he worked among us and led His disciples.

Pattern of Leadership

One of the interesting revelations out of this series of messages is the pattern of leadership that emerges from scripture. There are several relationships of authority outside of work that we must live in for God's glory. In fact, in one or more ways, we are all under God-ordained, sovereignly-appointed authority. Everyone here this evening is under the authority of governments. God has provided us federal, state, and local governments and officials whose leadership we must respect and obey. Within the Church the body is to submit to the authority of the Elders, and all to the authority of Christ. Wives are under the authority of husbands and children under the authority of parents. Every day we move in and out of spheres of authority.

Some where we are in authority and some where we are under the authority of others.

In all of these authority structures, there is a consistent pattern or model of Biblical leadership for both those under and in authority. I think there are at least four key principles in scripture that define our view of Biblical leadership whether at work or in any other relationship of authority. First, there is to be a sincere submission to all God-ordained authority. We are to obey and respect those who have leadership over us, knowing that God has placed them there for our good and His glory. Second, as leaders, we are to have consideration for those under our authority. There is to be an attitude of love and care for those under our leadership recognizing that God has placed them under our responsibility. Third, there is to be a selfless serving of those under our authority. Biblical leadership is giving and is willing to put the needs of others before our own. Lastly, it is humble toward others knowing that before God there is equality regardless of one's position of leadership. We are all sinners before God, saved by His grace, and not one of us is any better or worse before because of our position of leadership in any sphere of authority. These four key principles play out in a pattern that defines our view of leadership along Biblical lines and points our hearts to Jesus, who is the perfect leader.

Approach

Unfortunately, many Christians live at work as though they were in a different world, far from the commands and wisdom of scripture. At work they feel isolated from spiritual realities and are either oblivious or calloused to their sinful choices. Far away from the accountability of Pastors, Elders, Christian friends, and spouses, they choose to live a life far from God's standards. It is worth noting, that Biblical leadership is just one of many areas that we could speak to regarding work. Our relationships with those in leadership over us and those under our leadership, is just one aspect of the character of a godly man in the workplace. We must allow scripture to not only shape our view of workplace leadership, but also practical areas such as career decisions, stewardship, integrity, contentment, purity, and diligence. In all of this there is also the interaction of work with other areas of lives such as marriage, ministry, and our walk with the Lord.

For the leading man, all of work matters to God. There is no distinction between secular and sacred vocations. Every career and vocation is sacred in the sense that it we live with spiritual responsibilities in the world and our work is done in Christ and for His glory. Ultimately, whether slave or master, employer or employee, it is our goal to please God in all that we do and to bring glory and honor to His name. Paul writes in Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." I truly believe that it is vitally important that as Christian workers we understand the importance of living out a Biblical view of leadership at work. Satan would have us continue to be deceived, discouraged, or apathetic regarding Biblical leadership in the workplace. We can defeat this by holding fast to Biblical truth and being willing to diligently apply these principals even in the face of opposition and difficulty.

With this in mind, our approach this evening is to focus on Biblical leadership in more practical terms. Rather than a particular scripture, we will look at leadership at work with support from selected passages. Similar to Paul's instructions to the Ephesians and Colossians, we will look at leadership from the perspective of both employees and those in who lead employees; that is those who are either managers or employers. It is my hope that this message provides practical applications of what we heard this morning and addresses the real-life situations that we face everyday at work.

As an Employee

Respect for Authority

As we did this morning, let's start with a view of Biblical leadership as an employee. The first practical application to make is that of respect for authority. When we are under the authority of others in the workplace we are submit to their leadership with respect. True submission requires a respect for both the position of leadership and the person in leadership. Even in situations of both immoral and unethical leadership there is still to be a respect for the authority of the person. But for most of us, the typical situation at work is not so extreme and requires our recognition and respect for their leadership.

Turn to 1 Peter 2, and let's look at verses 18-19. Listen to what the Word says. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly." The standard for respect here is not just when those over us are gracious, easy to work for, have a similar personality, or see things our way. The standard here is to respect their leadership even when they are unjust and even cause us suffering.

Similar to the passage from Ephesians this morning, the context here in Peter is of household servants who worked in their master's homes. The implication of these verses is that some served under unjust and unbelieving masters who were harsh to the point of causing physical grief. Peter calls these servants to be subject and give honor and reverence to their masters. The word "all" indicates in every way in every circumstance this is to be their attitude. So here we have respect for those in authority over us commanded in one of the most difficult work relationships in the most difficult of circumstances. Why? Because it is praiseworthy in the eyes of our God when we patiently and humbly bear up under people and circumstances that cause us grief.

And yet, how easy it is for us at work, and in much less hostile circumstances, to make fun of, speak poorly of, and complain about those in authority over us. This thought convicted my own heart as I thought of the numerous times I have not respected those in authority over me. Whether out of pride, seeking the admiration of others, or spite, I have slipped into patterns of speech and thought that degraded my bosses, managers, and others in authority. It is so easy to forget that we are to be a living testimony for God in the workplace. It is so easy to forget that our disrespect for their leadership is disrespect for God who has placed them in authority over us. Paul writes in Romans 13:2, that "whoever re-

sists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.”

So what are some specific situations that might challenge our respect for leadership? Let's start with something that has drastically changed over the last 50 years. What if you are a man working for a woman? Do you justify on Biblical grounds that since women are subject to men in marriage you do not have to respect their authority? What if you are working for an unbeliever? Do you rationalize that since they are not a Christian you are not subject to them? How about something more common place? How many of us believe that we are working for someone who is not as competent as we are? Does our pride keep us from respecting their leadership because we believe we can do their job better than they can? In all of these situations, scripture calls us to give all respect regardless of their ability, or our perception of their ability, to lead.

Humility under Authority

So the first practical application of Biblical leadership for employees is respect for authority. The second practical application is humility under authority. When we are under the authority of others in the workplace we are to humbly accept their leadership. Humility requires a setting aside of our rights and interests and preferring the rights and interests of those in leadership. Humility requires a setting aside of our pride and considering those in leadership before ourselves. It is an absence of rivalry, conceit, or malice toward them. It rejoices at their success and accomplishments, regardless of the quality of their leadership.

Turn to 1 Peter 3, and let's look at verse 8. This verse follows a series of exhortations to submit to various forms of leadership including human institutions, workplace relationships, and marriage. At the end of this instruction he writes, “Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.” I think the phrase “all of you”, applies to both those in and under authority. Peter is saying that in all of these relationships, we are to have an attitude of humility toward one another. The sense of the word for humility here is a genuine concern for others that is marked by a conscious effort to place yourself beneath them.

To a certain extent, all of these attitudes toward leadership require contentment regarding those in positions of authority. But humility, perhaps more than any other quality of our attitudes toward leadership, requires an abiding contentment in God and His goodness toward us. Humility trusts God for the outcomes of both good and bad decisions made by leaders. Humility trusts God for recognition of our work when it seems ignored by those in leadership. Humility trusts that God has placed those in leadership over us for a purpose. Humility is content to pursue peace rather than pushing a point to prove we are right.

We can also define humility by what it is not. Humility is not false. By that I mean, humility is not pretense or put on as a charade. It is not making light of our work to manipulate others to sing our praise. It is not faking kindness and respect when our boss is around and then making jokes about them when their eye is not upon us. Humility has no capacity for bitterness toward leadership. Bitterness can well up and overflow in sinful anger, slander, and malice toward oth-

ers. It will stifle forgiveness and kindness when they are the right thing to do. Humility does not insult or speak falsely of leadership. It does not seek to cause harm to those in leadership nor will it abide lies or assassination of character.

There are many situations where humility is difficult and may even feel impossible. What about when we have been wronged? Certainly in cases of being wronged we have the opportunity to follow appropriate paths for justice and restitution. But we must do so humbly, seeking justice for its own sake and not to take our own revenge. What about when we are being taken advantage of? This is more difficult. There are times for the sake of God's glory, we may be called to suffer and endure difficulty with enabling grace. Romans 12 reminds us to "bless those who persecute you" and again that "vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." In some cases, the Lord may allow a circumstance where it is wise to leave a job because of the way we are being treated. But even then, we are still to be humble-minded in regard to those who are over us.

Obedience to Authority

There is one more practical application of Biblical leadership for employees that goes along with respect for authority and humility under authority. When we are under the authority of others in the workplace we are to obey their leadership. At first glance, obedience does not seem like an area that most people would struggle with. But submitting to leadership in the area of obedience is more than just giving lip service or doing the minimum that is asked of us. It is a whole-hearted effort that strives to do one's best not just for our employer, but as one working for the Lord.

Turn to Titus 2, verses 9 and 10. Paul encourages Titus to teach according to sound doctrine and provides examples that cover a variety of relationships where leadership is involved. Paul writes, "Slaves are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." There is so much we can learn from these two verses. First, those under authority at work are to be submissive, or in other words, are to yield to leadership in all things. Moreover, they are to be well-pleasing. The idea here is to work in a way that gives satisfaction or gains an employer's good will. Additionally, we see that they were not to be given to contradicting leadership or pilfering. The use of pilfering is an interesting choice because it conveys a keeping back in small amounts of what does not belong to us. Finally, Paul concludes by reminding them that they do this not to gain their freedom or for any self-serving reason, but so that they may adorn the doctrine of God. When we live Biblically under leadership, the goodwill and praise we receive we reflect back to God so that He receives honor and so that others are attracted to the Gospel.

I think everyone understands that obedience is submitting to the leadership of another. But the character or quality of our obedience is what is important. What is going on in our hearts and minds when we obey? There are several practical characteristics to sincere obedience. The first of these is diligence. Diligence and its opposite, laziness, are frequent topics in Proverbs. Proverbs 13:4 says that the "The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied." The diligent worker consistently and generously brings his

best efforts to the workplace. The diligent worker understands that laziness is just another form of pilfering; a keeping back of our efforts while still taking a wage that expects more than we are offering. Another characteristic is that of being trustworthy and faithful. The idea is that we obey with a high quality of work not only when our employer or manager is watching us, but also when they are not. Trustworthiness and reliability is best demonstrated when we are left on our own and are faithful to starting and completing the work we have been given.

So is there ever a time when we should disobey authority at work? Again, general principles of leadership can be applied to man-instituted authority at work. We are to obey leadership at work unless what is being done or what we are being asked to do would violate God's laws. For example, we should not steal, lie, bring harm to others, or break the laws of government. This principle may spill over into the interaction of work with other areas of our lives when we believe what we are asked to do would cause us to neglect spiritual priorities regarding our spouse, family, or ministry. In these situations, we must do what is right and trust ourselves to God to provide another means of employment and the provisions for life.

As a Manager/Employer

Serving from Authority

Let's move to the other side of the authority coin. What practical applications can we make when we find ourselves in positions of leadership at work? The first application is that Biblical leadership is foremost a role of serving from a position of authority. Throughout scripture and in the ministry of Jesus on earth, we see a model of leadership that aims to serve others. Servant leadership runs against the bent of our sinful hearts that would rather be served by others. Nor is it the model of the world that seeks to use others as a means to success or to climb the corporate ladder.

There is a general principle of serving others as a model of leadership that is present throughout scripture. We see it in Luke 22:25-26 where Jesus speaks to his disciples when they argue about who is to be regarded as the greatest. He says, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves." This morning we saw this same principle applied to masters in Ephesians 6:9, where Biblical leadership is showing the same attention and care to doing God's will in their position of authority as the servant is to have in his position under authority.

The kind of leadership that we are naturally drawn to be is that of ruling those under our authority. It demands the obedience and submission of others rather than leading in a way that produces and encourages it. In practical terms, servant leadership requires getting to know those under you so that you may lead in an understanding way. It is considerate of their interests and kind in both words and deeds. Servant leadership is not concerned about its power or position knowing that Christ Himself came to serve and give His life for us. Servant leadership in the workplace will stand out as you demonstrate genuine care and interest in

those under your authority. More importantly, it will demonstrate a gracious and humble model of leadership that will point people to Jesus Christ.

Responsibility of Authority

Another practical application is that Biblical leadership understands the responsibility of authority. This means that those in leadership recognize that they have been entrusted with a responsibility to use their position to benefit something greater. This may be as a manager entrusted with corporate resources in order to benefit the company. Or this may be as a business owner carrying the heavy weight of knowing that God has entrusted you as a steward of His resources to benefit both the people you lead and the Lord. In either case, there is a greater burden because your sphere of responsibility extends beyond yourself to those under your authority. You must not only do well, but you must ensure that those you lead must also do well.

This principle is seen in Colossians 4:1. Paul writes, “Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” Here we see the responsibility to first be fair and just to those under your authority. In practical terms, this is a responsibility to not play favorites, to be sure you fully understand situations so that you can render good judgment, and to assign work based on experience, skills, and ability. But the greater responsibility here is to remember that no matter what your position of leadership, we have a Master in heaven who watches over us. He sees when we are harsh and unkind to those under us. He sees when we withhold information, tell small lies, or take credit for the accomplishment of others. And he knows the attitude of our heart when it seeks to manipulate, to promote self, or blame others for our own faults.

The responsibility of leadership is probably the hardest for those who are both under authority and in authority. Managers in the lower levels of organizations often have a difficult responsibility to balance challenging and even unreasonable demands given them knowing the impact upon those that they lead. They may find themselves in positions of knowing confidential information that is not to be shared with those beneath them. They may even disagree with the decisions being made by their leadership, but know they must enforce those decisions upon those they lead and care about. These moments test our integrity, character, and wisdom where principles of leadership on both sides of our view of Biblical leadership come into play. Often our desire to be popular and well-liked comes into conflict with obeying and preferring the interests of our leaders. Biblical leadership is often not easy and carries a heavy load of responsibility.

Ministry in Authority

One of the most common phrases heard in the workplace is also the name of a popular restaurant chain. TIGF or “Thank God It’s Friday.” I wonder how many Christian workers arrive at work after the weekend and say to their co-workers TGIM, for “Thank God it’s Monday”. I would challenge everyone to think of their work as ministry; especially those in positions of leadership. Our work lives are not exempt from spiritual realities. All of our lives, including our work matter to God. When the substance of our work lives is reviewed in heaven, we

will not be asked about the prestige or accomplishments of our positions. We will be shown how our work did or didn't glorify God and minister to others.

Developing a ministry mindset means thinking about the spiritual realities of your leadership at work. When you consistently think about your work in spiritual terms, you focus on God's plans and purposes rather than your own. Certainly, work as ministry means meeting physical needs and fairly providing for life and living. But work as a ministry means truly caring about the people who serve you. It is a care that goes deeper than just the physical condition; it sees their spiritual condition as well. Practically, this means praying for them and looking for opportunities to share the gospel with those who are willing to hear it. This is the kind of leadership that will truly make a difference both now and for eternity.

For a small number of you, God has given you the gift and responsibility of owning a business. In a real sense, when we consider Biblical leadership it has even greater implications for you, because you have greater control over the course and decisions made. What is the purpose of your business? Is it to fill your storehouses with wealth by maximizing profits? What kind of steward of the business are you? Do you contribute profits to care for the less fortunate? Do you set aside money to further the kingdom of God? How do you minister to your employees? Do you provide fair wages and benefits in keeping with their needs? Do you regularly pray for them and look to help in times of need? How does your style of leadership reflect upon God and bring Him praise and glory? Running your business as a ministry for the glory and pleasure of God may require sacrifice and more work, but it will bring a satisfaction far beyond anything that money, fame, or power can supply.

Conclusion

Let me wrap it up tonight with a few introspective questions. I have woven as much application as I could throughout the course of the message. So let's bring it home together as we ask ourselves and pray over these questions. As I go through these, I will leave time for those of you who would like to write these down in your notes.

1. In what ways have I have been showing disrespect for those in leadership over me?
2. What wrong attitudes and thoughts do I have about those in leadership over me?
3. In what ways can I be more diligent in my work?
4. In what ways do I rule rather than lead those under my authority?
5. Are there areas of decisions and leadership at work that I should be praying about?
6. In what ways could I see my work as a ministry?
7. Is there anything in my response to Biblical leadership at work that is hindering my spiritual walk with the Lord?

C. H. Spurgeon once preached on work saying, "We begin with God in the morning, seeking help to do our work, and to do it well. At his hands we seek guidance and prosperity from hour to hour. We pray him to prevent our doing any wrong to others, or suffering any wrong from them; and we ask him to keep our temper and to preserve our spirit while we are with worldly men. We beg that we may not be infected by the evil example of others, and that our example may be such as may be safely followed." Let us not forget in all of this that we need Christ to be Godly followers and leaders at work. Let us desire to live out a Biblical model of leadership, admit our dependence upon Christ, and faithfully pray that God would help us not just to lead and be led; but to lead and be led well.

The Standards of Leadership

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Devon Berry

Introduction I thought we would begin this morning with an activity many of you may usually take up *after* church, not during: Reading the weekend edition of the newspaper. This is an article from the January 13th edition of the Charlotte Observer entitled: *Putting Manliness Next to Godliness*. It is a piece that chronicles several Christian movements which are responding to what they believe to be the “feminization of church.” Here are a few excerpts:

Brad Stine [of the organization Godmen] runs onstage in ripped blue jeans, his shirt untucked, his long hair shaggy. He’s a stand up comic by trade, but he’s in Nashville, Tenn., this day as an evangelist, on a mission to build up a new Christian – one profanity at a time.

...In daybreak fraternity meetings and weekend paintball wars, in wilderness retreats and X-rated chats about lust, thousands of Christian men are reaching for more forceful, more rugged expressions of their faith...

...The virility crusade is, in part, a response to a stark gender gap. More than 60 percent of the adults at a typical worship service are women...Women are also significantly more likely to attend Sunday School, read the Bible and pray regularly...Murrow blames men’s lackluster attitudes on the feminization of mainline churches...Eldredge [states], “Christianity as it currently exists, has done some terrible things to men...[men] believe that God put them on Earth to be a good boy.” “Factor in the pressure to be a “Christian nice guy” –no cussing, no confrontation, in tune with the wife’s emotions – and it’s amazing men keep the faith at all.

Stine argues that the genteel façade of a Christian nice guy inhibits introspection and substitutes clichés for spiritual growth...His speakers admit to masturbation and adultery. Such honesty, Stine contends, molds better more godly men than a typical Sunday service...Maybe worship could be hanging out with a bunch of guys, admitting we like blowing [stuff] up... Caldwell urges...leaders to have NFL bloopers on the big screen when the men come in, and oldies or country western on the radio.

While writers like Eldrege and Murrow have made some important observations about gender patterns in the church, should the “masculinization” of the church be the answer? Or, is this another instance in which the church, when coming upon difficulty, turns to the culture for an answer when it should be turning to the Word? Our purpose this morning is to turn to the Word to understand what God has revealed to us about the issue of male leadership in the church. [PRAY]

Contexts

As most of you know, we are in the middle of our annual Family Enrichment series held in the month of January. In this series we generally take a topic that concerns the family and work to develop a greater understanding of what the Scriptures have to say about that topic and its practical implications for our lives. This year our series is entitled “Leading Men.” The aim of the series is to enable men practically to become godly and effective leaders. In the last two weeks we’ve discussed men’s roles in the home and at work. This week, we’ll discuss men’s leadership roles in the church.

The text we will be studying from this morning is 1 Timothy 3:1-13. [READ] Before we begin into our text this morning, I’d like to bring our attention to several contexts and connections that will affect our understanding of what we hear today.

Family Enrichment Series

First, although it has been stated implicitly several times throughout our series, I want to briefly and explicitly answer the question: Why are we spending a whole month talking about adult men? After all, is there not another gender and other age groups that make up our body? Certainly there are. Is this an attempt to drive out the “feminization” of the American church and create a space where men can be men? Or are we trying to increase the attendance of males in the church by preaching on topics of interest to them? The reason we speak to men this month is because the Bible has *clearly* identified men as those who have certain leadership responsibilities in several very important spheres of life.

This biblical pattern begins as early as Genesis 2 and 3 (cf. 1 Timothy 2) and continues throughout the course of redemptive history until we reach very clear statements in passages such as Ephesians 5 and Titus 1. God has unique expectations for men as leaders *especially* in the spheres of church and home. I say unique because these are expectations and responsibilities that are not given to women or children. As men, we must not only know what these expectations and responsibilities are, we must by grace work hard to fulfill them in our lives. So we can summarize by simply saying that we address men specifically from this pulpit for the month of January because God addresses men specifically in his Word, and **that** *should be* the pattern for all of our preaching.

Paul’s Letter to Timothy (vv. 14, 15a)

A second context we need to consider this morning, beyond the Family Enrichment Series, is the context of the passage we will be considering, 1 Timothy 3:1-13. A few basic points should help us understand Paul’s intent for this passage in his letter to Timothy. We can start by noting that the “book” of 1 Timothy is not a book per se, but a letter. Unlike an essay or a journal article, it is a *personal* response from Paul to Timothy addressing real-time problems that Timothy and the church at Ephesus were experiencing. What were these problems? Well, because Paul spends much of his time addressing false teachers and their doctrines and order in the church, we can assume that the Ephesian church was infiltrated by false teachers and was experiencing difficulty in knowing and/or implementing biblical patterns for the body. So to a church troubled by false teaching and a

wandering sense of “how” to function as the body, Paul writes. Not so different from the church today.

Look with me at 3:14-15 [READ]. One of Paul’s clear purposes in writing to Timothy was to lay out the pattern for how the body was to behave. It is in this context that Paul addresses the role of male leadership in the church, particularly as elders and deacons are concerned, but also as all men are concerned as we will see in a moment. The point here is that in arriving to 3:1-13 we should be clear that Paul is writing very specifically and purposefully. The list of character qualities we find here are not random or simply about being “nice” Christians – they are the qualities that male leadership *must* have if it is to please the Master of the house. So note the specificity – it would not make sense to insist a bricklayer know how to bake cakes. Similarly, Paul is not insisting on qualities which have nothing to do with male leadership in the church – these qualities are *fundamental* to healthy doctrine and God-pleasing conduct in the church. As such we must take these as seriously as we do the church itself.

Connections

We’ve addressed two contexts of the message this morning and now I want to observe three connections with you in the form of these questions: What does this have to do with me? What does this have to do with the church? And, what does this have to do with the devil?

What does this have to do with me?

A first important connection we need to make is between the fact that I am addressing all adult males in the church this morning and Paul is addressing elders and deacons specifically in this passage. It is a seeming disconnect. After all, it would be very simple to say, “I am not an elder nor do I want to be and I am not a deacon, nor do I want to be...” Let me attempt to persuade you to remain awake with three points. First, each character quality (vs. skill, such as aptness to teach) required of elders and deacons in this passage is required of all believers elsewhere in the Scriptures, therefore, these are not requirements unique to these offices. The distinction lies in the fact that these things *must* be true of persons who hold the office of elder or deacon in the church; while they *should* be true in increasing measure of all persons in the church, though they may be evidenced in varying degrees.

Second, if you, male adult in the body here at Clearcreek, intend to influence others in any capacity whatsoever, you will be aspiring to these characteristics. Remember Paul is writing with specific intent in mind – this is what the person who leads and wields influence in the church should be known by. I would argue that this comes *home* to roost, literally, in your capacity as leader and shepherd *in your home*. To lead well in your home, as well as any sphere in church, is to be increasingly characterized by the qualities described in this passage and I suspect Pastor Greg will elaborate on this more fully this evening. Third, what Paul is doing for us in this passage is not compiling a “check-list” of sorts but painting a portrait of the mature, well-rounded, full of integrity, individual in the church. Do you want to be ever-moving toward a picture of practical holiness and Christian maturity? Then make the features of this portrait the subject of your constant

prayer, and the object of your daily labors. Are you convinced? I hope so. This is material that is important for all of us.

What does this have to do with the church? (v. 15)

The next connection to make is between this passage and the purpose of the church as described in the book of Timothy. We've touched on this a bit already but we can further elaborate by considering the second part of verse 15 (READ 3:15b). Pastor Chad just preached an excellent sermon on this reality several weeks ago. Do you remember? Ladder>Tabernacle>Temple>Church? The reality emphasized here is this: What is happening *here*, at this very moment, constitutes the household of God, the church of the living God! We are stewards and bond-servants in this house and the will of the Master has been made clear when it comes to the character of leadership in his house.

Further, not only are we the house of the living God on Earth, this house, the church, represents the living God to the world. This happens in part as the church functions as the pillar and buttress of truth. As one commentator put it

Christ on earth was the Truth...The assembly is not the truth: the word of God is the truth... *But the assembly is that which maintains the truth on earth...[our duty is the] the maintenance and presentation of the truth¹*

If indeed then we are the house of the living God, and this house is to be that which displays, distributes, and defends the truth to the world, the importance of the character of the leadership in the church cannot be underestimated. Note the language here is PILLAR and BUTTRESS! Not straw and mud, tent pole and support rope, or frailty and feebleness. Leadership in the church should be known as solid, upright, enduring, persevering, inspiring, and full of the cement of integrity. This passage gives us the specifics.

What does this have to do with the devil? (vv. 6, 7)

The last connection has to do with the unseen nature of what is unfolding in the realm of God's household, church leadership, and the spiritual personalities arrayed against it. While we don't have time to dwell on this point, I think it is worth noticing as mention of the devil occurs five times in the short six chapters of 1 Timothy (1:20, 2:6, 2:7, 5:14, 15). Satan has no interest in seeing the progress of the church on Earth. The fact is, the devil is continually looking to slander and discredit the church in the eyes of believers and unbelievers alike – this is a choice strategy for him (Luke 22, 1 Peter 5:8, Eph 4:27). When believers in leadership fall, you can be certain that Satan is pleased and the church is made to look foolish, false, and faltering in everyone's eyes. The one institution on Earth that is charged with presenting and maintaining truth, with being the bulwark of righteousness, consistently falls prey to the devil's traps and snares. There is no lack of examples in our country or even in our community. A major defense against this is the strong but humble, committed but caring, unyielding but gentle leadership of men in the church.

¹ Darby

Character

Now we come to considering the character of leadership in the church. God calls all of us to these qualities at one time or another in the Scriptures (as we stated earlier) but this morning we focus specifically on men who would yield influence in the church. Again, for those of you men who are tempted to say, but I don't "lead" in the church – remember, you at minimum lead in your home which is simply another place where body life should be expressing itself. In this sense, to lead in your home is to lead in church. And there are many of you who do hold offices and positions in the church which by their very nature bestow the role of leader upon you: Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, adult bible education leaders, A/V team leader, grounds crew team leader, as well as deacons and elders. So as we consider these qualities do the hard work of asking yourself, "Does this describe me? If not, how must I change?" Women, and children (that includes you, youth) listen closely as well. While certainly you should also aspire to these qualities, there is a critical role you play in adult male leadership in the church, which we will discuss shortly.

I have divided the character qualities described in this passage into three groups, qualities of character, qualities of home, and qualities of faith. I have combined the qualifications for elders and deacons under these headings as we will not be speaking to either office specifically. And we will only mention those portions of this passage which speak to the scope of our focus on male leadership in the church this morning, while focusing on the character of those who lead.

Qualities of Character

In verses 2 and 11 of chapter 3 Paul uses the terms "above reproach" and "blameless" to describe the overall character of leaders in the church. Much of the rest of this passage is spent unpacking the content of what it means to be above reproach and blameless. Here is how one commentator summarizes their meaning: *...it is a high and mature standard that speaks of being a consistent example. It is God's demand that His steward live in such a holy manner that his preaching would never be in contradiction of his lifestyle, that the pastor's indiscretions never bring shame on the ministry, and that the shepherd's hypocrisy not undermine the flock's confidence in the ministry of God².* I think at some level all of us know, even young children, how important this quality is. A synonym might be "integrity" which means being complete or undivided. How easy is it to respect, let alone be led, by someone who does not practice what they preach? A man who requires of his children what he does not require of himself WILL embitter his children. A leader in the church who calls those under his charge to that which he does not set the example for WILL disillusion and anger his people. Even worse, perhaps, are men who attempt to bring their unbiblical ways and patterns into the church and destroy its testimony in the world – they are in danger of hell itself (Matthew 15:1-9; Acts 5:1-10). We in the church must be **who we say we are** and we must, with undying perseverance, watch over ourselves and each other, lest the credibility of the church be destroyed.

² MacArthur, *Pastoral Ministry*

What the Leader Must Be (vv. 2, 3, 8)

Next, we will consider the positive qualities of character that begin to unpack the ideas of blameless and above reproach. They are sober-minded (v. 2), self-controlled (v.2), respectable (v.2), dignified (v.8), and gentle (v.3). Rather than looking at these individually, we'll consider them together as a picture or portrait, as each word carries its own meaning fairly readily. Here we have a man that is clear-minded and vigilant, he is aware of the needs, hopes, and desires of both his immediate family and his extended family, the church. He works hard to bring his public life into line with his private life. He is ever aware that *all* of life is God's and he is accountable before him. He is consistent. He is careful. He understands that what he says and how he says it matters, and therefore is continually self-aware, that is, biblically evaluating what he has said or done or is about to say and do. He does not use his position or his power to manipulate people. Rather, he expresses conviction and kindness simultaneously being ever careful that unneeded damage is not done. He takes care of sins and offences promptly. Hence he is regarded by those around him as trustworthy, credible, and honorable.

What the Leader Must Not Be (vv. 3, 8)

What must a leader not be? A drunkard or addicted to much wine (vv.3, 8), violent (v.3), quarrelsome or double-tongued (vv.3, 8), and a lover of money or greedy for dishonest gain (vv.3, 8). I believe that we can extend the prohibition against drunkenness and addiction to wine to all forms of addiction including any substance that would master us. Quarrelsome and double-tongued refer to aspects of the godly leader, both his speech and interpersonal interactions. Quarrelsome people must always have it their way and are obviously upset when it is not. They can find something wrong about anything. Whereas the double-tongued individual is frequently guilty of deceit, whether it be in exaggeration, candy-coating, telling a half-truth, telling a whole lie, or saying one thing while doing another. The violent are controlled by their emotions and are characterized by outbursts that may or may not result in physical violence – but will certainly be evidenced in words and emotions. One who loves money and is greedy is someone who “does not care how he makes money” so long as he makes it. He will engage in questionable or risky pursuits and be willing to sacrifice things more important such as church attendance or relationships with wife and children to make or obtain money.

It is interesting to note that Paul, in effect, instructs Timothy to see to it that leaders in the church possess these qualities. This assumes that such qualities are observable and can be judged as present or not in varying degrees. What this means for men at Clearcreek is that they can go to those who know them well, especially perhaps, their wives, and ask them, “Am I quarrelsome? Am I gentle? Do you feel that I am growing in self-control.” And women, you will benefit your husbands greatly by answering honestly and lovingly.

Qualities of Home (vv. 2, 4, 12)

Next Paul instructs Timothy that the homes and domestic lives of those who lead in the church should have certain qualities: First, he is to be a one woman man (vv.2, 12). While there are many aspects we could discuss of this, we'll limit our comments to simply this: Men, you should be in love with only one woman – emotionally, physically, socially, etc. If you are constantly wondering how your life would be if only... You are not meeting this requirement. Next, your home is to be characterized by hospitality, which is, love for strangers – today, in Christian circles this has somehow come mostly to mean love for friends. Hospitality is not simply having Christian friends over for dinner who are in little need of your generosity and are certain to return the favor, though this is kind. Consider Christ's words in Luke 14:12-14: *When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*

There are two other qualities of home that are noted here and these two are different as they come to us with a rationale. A leader in the church is to manage his own household well which includes keeping his children submissive (vv. 4, 12). The home is a proving ground for leadership in the church. Paul says clearly that if a man cannot lead in his home then how will he do it in the church? Paul's argument is the same here. Men whose children are always out of control, who disrespect adults, and do not obey their parents will not lead in the church. Households that are continually on the brink of ruin or chaos, that are known for strife and disharmony, and that are in constant disarray or disrepair for lack of attention are unlikely to be headed by godly men who are equipped for leadership in the church. The principle here is this, what happens at home does not stay at home. A man must learn to lead at home before he will lead in the church. Need help? Look around. There are many godly men, young and old, who are doing this with great adeptness. Find one, ask for their help, and humbly submit yourself to their wise and biblical counsel.

There is an important caveat to admit into our thinking here. It comes to us in an apparent tension in the text. Godly men who work hard to lead well in their marriages may have disruptive, unruly, and ungodly wives. Godly men who work hard to lead in the home may have disobedient and rebellious children. While I believe this will generally be the exception, it highlights this most important of facts: Wives, you can paralyze your husband's leadership in the church. Children and teens, you have the ability, the power, the potential to ruin your father's ministry – to limit his potential to serve and lead in the church. You do this by discrediting his ability to lead in his own home. Beware that in your stubbornness or lack of obedience that you do not cheat the church of the effective ministry of your husband or father. In turn, you should realize that you have a tremendous opportunity to serve the church well by working in harmony with your husband/father to produce a home that is managed well, establishing the credibility of your man in the church.

Qualities of Faith (v. 9)

Finally in verse 9 we are told that “They [deacons] must hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience.” In Titus 1:9, a parallel passage, we are told that elders “must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught.” At the heart of the person who leads in the church is conviction – a God-enabled grip on not only the fundamental teachings of the faith, but on Christ himself, who is the gospel (Eph 3: 4 ff). If you are wondering how is it I become all that God, through Paul, is requiring of me here (what to be, what not to be, what my home should be like, etc.). The answer is here. Hold firm to the Word, which is Christ himself. Hold to him in a way that gives neither your conscience nor anyone around you any reason to condemn you. A vigilant and sober man will tend to his conscience, especially as it is ever-more shaped by the Word. He will not ignore its protestations but will check them against the Word as applied by the Holy Spirit. If are sitting here this morning with a conscience that is not at ease, PAY ATTENTION, you may not be holding firmly to the mystery of the faith, Christ.

Conclusion

As we move toward wrapping up this morning I’d like to make a few final observations. Note that in v.13 there is a reflexive principle: *For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.* God-honoring leadership in the church will yield benefits for the individual, but more importantly for the church. Such men will grow in respect and honor among others and in turn their credibility is further established which protects the body. And, such men will grow faith and assurance which will allow them to better serve and lead the body, both at home and in the church. The Lord is gracious in that he blesses us in obedience, and that he blesses us through his body.

I want to strongly urge men to take with grave seriousness the issue of leadership in the church. Avoid these errors: 1) God is sovereign, therefore whether or not I am a man after the heart of 1 Timothy 3:1-13 does not matter. Not one word in the Bible supports your “reasoning.” May that sentiment never be found in our minds or on our lips. 2) I do not lead in the church, therefore I do not need to pay close attention to this sermon. You DO lead in the church if not only in your own home. 3) The church is beyond help – it will never be what God has called it to be. There is no way we can stand strong, like pillars and buttresses. I’ll address that in a moment, but first consider this: Here is bald truth, the reputation of Clearcreek Chapel, therefore of *Christ himself*, rises and falls on the character of men in the church. The stakes men, are very, very, high. If you know yourself as I know myself – the picture is grim. If the reputation of Christ is on my shoulders – then with certainty the church is doomed for I am nothing like a pillar or buttress. Where is our hope?

Dear brother, our hope is not in adopting a cultural idea of masculinity or anti-femininity, it is not in bearing our chests and cursing, it is not in running roughshod over those who challenge or despise us, our hope is in the Word, chapter 3, verse 16 to be exact. How do we come to be what chapter 3 calls us to? *Great is the mystery of godliness.* “Godliness” here refers to a manner of living, godly conduct. Paul presumes the question, “How can mere men ever be buttresses and pillars of the truth? Those who are above reproach and blameless?” I do not know, it is a mystery? Be-

loved, rejoice mightily and shout for joy, the mystery is solved, the question is answered in the song that completes v. 16:

*He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.*

Our answer is in Christ, our gospel, our hope, our strength. Our ability is not in our masculinity – we need not prize it to any greater degree than what the Scriptures warrant. It is in Christ. So, men, you can and you must be those who are above reproach and are blameless, you must be pillars and buttresses, that the household of God might stand for truth with mightiness!

Practical Leadership at Church

Greg Cook

Tonight, we are going to look at what Paul said in 1 Timothy 3 about leaders. Pastor **Introduction** Devon did an excellent job of helping us to see that this text was not only aimed at those who are in leadership in the church, but that it is aimed at all men and their leadership. It is my intent to speak to two areas in more detail, and to only make general comments on one. Again, I do not want you to think that I am the expert and that I can stand in front of you having done all of these things, or even to have done any of them well. I am passing on to you those things that I have learned in my life. Or I am passing on those things that I have read that I believe will be practical in your lives, as you seek to progress in becoming Leading Men.

Let's pray and ask God to help me and you, as we consider some practical matters in leadership, as I have outlined them tonight. <PRAY>

Being a God-honoring Man

Pastor Devon did an excellent job this morning of helping us to understand this 3rd chapter in 1 Timothy and how it applies to all of us men. This section is not just about someone who is in a leadership position in the church. This is about every man, no matter his lot in life. If you don't believe that this section is for every man, then it would follow that a man could basically live any way that he deemed to be right in his own eyes. Then if he wanted to be in any position of leadership, especially in the church, then he should begin to work on the things spoken of here in 1 Timothy 3 to be eligible. In addition, the implication in verse 5 is that a man's family is his training ground for being given additional positions of leadership. A man's leadership at home cannot be any different than his public leadership. Paul says that he won't know how to care for the church if he can't care for his home.

Devon focused this morning on one of the critical elements of leadership and that is Character. There is no way that anyone will be a God-honoring leader without having and developing the character traits that are given here. Yes, these qualities are in the context of leadership in the church, but they apply to leadership in all areas of life. Is there anyone here who would be willing to wholeheartedly follow someone in leadership who was a liar, who was dishonest, who was a hypocrite, who was angry, loud, boastful, proud, harsh, allowed themselves to get out-of-control over issues and actions, and all kinds of others descriptions of leaders that we know? Of course not. Why? Because leaders must have these qualities in order to lead well. So a man must be a God-honoring man in his character. And this starts at home.

Being a God-honoring Manager

As Pastor Devon said this morning, ALL men are to manage their homes; church leaders must possess and demonstrate their ability to manage their homes WELL. So each man sitting here tonight is to be a God-honoring manager of his home. What is a God-honoring manager? Lou Priolo says, "He manages his family in accordance with biblical principles. A manager doesn't do everything himself. A manager sees to it that each member of his household fulfills his or her biblical responsibilities. He is not a micro-manager, meaning that he must have his hand in every project. However, he is aware of everything that's going on in his home. He knows what needs to be done, but he also knows how to delegate respon-

sibilities to those who are capable and responsible to fulfill them.” (Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband*, page 218).

When we talk about leadership, there can be a tendency to believe in a leadership that is not biblical. The Scriptures are clear that the husband is to be a servant-leader, just as Christ was. Wayne Mack, in his book, *Strengthening Your Marriage*, made this comment on being a servant-leader, “... a leader is first and foremost a servant. His concern is not for himself; his concern is not to give orders, to boss other people around, to have his own way. His concern is to meet the needs of others. Indeed, if the best interests of others are not on his heart, if he is not willing to sacrifice himself – his personal needs, wants, desires, aspirations, time, money – if the needs of others are not more important than his own, he is not qualified to lead.” (page 27). That is strong language. Does that describe you and me?

I would like to make some brief comments on areas where men are to lead and manage their homes.

Leading in Financial Provision, Direction, and Decisions

The first area is in the arena of the finances of the family. There are at least three issues that need to be discussed under this heading of finances.

Financial Provision

The Scriptures give clear direction that the man is to be the primary financial support for the family. In 1 Timothy 5:8 Paul has these words,

“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”

Paul also gives this warning in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10,

“Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. 7For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, 8nor did we eat anyone’s bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. 9It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. 10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”

Richard Baxter, in his monumental work, *A Christian Directory*, says that the “husband must be specially careful, that wife and children want nothing that is fit for them, as far as he can procure it”. (page 439) It is his responsibility to make sure that his wife and children do not go without. When we look at a family’s finances, it is the husband’s income that should be the main support for the family. He should be working either at his full potential, or working toward achieving his full potential in producing an income for his family. If a wife works, she should not be the one who provides the most to the support of the family.

Now, as soon as I say that, there are circumstances that bring about exceptions to these directives. In God’s Providential care, a husband may have physical limitations that make it impossible to provide for his family. He may have suffered an injury, or has a disease that makes employment nearly impossible. Or, because of a lack of training or education, he is under-employed and not able to provide adequately for

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his family. He is working hard, but he is not in a job that pays sufficiently for the support of his family.

However, having said that, a husband must be careful that he doesn't excuse his employment, or lack thereof, because he is not willing to make the hard choices of working hard toward becoming better employed, or of being too concerned with his own enjoyment of other activities that interfere with having employment that would potentially provide adequate support for his family. There are many men who are more concerned about sporting activities like golf, fishing, hunting, bowling, softball, or any number of other activities that make having adequate employment nearly impossible. As I said earlier, the man is to be a servant-leader, and this is an area where it will be most observed. Is he willing to sacrifice his own enjoyment to provide for his family.

Now, I understand that it is a fearful thing to step outside your comfort zone to train for, or look for employment that can be adequate for your family. Starting over, or changing careers, is not a fun thought to entertain. But, God is the One Who will help you as you seek to please Him in this area of servant-leadership – providing adequately for your family financially.

Financial Direction

Not only is the man to be the provider for his family, he is to be the one who determines the financial direction of his family. He should be looking to the future and making short-term and long-term goals for his family. Are you going to provide a private elementary and secondary education for the children? Are you going to provide a college education for the children? What are you going to do about family vacations, where are you going to live, and what amount of debt are you going to incur.

This direction is not something that he determines without consulting with his wife. Remember, the manager doesn't do everything himself, nor does he make all of the decisions without input from others. He is wise in his dealings with those under his leadership.

Financial Decisions

And lastly in this area of finances, the husband makes the final decisions in the area of finances. Now, please do not hear me say that the man must handle the finances. That is not what I am saying. Remember, he is the manager and makes the final decisions. Let's face the facts, there are some men who couldn't balance a checkbook if their lives depended on it. It's a major accomplishment when they remember to keep the ATM and credit card receipts.

What I have found in this area is that normally, each spouse is the opposite of the other. One of them is the spender, and the other is the saver. One is a math wiz and the other can't add, subtract, or understand a checkbook ledger no matter how many times it is explained to them. It is the rare home that has two spouses who are both savers. It is a disaster where both spouses are spenders.

But as the manager of his home, the husband will look at this own abilities and the abilities of his spouse, and have the one most qualified do the financial details for the family. If your wife is a CPA, you are certainly going to let her pay the bills and bal-

ance the checkbook. Remember, a manager uses and develops the resources that God has placed under his care for the good of the family and for the glory of God.

However, if the wife handles the finances, she must make sure that her husband knows the situation at all times and allows him to make the final decisions. It is the wise husband who will ask for and consider seriously the input of his wife when it comes to financial decisions. That does not mean that he follows her opinion all of the time. There may be times when he must go against her input in making a financial decision. The buck stops on his desk.

Just as a side note, the credit card industry has given some statistics for credit card use and debt in general. In 95% of families, the majority of the debt comes from husbands. In general, women have a fear of debt. As a result, women take families into debt in little increments; men take families into debt in giant leaps. Remember, this is the general way that things happen. There are families where it is exactly the opposite. What the take away from this is – men you need to be extra careful as you make decisions on family finances, especially when it comes to incurring debt. (Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, page 347)

Leading in Problem Solving

How many times has a wife come to her husband with a problem and he has said to her, “That’s your problem – solve it?” As the manager of the home, the husband must be the one who solves problems. Of course, he will get input from those who are involved in order to make a wise choice. But there is no situation in a man’s home that is not his responsibility. He is the one who leads the way in solving problems. He is the one who follows biblical principles in peacemaking. He is the one who teaches others the principles of peacemaking. He is the one who teaches others the principles of making wise choices.

A resource for help in this area is *Peacemaking for Families: A Biblical Guide to Managing Conflict in Your Home* by Ken Sande with Tom Raabe.

Leading in Child Rearing

Another component in managing his home well involves the rearing of children.

Child rearing is not something that is done on the fly. At the moment of disobedience or conflict is not the time to begin thinking about what to do. The wise manager will have taken the time to read about this subject and discussed it with this wife before the baby ever arrives. They will have talked and decided on how they are going to discipline and instruct before the time comes when it is needed. They will be on the same page when it comes to rearing their children.

A study showed that fathers spent minutes each day with their children. And the wives, who are working in their careers are getting less and less time with the children as the years pass. How can we expect to raise God-honoring children when we don’t take the time to build into their lives.

Again, it is the man who must make this a reality in his home. He is the one who is ultimately responsible for the rearing of his children. This doesn’t mean he is the only one involved, or even the one who is involved the most, but he is the one who oversees and sets the pace for the rearing of his children.

May I recommend three books for your instruction in biblical child rearing:

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Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp along with the companion book *Shepherding a Child's Heart: Parent's Handbook*, also by Tedd Tripp.

Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens by Paul David Tripp

The Heart of Anger: Practical Help for the Prevention and Cure of Anger in Children by Lou Priolo.

Leading in Tone-setting

Also involved in being a God-honoring manager in your home is the fact that you are to be the one who sets the tone in your home.

Loving their Mother

A tone of love in the family is set when children see the public and frequent words and actions of parents who love each other. They should see gentle, loving pats, embraces, holding of hands, exchanges of smiles, kisses, and other outward expressions of love and affection. They should hear tender words, restrained tones even when angry, and the seeking and granting of forgiveness when there has been offense. The best way to help foster affection and love in the home is for the children to know they are loved, but that their mother is loved even more.

Being an Example

People don't learn as well by lecturing as they do by observing. The husband must be one who is gentle, patient, seeking the best in others, unselfish, honest, and self-controlled. He should be one who is growing in his relationship with God and in his ability to lead. If the tone of your home is not what you think is God-honoring, then look at the example you are giving.

Being a God-honoring Minister

The final area that I want to consider is the area of being a God-honoring minister. John Calvin said in his *Institutes*, that the husband is the pastor of his home. He is the minister responsible for the spiritual development of his family.

Leading in Family Worship

Now, this section of ministering is one that I confess was not something that I did in my home. And that is to lead in family worship. I have been greatly challenged in my reading of several chapters in the books by Donald Whitney, to which I referred in my message two weeks ago. And as I looked at his website, he had released a new booklet entitled, *Family Worship: In the Bible, in History, & in Your Home*. It is only 64 pages and I recommend it highly to those men who want to please God by leading their families in family worship.

One of the excuses that I have heard from many men who do not consider themselves very educated, is that they cannot lead a family in worship because they don't know enough to be the teacher. In fact, one of the most frequent problems I hear in counseling is the whine of a wife who wants her husband to lead, and the husband who responds that his wife knows 10 times more than he does. It's better to let her do it, since he doesn't want to look stupid before his whole family. Again, I cannot speak by experience with what I am going to suggest, since I did not practice it in my own home, but I trust Don Whitney, that what he suggests is both doable and practical enough for any

man of any understanding of Scripture. He spends the first 23 pages making a case from the Bible and from history, that this is not only commanded in Scripture, but it has been practiced since the beginning of time. He teaches that there are three elements involved in family worship – reading, praying, and singing. He takes his cue from Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon. Matthew Henry said, “They that pray in the family do well; they that pray and read the Scriptures do better; but they that pray, and read, and sing do best of all.”

Reading

The suggested book to read is the Bible. Read it chapter-by-chapter, and read entire books. Choose passages appropriate for children’s ages. Read for shorter periods of time and short sections when they are young. Have the children read as part of their learning to read. Have older children read as they are able. Read enthusiastically and interpretively. Explain words the children may not understand. Clarify the meaning of key verses. Ask the children to explain what they have heard. In order to have variety, another good book could be used in addition. Kevin Cyrus, my son-in-law, remembers with fondness his father reading *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C.S. Lewis. Others have told me they remember their father reading *Pilgrim’s Progress* to them. This isn’t necessarily about being a scholar and knowing it all. It is about passing on to your children your love for God and His Word.

Praying

The second part of family worship involves prayer. This is also a time for variety. The situation of your family – their ages and the amount of time that is dedicated to family worship – will dictate how this is done. Praying is caught as much as it is taught. Remember a couple of weeks ago I talked about using the Psalms for prayer. This would be a good time to use that technique.

Singing

And then, singing. I know, I can hear you now, “I can’t carry a tune in a 55 gallon barrel.” That’s not the issue. God instructs us all to make a joyful song to the Lord. Your home should have CDs or tapes of worship songs that you use in your singing. If your children are involved in learning to play the piano, this would be a great time for them to use their skills for God’s glory by accompanying this time of singing.

Family worship does not have to be something that takes a lot of preparation. Granted, some preparation will enhance the time, but preparation should not be a hindrance to doing it. Just sit down and read, pray, and sing.

Don Whitney gives three more guidelines for this time: 1) be brief so the experience doesn’t become tedious, 2) do it regularly, and 3) be flexible. It is best done when the family is normally together anyway, such as after meal time.

Don’s last chapter is entitled “*Isn’t this what you really want to do?*” He gives 9 motivations to encourage you to do it. But he also gives these reasons why we don’t do it:

We feel embarrassed to begin. We have failed for so long, we are ashamed and embarrassed to start.

We fear the attitudes and remarks by some family members when we suggest starting.

We don’t think we are capable of leading family worship.

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We are ashamed because we tried it earlier and didn't stick with it. There is the fear of this happening again and the dislike for what family members will say if we don't carry through this time.

We don't know what to say to our wives and children to get it started.

His encouragement, as well as the instruction from Scripture and the example from history, is to repent and to get started now. Ask your family to join you in doing what is right. And may I add, wives, kids, make it easier on Dad by letting him know that you would be willing to have him do this, if that's what he wants to do. And just as I said 2 weeks ago, please do not criticize his early efforts. Encourage him so he will not become discouraged and will be excited to continue.

Leading in Church Involvement

The God-honoring minister of his family is one who takes church involvement seriously. He sets the tone for the spiritual involvement of his family. It starts with the discipline and belief of the man about church.

Being Prepared for Church

The God-honoring family minister is the one who makes sure that all of the children's clothes are laid out on Saturday evening before going to bed. Everyone knows what is going to be worn the next day. No looking for pants, shirts, dresses, slacks, socks, and all the other necessities of life at the last minute before leaving for church.

He is also the first one up. He makes it his job to get his family up, fed, and dressed in adequate time to have a leisurely drive to church. None of this being the last one up. None of this only being concerned about getting himself up and ready. None of this making his wife get everyone, including herself, ready as he waits at the front door, or worse, in the car. He leads in getting it done.

Regular Attendance

The God-honoring minister of his family makes sure that he and his family are at every service of the church, unless providentially hindered. I know that I am probably preaching to the choir, but what that looks like at the Chapel is Sunday at 9:15 and 10:30 AM, 6:00 PM, and flock on Wednesday evening.

Membership and Baptism

The family minister will be a member of a local church and will have been Scripturally baptized. He will instruct and encourage his children to make the commitment to baptism and church membership as appropriate. And he will make sure that he participates in church business meetings and at the Lord's Table when served.

Proportional Giving

He will have the heart of giving proportionally as God provides. And he will teach and encourage his children to do the same.

Participation

He will participate in the ministries of the church as God has enabled and gifted him for. He realizes that God has given every believer at least one gift that is for ministry to the body of Christ. He will help his wife and children serve as they have opportunity.

He will be actively engaged in corporate worship by singing, praying, and being attentive to the teaching of God's Word.

Submission to and Encouragement of Leadership

He will pray for, both privately and with his family, for the leadership of their church. He will talk positively to his family about leadership and will keep criticism out of his discussions. He will help his family to get conflict with other church members and leaders resolved in a God-honoring way.

This God-honoring minister of his family will be the example to his entire family of what being a disciple of Jesus Christ is. He will show his concern for his family and their spiritual development by making sure they see in him the priority that faithfulness to the church has in his life.

Ministering through the Family

And finally, under this heading of God-honoring Minister, there is his leadership in ministering through his family. Ministry is not done outside of family, it is done through family. The outside world needs to see what a Christian family looks like. And the family is that vehicle for ministry.

Kent Hughes, in his book *Disciplines of a Godly Family* lists 6 ways a family ministers to a lost world:

The family keeps an open house. Everyone is welcomed at any time. This is a place where others can observe first hand. There is always an open place at the table, a place in the car, extra equipment for participation by others.

Parents get to know and like their children's friends. Their friends will know whether you really like them, or if you just put up with them.

You pray for other people and their children. Common sense dictates that if we desire to have a family ministry, we must pray for those families with whom we have contact.

Be a source of neighborhood fun. This doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive. Just simple things make for the most fun.

Being kind to your neighbors. Have them over for a cookout. Bake some cookies and take them over. Volunteer to baby-sit their children. Help them cut their grass, paint their house.

Becoming involved in the community. What about coaching, getting involved in a project sponsored by the city or township.

The philosophy of the Master's Mission is that missionaries minister out of their families. The watching world looks at the family and they need to see a family that lives life according to Biblical principles and for the glory of God. It is no different in this lost culture in which we live. We need to minister out of our families. The watching world needs to see families who are led by men who are God-honoring.

Conclusion May I wrap up tonight with these thoughts:

Leadership involves being a God-honoring man, who is constantly working on the character qualities that are required for leadership.

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Leadership involves being a God-honoring manager, who is growing in his ability to manage by being that servant-leader who is concerned more about those he is leading than he is about himself.

Leadership involves being a God-honoring minister, who is growing in his ability to minister to and through his family for the glory of God.

As we come to the conclusion of this series on Leading Men, we have seen much that is required of us as men. Please do not get so overwhelmed with the changes that are needed that you don't begin. As I mentioned during my last message, you can't make all of the changes you need at one time. The old saying, "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." is very fitting for us here. Please do not leave here tonight saying, "Whew, I'm glad this series is over. Now we can get back to something that is not so convicting." Take the time to talk to someone that can help. See your pastor. Whatever it is going to take to help you change and grow in your God-given role as leader, do it. Start tonight. For the glory of God, for the good of your family, and for the ministry of Clearcreek Chapel.