

Marriage and the Gospel

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes that marriage is a divine calling that serves as a powerful means of sanctification and reflects Christ's love for the church.

Duration: 1:19:50

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:2, Proverbs 29:18, Isaiah 3:1-3, Matthew 22:37-39, Romans 8:28

Topics: "Marriage"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a holistic life that encompasses the intellect, soul, and body. He encourages listeners to use their God-given abilities to serve others and give their lives away. The speaker references a Bible verse from John 12:24-25, highlighting the idea that by dying to oneself, one can bear much fruit and gain eternal life. He also addresses the issue of men not being heads of their homes, attributing it to the judgment of God upon America and the pursuit of worldly desires. The speaker urges young men to engage in God-honoring labor and find purpose in their work.

Transcript

Oh, it'd take a lot more than that to deter me. I'm actually not going to preach 25 hours, I'm going to preach 25 one-hour sermons. I want to talk about marriage.

Other than the Gospel, it's my greatest passion, because I see it as my greatest need. I always tell young men, you know, when I was a missionary for my first several years in Peru as a single missionary, I was so spiritual. And then I got married and I truly began to realize how unlike Christ that it truly was.

You know, I can be so many things to so many people, but the reality of Christ working in our lives is seen in our marriage. We are brought into a relationship with a person who, like us, is justified, partially sanctified, not yet glorified. And so all the reality of who you are and who you are not is going to come out.

And I want to talk about marriage because I need to hear it so much, because I look around at the church today and I'll have to say I don't think the church helps marriage as our family. I think by and large, most churches hurt the family. I think it would be very easy for our country to fall into socialism because it's what we practice in the church.

Socialism is by and large, it's not just taking away human freedoms. It takes away those human freedoms because the people are willing to give them up because they don't want the responsibility of those

freedoms. Sir, the church does not have the responsibility to disciple your wife.

The church does not have the responsibility to teach your children. You gave away that because you didn't do it. Someone comes to a church where I'm pastoring and says, what do you offer my children? I said, nothing except a godly dad.

And sir, if you become a member of this church, you will be held accountable with regard to the discipleship of your wife and the discipleship of your children. Isn't it amazing, my dear friend, how many countless millions and millions of dollars are spent on Sunday school literature for children? How many millions of man hours in training, in teaching to find teachers to teach children? How many millions of dollars in man hours spent on conferences to promote Sunday school and to train Sunday school teachers? Now, let me ask you a question. How much money is spent, how many man hours on conferences and literature to teach dads to disciple their children? Almost nothing.

Yet, that is the direct command of Scripture in the book of Ephesians chapter 6. God doesn't have a plan B. And He gives no one the right to forfeit their responsibilities. Although I can see the church having a role through the exposition of Scripture to teach children, through the exposition of Scripture to teach youth, the fact that there is so much activity around children and youth in our churches just demonstrates the grossness of our sin. My primary obligation is to be a man of God for my wife.

My secondary obligation is to be a man of God for my children. And that's yours. Let's talk about marriage first.

I'm going to have to skip through a lot, but I want us to go to Romans chapter 8. Romans 8.28. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good, to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He would be the firstborn among many brethren. A young man walks into my office and says, Pastor, I want to marry so-and-so.

And I say, OK, why? Well, she's beautiful and I love to be with her. And we just seem so compatible and we get along together. And when I'm with her, I just feel like I'm complete.

And he keeps going on and finally I look at him and I say, Well, let me just see if I'm understanding you. You want to marry this girl because she meets all your selfish, self-centered needs and desires. Is that what you're telling me? And he says, No, that's not what I'm telling you.

It's not what I mean. I said, Young man, it's exactly what you're telling me. You want to marry her because she's beautiful.

What happens when she's no longer beautiful? What happens when someone else comes along that's more beautiful than she? You want to be with her because you feel so compatible. What happens when you find out you're not as compatible as you thought? And someone else comes along who's a little more compatible than she. You say you want to be with her because you can just talk for hours.

What's going to happen when you can no longer talk for hours? And you can talk to your secretary at work and share more things with her than you can your spouse. Why do we get married? Well, there are many reasons, and I'm just going to give you the foundational one. Marriage is a divine, sovereign calling from God.

It is a divine, sovereign calling from God for you to lay down your life for the benefit of one of His daughters. Whether or not there are any reciprocal advantages to that. Whether you receive anything.

The basis of the marriage is not how compatible she is or how much she meets your needs or how good you feel when you're around her. The basis and foundation of marriage that you know you have been called by God to lay down your life for this woman. For this one particular woman.

I know, as failing as I am at the task, I know that I am called to preach. I know that I cannot lay down that mantle at all without the penalty of discipline. Possibly even the destruction of my life.

I cannot lay down that mantle. I have been called into it, and the calling is irrevocable to the same degree. I was called by God Almighty to lay down my life for a certain daughter of His.

And the moment I said yes to her, to God, I said no to everyone else on the planet. Marriage provides the greatest opportunity you will ever have. To live out some of the most demanding, most radical, and most essential calls of discipleship that were given by our Lord.

Let me just give you an example. Matthew 16, verse 24. Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.

Now let me ask you a question. How have you lost your life? You're not missionaries. You didn't leave for a foreign land where you must eat the grossest sort of food and suffer the hardest sufferings, physical and mental anguish.

No, you live here in America. No one persecutes you for going to church. What does it cost you? Tell me! What does it really cost you? Sunday morning? Not watch a few television programs? What does it really cost you? Where do you get the opportunity to do what He says is essential for any sort of discipleship? I'll tell you where you get that opportunity.

In the hardest place to demonstrate it. In the relationships that God has providentially brought into your life. That's where you get the opportunity to do this.

Listen to me. I had a young guy come to me one time and he was all about China. I want to be a missionary to China.

I want to be a missionary to China. He said, I just love the Chinese. I want to be a missionary to China.

My heart is for China. Finally, I couldn't take any more. I looked at him and I said, do you know why you love the Chinese? He said, why? I said, because you don't know any.

He said, what do you mean? I said, look, I know many Chinese wonderful people, but it is so easy to love someone 10,000 miles away. This romantic idea of this love that you have for a certain people, when you get over there after about six months and all the newness wears off, all the strange smells that you've never had to deal with before, all the strange food, all the strange customs, all the things that's bad about your own people you're going to find is bad about them because all people are the same, then you tell me

whether or not you love them. You see, very rarely.

You can't hardly give me an instance where you have lost your life for following Christ. Where you've given up stuff, sacrificed greatly, gone through great extremes for His cause. Well, I can give you an opportunity right now.

It's called marriage. And I want to tell you something. It is a lot easier to lose your life out on the mission field than it is with the people closest to you.

To lay down your life for another human being. To be a servant for that person and to do it for their sake and for the glory of Christ. You know, a statement that I heard, and I don't even know who told me, it was years ago, but it has stayed with me all these years, and it governs and convicts me so much.

He simply said this, everyone wants to be called a servant. Nobody wants to be treated like one. This is your opportunity to really become a servant.

It goes on in Luke 22, 25-27, He said to them, And the kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called benefactors. But it is not this way with you. But the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

For who is greater? The one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. This gives us a great idea of what true biblical headship is like in a family. It is not the opportunity to be the benefactor of that family as though the entire family was an extension of you and exists for you.

Rather, to be the head of the family is to be the one who serves, who gives His life. He leads not for the benefit of His own self, His own comfort, but He leads and He lives for the benefit of His wife, His children, those in fellowship with Him in Christ, and in the world. An opportunity every day.

Some of you, if I were to say, tell me an opportunity you've had in the last year to lay down your life for Christ, to lose your life for the cause of the Gospel, you wouldn't even be able to give me one. But, if you look at marriage this way, look at the opportunity now to lay your life down in service, real service, not some romantic pie-in-the-sky thing, but real service with real people who are watching you almost 24 hours a day to lay down your life in service for them. This is our great opportunity to follow Christ.

To follow Christ. And go on, and John says this, well, Jesus said this in the book of John 12, verse 24 and 25, "...Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it.

He who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal." Again, so many men, after they've been married 10, 15 years, they're dissatisfied. They feel like maybe they get that midlife crisis sort of thing. They get desperate, almost chaotic, a crisis wondering how are they going to make their life better.

I'll tell you how to make your life better. All the pain, all the things in your life that has just produced an empty, hollow man comes from the fact that you've kept your life. All the thing of lack of fulfillment, well, I'm 45 years old, you say, is this all that is in life and this is it? Shouldn't I look for something else? I mean, my life's about gone.

All the hollowness, all the emptiness in your life and mine is the result of not dying to self. Listen, Jesus is not teaching us some morbid doctrine. In His wisdom and His love for His people, He's teaching us the way of joy.

When have you ever just got fed up with everything and just go, I'm going to do stuff for me for a while. And you've done different things for yourself. You've bought stuff for yourself.

You've made decisions for yourself. When has that ever produced joy? When? When? Maybe take money and save up stuff for a toy that could have been better spent on your family or something for a boat or this or that or something. And you just go get it because, well, you work and it's your right and you're tired and you ought to have your hobbies and no sooner do you get it than you're disappointed with what you've gotten.

Let me ask you this. When have you ever laid down your life in service to Christ for other people that you just didn't feel such joy you thought you were going to explode? It's just like soul winning, isn't it? When have you ever been prompted of the Holy Spirit to witness to someone and you refused to go that you didn't feel absolutely miserable? And when have you ever obeyed His voice and witnessed, even though the people laugh at you, that you did not return to your car floating on air with joy? You see, Jesus is teaching this is the way of life. To lay your head down as a man on your pillow at night knowing that you have poured yourself out as a drink offering for your wife, for your children, for your brothers and sisters in Christ, for the world.

Your joy will know no bounds. Paul said in Philippians 2, 3, and 4, do nothing from selfish or empty conceit, but with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves. Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Guys, He's teaching us the way of life. These are the teachings of our Lord. The One greater than Moses.

The One greater than all the combined wisdom of the world is now teaching us how to have joy, how to have life in abundance. Now, I want to teach you something about marriage that may help you. You know, there's a saying in the Bible that there's these dating services all over.

E-harmony and all these different... even Christian dating services. Boy, that's faith in the providence of God, isn't it? But sometimes people ask me about Christian dating services. Is that biblical? And I say no.

But I'll tell them no for a different reason than what they think. Well, it's no because people aren't trusting God and so on and so forth. I say no.

It's not biblical because they're seeking to put two people who are compatible together. And you say, well, what do you mean? That's not usually God's intention at all. It's the lie of compatibility.

Now, God will usually... I think even, I mean, it's like He'll even blind you. God will bring you into a relationship with someone most of the time who is not only not compatible with you, but is weak, tremendously weak in the very areas where you would most want them to be strong. Now, why does He do that? Is it because He hates us all? Like Jeremiah said, you tricked me? Why does He do that? I'll tell you why.

Remember our text, Romans 8, 28 and 29. What is the goal of everything God does in His providence for His children? To conform them to the image of Christ. Now, when you think of the image of Christ, what

are some characteristics that just automatically spring to the forefront? Well, for me, three.

Unconditional love, mercy, and grace. If I could pick out three things in which they told me, you can imitate Christ in these. That's what I think about.

Unconditional love, mercy, and grace. Now, I have some things here I want to just go ahead and read that I've written out so I get them right. Let me ask you a few questions.

How would you ever learn unconditional love if you were married to someone who met all the conditions? Question. How would you ever learn mercy, patience, long-suffering, heartfelt compassion if you were married to someone who never failed you? Who was never difficult with you? Who never sinned against you? Who was never slow to acknowledge their sin or ask for forgiveness? How would you ever learn grace to pour out your favor on someone who did not deserve it if you were married to someone who was always deserving of all good things? Do you see that? Listen to me. The main purpose of marriage is that through your marriage, you become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Marriage, I believe, is the greatest instrument of sanctification. You are married to a person who does not meet all the conditions so that you might learn unconditional love. You are married to a person who needs mercy so that you learn to give it.

You are married to a person who does not deserve so that you learn to pour lavishly yourself out on a person who does not respond appropriately. And thus, you become like the God you worship. You see, you worship God for these things, but you don't want to give them to others.

You worship God for grace, but you demand that your wife live in such a way that she not be in need of it. You worship God for unconditional love, but you get mad at your own wife when she doesn't meet the conditions. Do you see? Let me read this.

Again, I just want to make sure I say everything that I've written here. Do you realize what you would be like if you had the perfect spouse? You would be a man who esteemed his wife, served her, and treated her as a queen, but only because she met all your needs and expectations. Inwardly, you would be a selfish, self-centered, self-promoting monster.

You would never see the real you and would never be able to repent of what you really are and go to Christ for grace. It is the faults and failures of your spouse that expose the real you, who drives you to Christ and makes you grow. One of the purposes of fasting... fasting is an unforgotten thing in our day.

It has many wonderful benefits, and one of them is overlooked by even most of the people who teach on it. You see, if you and I work in the same office, and we pass by one day and I go, Hey, John, you're real short with me. You're real curt.

You're not very polite. You just walk on. And then a couple of hours later, you come back and you say, Paul, look, I'm sorry.

I've got a lot of pressure on me today. Things aren't going well at home. I feel actually even sick.

And I'm just not myself today. What you're saying is actually the opposite of what's true. You see, you are yourself today.

You see, and all the trouble has brought it out. You see, you look so good when your belly is full, when things are going well at the job, when all your circumstances are fine, you look like a spiritual man. And if God allowed things to remain that way, you would be on the outside a whitewashed tomb and inside full of dead men's bones.

I have seen men, and literally, I'm not trying to make fun or anything, but literally, they're married to a woman who looks like a supermodel with the spirituality of the Apostle Paul. And they boast all the time about what great husbands they are. Sometimes I want to look at them and say, you're what you are because she meets everything you desire.

You see, what I want to point out to you is this. The worst marriage may be actually of the greatest eternal benefit. The worst marriage may actually result in the greatest eternal benefit.

My wife and I are very different. My wife and I are very different. And after I got married, I thought, I didn't know there were all these differences.

We're not that compatible. We don't really like to do the same things. A lot of things.

And you know what enters into your mind? I picked the wrong one. Yeah, you can laugh because the camera's not on you. And men become depressed because they're now believing a lie.

And they don't realize that the incompatibility between you and your wife is one of the greatest evidences that this is a work of God in order to teach you to love because you said you wanted to be like Jesus in that prayer you prayed, which is the most dangerous thing that ever came out of your mouth. It was. Lord, make me like Jesus at any cost.

You remember when you prayed that? He says, okay. He took you up on it. He gave you a woman that is strong enough and His grace is sufficient enough to keep that marriage going through the early years when you are too immature and too dull to recognize a true work of God.

But He has orchestrated also, in a sense, the very weaknesses that are in your wife and the things that most disturb you about her so that you will become like Jesus, that you will love her when she doesn't meet the conditions. Do you see what it's about? Now, many men are good moral men. And they get married and they realize this woman is not what I thought and begin to have trouble with her and there's fights and there's all sorts of things that go on.

But he says, you know, I don't believe in divorce, which is good. I don't believe in divorce. I'm just going to stick with this.

But, in their heart, they've divorced. The wife kind of lives her life. He kind of lives his.

They go to bed at night, sleep back to back. He really doesn't entrust himself to her anymore and she doesn't entrust herself to him. And he just lives there thinking this.

Well, I've made my decision. It was wrong, but I'm stuck with this. And they lose all the sense of purpose in their marriage.

They have no purpose. It's just useless. It's suffering for no cause.

That's the greatest lie of the devil. It is not suffering without a purpose. It has a purpose.

So you need to walk back in through the door and be obedient to Christ and begin to seek to lay down your life for that woman. Because the reason she's your wife is to make you like Christ. One of the greatest books that you will hate me for recommending is Stuart Scott's book on the exemplary husband.

Because what he will tell you is your problem in your marriage is that you're not like Jesus. The problem in your marriage is your need for greater Christ-likeness. I look back now after being married for 16 years, I have seen miracles on the mission field.

I have seen God do tremendous things that would set your ears on fire if I told you. But the most amazing thing, the thing that most overwhelms me, that proves to me the omnipotence, the omniscience, the wisdom of God is the woman that He gave me. That I can see His hand.

That there is so much in my life that still needs to change, but there is so much in my life that has changed. I have become more like Christ. Even though the advances have been small, I have become more like Christ because of His wisdom in giving me that woman.

And if that woman had never come into my life, those areas would have never been submitted to Christ. So see, that's what I want you to see. You've got to ask yourself a question.

What is your real goal? You see, I hear even Christian marriage counselor guys and they'll talk about, you know, marriage is to have a little piece of heaven on earth and all these different things. Well, I want you to know, marriage can be a wonderful joy and a wonderful blessing, but that's not the purpose of marriage. The purpose of marriage is that through that woman, you become conformed to the image of Christ.

Through her weaknesses, you become conformed to the image of Christ. That's it. And if she were sitting here instead of you, I would be saying the same thing to her.

Listen, in the New Covenant, listen to me, love is not a thing in the New Covenant. It's everything. It's everything.

Love. To love the Lord my God with all my heart and to love my neighbor, which the closest one happens to be my wife, as myself. You can work on all the other stuff if you want.

I'm going to stick with that for the next 50 years. I have come to believe, I do believe that if a man... it does say this at times in Scripture, a man who can master his tongue is a perfect man. A man who masters and grows into Christ-likeness in his most intimate relationships is Christ-like in all of them.

It's so easy to be Christ-like in this pulpit. It's sickening how easy it is to be Christ-like with her, the person who knows me. That's another thing altogether.

Now, I want to talk about headship for a moment. Before I do though, I have to say something. There are extremes.

People who deny headship and people who take headship. It's sickening. I want to tell you something.

It terrifies me to teach on headship. Why? Because wicked, carnal, self-righteous, legalistic men can take this doctrine and just enslave their wives and children. And I have seen it.

I have seen it. But there is a headship and it's not a figurative position. I want you to go for just a moment to Ephesians 5. In this whole chapter, in this whole context, what is He doing? He's teaching us how to

deal with all the different roles of life.

How we're to live, not only within the community of faith, but in every relationship that we have. And if you look in verse 21, it says, "...and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ." He's talking about believers being subject to one another in the fear of Christ. That even an elder who may have authority and deserves respect, he has to be in a sense at the same time subject to even the most immature believer in the sense of if that believer comes up to him with Scripture open and with humility and says, Elder, I have a problem with what you did the other day.

That elder can't say, I have authority over you. Shut up. That elder is obligated to listen.

And the person may be wrong. And that's okay. The person may be right.

May need to call in other brothers to judge. Who knows? But what I'm saying is, no matter who we are in the body of Christ, we're in a sense subject to one another. It's very important.

Then he goes to verse 22, "...Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord." So he's teaching us now, how does this relationship work itself out in the context of marriage? And then you go to Ephesians 6.1, Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Now he's telling us how does this relationship of authority, submissiveness, function within the confines of a family? The parents and the children. And then he goes on in verse 5, and he says, "...Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling in the sincerity of your heart as unto the Lord, as unto Christ." And the whole idea here is, in our modern context, would be with your employer.

If you're going to be employed by someone, you need to subject yourself to them unless it violates conscience or violates the Word of God. You need to be a good employee. You need to listen to your employer.

You need to do what he says. You're working for him. So all throughout this context, in every relationship, there is a sense of authority.

One being head over the other. Now, there is a sense of headship with regard to marriage. I am the head of my wife.

Now what does that mean? Well, first of all, let's look at why people don't do this anymore. Why have men neglected this important role? First of all, I think it's an ignorance of Scripture. We do not see how important the family unit is anymore.

And we do not see any longer how important the role of a man is in a family. We have relegated the man to a Neanderthal who is the breadwinner. Someone almost outside the home.

Who if he brings home the bacon, that's all that is required of him. And so, making money, supporting his family financially, is the most important thing on his mind. That's not the most important thing on the mind of a godly man.

You know, the Bible says in Hosea 4.6, my people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. How many of you, maybe many of you, I hope, but how many of you have done a serious study of your role as husband? I mean, not gone to a Bible study, but you've sat down yourself and you've done this study and you've gone to other brothers to check out your exegesis, to check out your interpretation. Maybe gone to

the elders or something to say this is what I've learned from Scripture.

These are my responsibilities. Almost no one does that. You should.

Proverbs 29.18 Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law. I know a lot of pastors use this to say where there is no vision, the people perish. That means we need to have a vision.

Let's build a building or something. That's not what this text means at all. The vision is the revelation of God's law.

Where there is no vision of God's revelation of His law, of His Word, the people run unrestrained. Our families are unrestrained. How much of your family, the way you do things, are a result of your study of Scripture? And how much of it is just the result of that's the way everybody else does it? The need for us to go into Scripture is overwhelming.

Now, also we have the influence of psychology and sociology. Any man who even hints at the fact that there might be a difference between a man and a woman, any man who even mentions the idea of headship is considered just a social dinosaur. A monster out of the past who ought to be done away with.

So, men are feminized, emasculated. Nothing. They don't exist.

Media is so powerful. Isn't it amazing that you can have a commercial where a man's trying to fix a lawnmower or something and he can't do it, and his wife is standing over him making fun of him. She can call him, you idiot, you don't know what you're doing.

She can tell jokes about how dumb her husband is and everybody laughs. You turn that around and get a man making fun of a woman on television and he is brutally attacked. I'm not saying one is right and the other is wrong.

What I'm saying is look at the prejudice that goes on. Men are under attack. And why are they under attack? Because God has set men to be heads of their homes and Satan is going to destroy any chain of authority that has anything to do with God.

Everything that has an order in creation, he seeks to destroy it. Any plan, any purpose, any way of doing things. So that we've lost manhood.

Also, the media's representation of manhood. Just look at something for a moment about the hero of the movie. Okay, let me read you a few things.

First of all, most men who are the heroes of the movies, he's either divorced or an independent spirit who cannot be confined to the restraints of marriage and family. You ever see a hero in the movies that's a family man? Also, he may get the girl in the first movie, but in the sequel, there'll be another girl. Have you ever noticed that? I mean, he can't even make it to the sequel with the same woman.

Why is that? I'll tell you. It's the pursuit of something that tantalizes people. And usually when they get what they've been pursuing, they're bored with it and start pursuing something else.

That's the way we've been raised. Also, he's not a family man. He does not go home to a family every night.

Now listen to this, and particularly you young men. The man, the hero of the movie is not given to God honoring labor. I agree with Vodie Bachum that after he deals with the spirituality of man, one of the first questions he's going to ask any man who seeks to court his daughter will be this, do you delight in God honoring labor? Do you delight to work hard? Or do you only do what your employer makes you do? Do you delight in it? Do you see a purpose in it? Do you receive a joy out of working hard? Because if you don't, young man, get out of my house.

Also, the hero is a moral and ethical contradiction. He will risk his life to defeat the enemy and save the world, and at the same time, he's a drunk and a womanizer. I mean, look what media has done.

To manhood. And that's one of the reasons why we don't practice headship. But there's another reason.

It's called just flat-out disobedience. Men, it's the little things. It's the little things.

Men, there are a few very great things in the kingdom. They're all little things that add up to a great life in the end. Most of you have some sense of headship, but you've been disobedient in that even though you know you're called to be head of your home, you haven't even begun to study about it.

But again, if your employer said, learn this book or you'll lose your job, you'd learn that book. God has called you to be head of your household. Have you studied the book? Judgment Day depends upon it.

Have you studied? Do you know, do you have great convictions founded upon Scripture of what it means to be head of your home? I hope you're frightened. Disobedience. After the Depression and World War II, and I will take nothing away from those men.

That was my father's generation. Most of them were born, like my father, standing on a street corner when he was eight years old selling newspapers in Detroit just to bring home food. Most of those men worked and worked and worked just to provide food.

But in their working, they carved out something for themselves. By the time I came along, my father was prosperous. But he grew up with a mindset that he had done his job if he put food on the table.

That's not true. It wasn't true for his generation. And it's most certainly not true for ours.

Because most men today are not working just to put food on the table. They're working to have two new cars they don't need. They're working to pay a huge mortgage that they should have never gotten into.

Do you see that? And no sooner, at least our father's generation, they worked to put money on the table and they saved so that when they died, their children had something. Our generation spends what it doesn't even have and can't see a problem with that. So you work.

The idea that men are called to give their wife and children what they never had. Well, I just want my children to have the things I never had. Sir, it's the things you never had that made you the man you are.

And it's all the things your children have that are keeping them from any semblance of a manhood. I was talking to a man who immigrated here from Guatemala. And I got to know him.

He poured concrete and stuff. I got to know him and began to talk to him. And one day he just kind of opened up to me.

He says, I don't know what to do about my son. And I said, what do you mean? He said, hermano Pablo, brother Paul, I worked for I don't know how long to get my first pair of shoes. And to go down there, when he says I was like 8 years old, 9 years old, he said I worked and I got shoes and I was the happiest person on the face of the earth.

He said everything I've done, I have worked and worked. And now my son gets furious with me if I don't buy him a pair of Nike tennis shoes that cost him \$120. He said, I don't know what to do.

I said, welcome to America. Welcome to America. Materialism is eating us alive.

God did not call you to give your children the things you never had. He did not call you to be Santa Claus. He called you to be a godly father.

I know of men who have been offered promotions double their salary. Double their salary promotions that they refused. Why? Because it would take them away from their families too much.

Turned it down. That is following Christ. That is following Christ.

Another thing that I hear men say that quality time... they don't have a lot of time with their children and their wife, but the time they have is quality time. That's a lie. It's just a lie.

There you go. Any problem with that? See this man on the front row. It's a lie.

It's a lie. And I'll tell you why. I'll prove it.

Using our own time with the Lord, I don't know, maybe I'm just not as spiritual as you, but every time that I seek to meet with the Lord in the Word of God and prayer, angels don't come down. Not every time. I don't hear great choirs bursting forth.

The bush doesn't start burning out in front of my house. I go weeks and sometimes months like Brother Don says, fighting the good fight of faith, reading the Word, praying, crying out to God. But every once in a while, and I will not let anybody take this away from me, every once in a while, there's a visitation.

You have a sense in which, whoa, God is showing me stuff in the Word. I mean, it's like in five minutes I'm understanding more than I understood. You know, you're in tears.

You're just praising God. He's come down. He's shown you some things.

You know, like that. Wonderful. Well, guess what? Quality time is born out of a quantity of time.

How many of you, fathers, you've done all kinds of stuff with your children, and I mean, maybe you're very faithful and you're doing stuff with them all the time, and then all of a sudden, maybe once every couple of months, it just clicks. And your son opens up to you and you open up to him and he starts asking you questions and things go on. It's just an amazing time together.

That came out of a quantity of time. You can't schedule those things. Also, let me ask you a question.

Why did you have children? Why did you get married? Was it just to curb your sexual drive that you got married? Did you have children just because you like Little League? You say, well, I don't spend time with them, but when I am with them, it's good time. I go, why did you have children? What was your purpose? What was your purpose? But to be with them. Why a relationship with God? To be with Him.

Why a relationship with a woman? To share a life together. Why children? To pour yourself into them. To watch them grow.

To rejoice in them. To hope that there'll be a heritage unto the Lord. There is a lie that says I can have my cake and eat it too.

You can't. You can't. You have got to make some choices.

A lot of times, men will come to me and they're all in debt and the wife's there and they're angry and they're fighting all because of all their financial problems. And I'll look at them and I'll listen and then I'll say, usually the first thing I'll say is, I think I've figured out your problem. And they say, what? I said, you didn't go to med school.

And they say, what do you mean? Well, you didn't go to med school. You're living like a doctor. But, you didn't go to school.

You didn't get a doctor's job. You don't get a doctor's wage. You see, we live in a country of entitlement.

You think you're entitled to something. You're not. Just because someone else has a big house and a fancy car and all these other things does not mean you're entitled to that.

Unless you can buy it with cash. And even then, as a believer, you need to realize what am I spending God's monies on? You see, you're not entitled to anything. That's one of the biggest problems in this country.

Well, I'm entitled. No, you're not entitled to live like a doctor because all those years that doctor was going to school until he was 35, you were hanging out with your friends. You didn't like to study.

Remember 9th grade algebra? Who needs this stuff? Well, now you're paying for it. Do you see what I mean? You're not entitled because you didn't do it. So, here's the thing that you need to understand.

You have to make some choices. Even in my own ministry, people say, Brother Paul, you're at the top of your game. Why are you turning down this? And why aren't you going here? And why aren't you doing that? Because in God's providence, I had my first child when I was 40.

I have three children. Eight, six, and two. I can't obey God with regard to my family and be doing all this other stuff.

I've got to make choices. God's will is perfect. I do not have to sacrifice my family for the sake of the ministry, nor do I have to forsake my ministry for my family.

God's will is perfect. You make choices. Choices.

Another thing is, men come home from work and they just say, I'm tired. Join a club. I'm tired.

But here's something. Gentlemen, listen to me. I have both hips replaced.

My wrist is all full of pins. It moves this much. I have a problem in my neck that causes tremendous headaches like you cannot believe.

The decision they'll make to operate will be the day that I call my wife and say, bring me a gun. I get very tired. I get sick sometimes to the point of nauseous.

Now why am I saying this? If anybody should not take care of themselves, it should be me. I should just be laying in a bed. I have to watch what I eat.

I work out an hour a day just so my joints will move. But I do a lot of stuff because I need the energy. Energy.

I need to be physically strong. Some of you do not take care of yourselves. This is one of the reasons why you can't really hold your own with your family and the work of God.

You're not physically able. I'm not talking about make yourself look like Arnold Schwarzenegger, but even Jonathan Edwards and some of the greatest saints took care of their body so they could be strong enough to live long enough for the Lord. We need to realize that we've only got one life to live.

We need to eat right. We need to do whatever we have to do in order to keep enough energy and enough strength to give our lives away. It's so very important.

I want you to know, it all works together so holistically. You can't neglect your intellect. You can't neglect your soul.

You can't neglect your body. But you want to take whatever God has given you and keep it as strong as possible in order to give as much of it away as you can. This is so very important.

I mean, gosh, I come home. I've got an 8-year-old that's the size of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. I mean, I've got all these jumping on my back and everything else.

They need a dad they can play with. Not one that comes home from work and sits in a chair watching something he shouldn't be watching. You see, we've got to give our lives away.

You get up in the morning and you meet with the Lord. You go to work. You come home from work.

I know you're tired. You get home at 6, whatever. Take care of yourself the best that you can.

But when you get home from work, your work just begins. It just began. Now you have children to take care of.

And you have a wife to take care of. And if you collapse in your bed at 11, 30, or 12 o'clock at night, not because you've been watching the tube or been playing with your friends, but because you've poured your life into your wife and your children, I guarantee you'll sleep a lot better. We have a rule at my house that when I come home from the office in the afternoon, usually about 5, even if I have to go in a lot early, if I have to go in at 4, go in at 5, whatever, get home around 5, the rule is this.

Up until 5 o'clock, the children belong to my wife. When I get home, they belong to me. The diapers belong to me.

The wrestling belongs to me. It belongs to me until they go to bed. And when they go to bed, then my wife is mine.

That's the goal. But guys, this is what it means to live the Christian life. This is what it means.

And I'll tell you where churches do a disservice. Event-oriented, program-oriented churches. They expect the men to come home from work and come to the church because it's all got to start at the building to keep the power there, to keep everybody centered around some man's ministry, and then go out and evangelize and do all sorts of things.

I say, get to your home, disciple your wife, disciple your children. Come to church. Hear the Word.

Yes, there will be some things we do together and we'll learn together and we'll even minister together, but primarily, I want you to become a man who shepherds a woman and shepherds His children. And then me as a pastor, I'll go fishing. No, as a pastor, I'll shepherd you.

Yeah, and still go fishing. But do you see? It's a life of... After the last several years, I've just seen... I'm famous because I preached one famous sermon. The Shocking Youth Message.

And all of a sudden, I'm famous. One message. I've seen the circus and the celebrityism of Christianity and how people can think things about you that aren't true, think too little of you, but mostly think too much of you.

You get to where you're preaching in conferences about ministry, but no longer doing much ministry. Is all this circus about what it means? No, I'll tell you what it means. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Love your neighbor as yourself and your neighbor begins with the people closest to you. I direct a mission organization, folks. I'm about missions.

But we do missions by being obedient to Christ. Not by jumping over all our obligations to go do something else that's a lot easier and gets a lot more glory in man's eyes. Now, I want to talk just for a moment.

Just for a moment, I want you to go to Isaiah. And I'm going to try to not go 25 hours, but this is really important. Isaiah 3, 1-3.

What I want you to see, one of the reasons why men are not being heads of their homes is the judgment of God upon America. It's the upheaval of society. Look at verses 1-3.

Chapter 3, 1-3, And behold, the Lord God of hosts is going to remove from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support, the whole supply of bread, the whole supply of water, the mighty man and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, the counselor and the expert artisan, and the skillful enchanter. He's going to remove them all. Now look at 4 and 5. And I will make mere lads their princes, and capricious children will rule over them.

Look at verse 12. O My people, their oppressors are children, and women rule over them. That's our nation.

Men who are not experts at all rule over men who are. Capricious children. Everybody knows we are a culture of youth in everything.

Everything from fashion to economics is basically determined by the whims of youth. Where are the men? Where are the men? Now, I want to talk about headship for a moment. And I want you to realize something.

It is a two-fold relationship. And I want to give you an example from the centurion in Luke 7, 8. He says, For I am a man placed under authority with soldiers under me. If I have authority in my home over my spouse and over my children, I must always recognize with great fear and trembling that there is an authority over me.

And it is God. And He will call me on the carpet. But I am dealing here with something most precious to God.

And I had better deal with it correctly. The next thing I want you to see is that all authority is to be regulated by the Word of God. Remember when I read to you in Deuteronomy about the king who had to copy out a copy of the law by hand and he had to read it and read it every day so that his heart not be exalted over his countrymen? You are to submit yourself to the Word of God, to know God, to know God's command so that you do not exalt yourself over your wife and your children and forget the reason why you have been appointed head.

And it is for their benefit, for their good, and for God's glory. Again, I'm skipping over a lot of things. But Deuteronomy 4.2 says, You shall not add to the Word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it.

You had better not add to the Word of God and put upon your wife and children something God did not command. And you had better not be cowardly and refuse to share with your wife and children the things God has commanded for fear they will react in a wrong way. You are obligated as a man under authority to be trained in that authority of the Word of God and to share it graciously, lovingly, mercifully, and with a great deal of patience.

The same patience that God has shown you. Now, I want to make, and again, I'm just skipping over volumes of stuff, but I want to make a contrast between two things. Authority among the Gentiles, the authority of Caesar, and the authority of Christ.

Now just listen. First of all, I'm going to give you a picture of the authority of Caesar. It says in Daniel 7.7, After this, I kept looking in night visions and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong, and it had large iron teeth.

It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet. And it was different from all the beasts that were before it. And it had ten horns.

Now just listen. It crushed and trampled down the remainder. It devoured.

That's the type of headship and authority that has nothing to do with Christianity. Yet, I have seen men take the idea of headship and do this very thing to their families. We have been placed over our families for their benefit, for their good.

And here's the authority of Christ. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. Matthew 20.

Listen to this. So when He had washed their feet and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. Here is the One who has all authority.

And He takes the role of the lowest slave in the house to serve. To serve. To serve.

Again, this is our great opportunity to live out the principles of radical discipleship for the glory of God. Now, here's something that I want to share with you that biblical headship respects, highly regards the dignity of the wife. Highly regards the dignity of the wife.

I want you to understand something that's very, very important. Men, even though we would not say it this way, oftentimes we act as though our wife and our family is nothing more than an extension of us. They are not an extension of us.

The wife, our children, they are persons in their own right before God. And they need to be treated with exceptional dignity. We must make decisions.

We must rule. We may even have to discipline, but always within the context of respecting their human dignity. Your wife has been given the right to be a child of God.

John 1.12 She is a fellow heir of the grace of life. 1 Peter 3.7 Her uniqueness and individuality is set forth in Scripture. I want you to listen to something.

Just listen to this text. Maybe you've never seen this before. Revelation 2.17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To him who overcomes, which is not just male believers, to anyone who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone and a new name written on the stone, which no one knows but he who receives it. My wife will receive things from Christ that's only between her and Christ. It doesn't always pass through me.

She's not an extension of me. I'm not a mediator between her and Christ. Between she and Christ.

Not at all. She is a child of God in her own right and I need to respect that and I need to tremble. Do you know what Scripture says about these things? How we're to handle fellow believers.

You need to concentrate more on considering your wife as a fellow believer. It may help you treat her better. Now, it says in 1 Peter 3.7 that if a husband mistreats his wife, his prayers will be hindered.

God will not even listen to the things He's saying. But listen to this, Matthew 18.5-7, and whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks, for it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the man through whom that stumbling block comes.

Let me ask you a question. Are you a stumbling block to your wife's growth in Christ? Are you a stumbling block to her relationship with Christ? Are you a stumbling block to her sanctification? Or are you an instrument of God helping her grow? This is a very important point. Biblical headship is redemptive.

There is a small sense in which you as a husband are a Savior to your wife. Just look at Ephesians for a moment. Ephesians 5. It says in verse 22, "...Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body." Christ is head of the church, but He is also Savior of the church.

Now, you want to take upon yourself that same title as head. Do you want to take upon yourself the same title as Savior? Because that's rather costly. Now, Christ of course, offered the perfect work, perfect atonement.

Nothing can be added to it. But simply what He is saying here is that we are to be an instrument in our wife's sanctification, her healing, her wholeness, her growth. We are to be a source of blessing.

Let me ask you some questions. Is your wife more confident in her calling and election because of you? Is your wife growing in her love for God and one another because of you? Is your wife making greater progress in sanctification because of you? Especially in a chaste and respectful behavior, a gentle and quiet spirit, sensibility and purity, modesty and discretion? Are all these things happening because of you? You say, well, I didn't think about those things. Really? That should make you very afraid.

By the way, Pastor, I'm going to leave all these notes with you. Just don't sell them. You can use them.

You can copy them. You can give them away. You can burn them.

You can do anything you like. But just go through this on your own. There's a lot of Scriptures here.

Is your wife more intently looking forward to the coming of Christ and her future glorification because of you? Is your wife making greater progress in her work? Is she a better homemaker because of you? Has she greater capacity to teach what is good and instruct other women to love their husbands and children because of you? Is your wife blossoming as a person in her own right before God and in Christ because of you? Is she increasing in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man because of you? It's an awesome responsibility to say, I do. Now, I want to show something that's very, very important here. The distinct needs of the wife.

In Ephesians 5, it says that the husband is to love the wife, but it never says the wife is to love the husband. It says that the wife is to respect her husband, but it never says that the husband is to respect his wife. Now, that does not mean that husbands do not need love and it does not mean that wives do not need respect.

But I think something is being taught to us here. As a man, I love my wife. She's a beautiful lady.

I love my wife. But I do not need my wife when I get up in the morning. I don't need her to say, I love you, I love you, I love you.

I don't need her to call the office four times a day going, honey, I love you. I don't need her sending me flowers. A gift certificate from Cabela's would be fine, but I don't need flowers.

I just don't need to hear that all the time. But, what do I need? I need her respect. I know if my wife respects me, the whole world can come against me.

I'm fine with that. If I know my wife doesn't respect me and she doesn't treat me with respect, it kills me. Now, my wife, she needs respect.

But of all things, she needs to be loved and she needs to know that she's loved and she needs to be told that she's loved. That needs to be affirmed all the time. I need her respect.

She needs my love. And she needs me to show it. You say, well, Brother Paul, I'm just not like that.

I know. Repent and become more like Christ. It's very simple.

It's what she needs. Listen to this. Love is patient.

Let me ask you, is it not true that we're more prone to be most impatient with our wives than we are any other person on the face of the earth? Love is kind. You would say stuff to your wife you wouldn't say to anybody that works with you. They'd hit you in the head with a crescent wrench.

It's true. I mean, kindness. Just think about the smallness of that word.

Just kind to her. It's not jealous. It does not brag.

It's not arrogant. It does not act unbecomingly. When you've gotten mad at your wife, would you really want a video camera in there? And for us to show it? If I had some of that stuff on film and was getting ready to show it, you would leap out of the seat in the very back without touching any of the rows.

Leap on me and fight me for that little thing to keep it from being shown. Because you've looked like one of those. I mean, bad.

Bad. Just think about that. That's showing who you really are.

And the reason you don't act that way with other people is because you'll get in trouble for it. They'll see it. But hidden in your house, that's almost like a woman being abused in a hidden place where no one will know.

Man, Christ is there. He sees it. It does not seek its own.

Man, we have to be very careful men about our hobbies. Hobbies will cause us to spend money that we earned for something that, man, we need an outlet. Need that gun.

Need that boat. Need this. Need that.

Think of throwing nothing away. A lot of money away on a four-wheeler or something. And then turn around and if your wife buys a new pair of shoes, you're saying, well, you're kind of the spendthrift, aren't you? We've got to be very, very careful.

Very careful. You know what's the funniest thing? This has nothing to do with the sermon, but it's just the funniest thing. I love going to Cabela's or Bass Pro Shop.

Because you'll see these guys that are like 6'6", go about 260, and a little wife about this tall, and they're going, but honey, I think I could pay for it if you let me get it now. I know that if I work really hard, I could... It's like a little kid. It's unbelievable how a man can be reduced to nothing in a Bass Pro Shop or Cabela's.

I'll work real hard. I'll pay it all off. It's unbelievable how many things that we want.

Little hobbies, little things. Men, when I was on the mission field, there were like three different missionary families that had to return to the States because the wife had a nervous breakdown. Now, it was not because those women were necessarily weaker or less godly than their husbands.

Here was the thing. I want you to think about this, especially those of you who brag about being homeschooling dads. You're not really a homeschooling dad.

You're just married to a homeschooling mom. Okay? But I want you to think about this. These missionaries, the man would get up in the morning and say he needed new tires for the Jeep.

That'd take all day in Peru. He'd get tires. He's going out.

Or he's going out to build a church. Or he's going out witnessing. He's doing all these things.

And he's interacting with people.

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