



HOW TO LEAD YOUR FAMILY

DAILY DEVOTIONS FOR MEN

The Teaching Leader - Day 1

YOUR WIFE NEEDS THIS FROM YOU

*For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ
is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.*

EPHESIANS 3:23

Your wife has been waiting for this moment. She's been hoping you would step up and take spiritual initiative in your marriage. She doesn't need you to be perfect or have all the answers. She needs you to be a man who seeks God and invites her into that journey with you.

Right now, she's probably feeling hopeful. She heard the challenge in the sermon and saw something in your eyes that said you were serious. She's wondering what this could mean for your marriage and family.

The most powerful thing you can do this week is start praying for your wife specifically and consistently. Not vague prayers, but focused prayers about her actual life. Pray for her biggest source of stress this week. Pray for something she's excited about or looking forward to. Pray for her relationship with God and how she's growing spiritually.

When you start praying for someone regularly, God changes your heart toward them. You become more aware of their needs, more sensitive to their struggles, more invested in their success. Your wife will begin to sense this shift even before you tell her you're praying for her.

Application: Every day this week, pray FOR your wife privately (her biggest stress, something she's excited about, and her relationship with God). Also start praying WITH her using the approach you'll learn tomorrow.

Reflect & Write: What is your wife's biggest stress right now? What is she excited about? How is she growing spiritually?

Prayer: Father, help me see my wife the way You see her. Give me a heart that consistently brings her before Your throne in prayer.

PRAYING WITH YOUR WIFE

THREE SIMPLE RULES

Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

MATTHEW 18:19

Yesterday you began praying for your wife. Today, we're taking the next step: praying with your wife. This might feel intimidating, but Craig Groeschel offers three simple rules that will set you up for success.

First, keep it simple. You don't need theological words or fancy religious language. Here's what a simple prayer sounds like: "God, thank You for Sarah and for how hard she's working to help her mom right now. Please give her wisdom about the doctor's appointments and help her not to worry so much. Give her Your peace. Amen." That's it. Your wife isn't judging your prayer vocabulary. She wants to see you take spiritual initiative.

Second, keep it short. A two-minute prayer that's genuine beats a ten-minute prayer that's just going through motions. Jesus actually warned against long, repetitive prayers. Thank God for one specific thing about your wife, then ask Him for one specific thing she needs.

Third, if you miss one day, don't miss two. You're going to forget sometimes. Life gets crazy. The key is getting back on track immediately. Your wife is watching to see if you're serious about this or if it's something you'll quit when it gets difficult.

Application: Continue praying FOR your wife daily (privately). This week, start praying WITH her using these three rules: simple, short, and consistent. Ask her, "Can I pray with you about something?"

Reflect & Write: Write out a simple, two-minute prayer in your phone you could pray with your wife this week. What would you thank God for? What would you ask Him for? Jot some initial idea below.

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to take this next step with my wife. Help me follow these simple guidelines and stay consistent.

The Teaching Leader - Day 3

WHEN PRAYER FEELS AWKWARD

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

ROMANS 8:26

You've started praying with your wife, but if you're honest, it probably feels awkward. Maybe you stumbled over words, ran out of things to say after thirty seconds, or felt like you were just going through the motions. That's completely normal for anyone who is new to praying out loud.

Here's the truth: every man who leads his family spiritually has felt this way. The awkwardness doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It means you're doing something unfamiliar. Like any new skill, spiritual leadership feels clunky at first but becomes natural with practice.

Your wife isn't expecting eloquent prayers or perfect theology. She's looking for authenticity, not performance. Even if your words aren't perfect, she's seeing that you're putting forth effort to have God at the center of your marriage and that you're noticing her needs and taking the initiative to bring them to God. When you pray, "God, I'm not good at this, but please help Sarah with her stress at work," that simple, honest prayer is powerful.

The Holy Spirit helps us when we don't know what to pray. He takes our awkward, stumbling attempts and translates them perfectly before God's throne.

Don't let the awkwardness stop you. Keep praying with your wife even when it feels uncomfortable. The awkwardness will fade, but the habit of seeking God together will transform your marriage.

Application: Continue praying **FOR** your wife daily and **WITH** her using Craig's method (simple, short, consistent). Focus on being authentic rather than eloquent when you pray together.

Reflect & Write: How does it feel when you pray out loud with your wife? What makes it feel awkward, and how can you push through that?

Prayer: Father, help me remember that You care more about my heart than my words. Give me courage to be authentic in prayer, even when it feels awkward.

WHAT IF SHE KNOWS MORE BIBLE THAN YOU?

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

Here's a fear that stops many men from spiritual leadership: "What if my wife knows more Bible than me? What if she's more spiritually mature? Won't I look foolish trying to lead someone who's further along than I am?"

First, spiritual leadership isn't about knowing more Bible verses than your wife. It's about taking initiative to point your marriage toward God. Your wife doesn't need you to be her Bible teacher. She needs you to be her spiritual partner who says, "Let's seek God together about this."

Second, her spiritual maturity is actually a gift to your marriage, not a threat to your leadership. Use her knowledge. Ask for her insights. Say things like, "You know the Bible better than me. What do you think God would say about this situation?" That's not weak leadership. That's wise leadership.

Third, you can lead from a position of learning. You don't have to have all the answers to take initiative. You can say, "I don't know what the Bible says about this, but let's find out together." You can suggest reading a book together or asking someone wiser for advice.

Your wife wants to see you take spiritual initiative, not spiritual control. There's a big difference.

Application: Continue praying **FOR** your wife daily and **WITH** her using Craig's method. If your wife knows more Bible than you, use that as a resource rather than seeing it as a threat. Ask for her insights and learn from her.

Reflect & Write: How can you lead spiritually even if your wife knows more Bible than you do? What would "learning together" look like in your marriage?

Prayer: Lord, help me see my wife's spiritual maturity as a gift to our marriage. Give me humility to learn from her while still taking initiative to lead us toward You.

The Teaching Leader - Day 5

CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR HER HEART

To answer before listening—that is folly and shame.

PROVERBS 18:13

As you've been learning to pray with your wife, you're discovering that spiritual leadership requires creating emotional safety. Your wife needs to know that when she shares her heart with you and with God, she won't be judged, criticized, or given a lecture.

This means listening to her prayer requests without immediately trying to fix everything. When she says, "I'm really struggling with worry about my mom's health," don't jump straight to "Well, you just need to trust God more." Listen. Acknowledge her feelings. Then pray with her about her worry.

This means not using her vulnerable moments against her later. If she shares something difficult during prayer time, don't bring it up during an argument next week. What she shares in prayer should be safe with you.

Your wife is testing whether it's safe to be vulnerable with you spiritually. If you respond with patience and compassion, she'll share more of her heart. If you respond with criticism or quick fixes, she'll start keeping things surface level. The goal is creating an environment where she feels safe being real about her struggles, fears, and dreams. That's what allows spiritual intimacy to grow in your marriage.

Application: Continue praying FOR your wife daily and WITH her using Craig's method. When your wife shares struggles during your prayer times together, listen first, comfort second, and pray third. Don't jump straight to giving advice.

Reflect & Write: How do you typically respond when your wife shares struggles with you? What do you need to change to make her feel more emotionally safe?

Prayer: Father, help me create a safe space for my wife's heart. Give me wisdom to listen with compassion and respond with grace.

The Teaching Leader - Day 6

SPEAKING TRUTH INTO HER LIFE

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths,
but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs,
that it may benefit those who listen.*

EPHESIANS 4:29

Your wife needs to hear God's truth from you, but not in the way you might think. This isn't about correcting her theology or pointing out her spiritual weaknesses. It's about speaking God's promises and character over her life when she needs to be reminded.

When she's anxious about work, remind her during prayer that God cares about every detail of her life. When she's feeling overwhelmed as a mom, thank God for the strength He gives her and ask Him to help her feel His peace. When she's doubting herself, speak about how God sees her as His beloved daughter.

Here's what this sounds like in prayer: "God, thank You that Sarah is Your daughter and that You love her even more than I do. She's been worried about this situation at work, and I know You care about it too. Please give her Your wisdom and help her remember that You're in control even when things feel chaotic."

You don't need to have Bible verses memorized to do this. If you're not sure what God says about anxiety, fear, or discouragement, look it up online. Then use what you find to encourage her during prayer.

You're not preaching at her. You're reminding both of you of who God is and how He sees her.

Application: Continue praying FOR your wife daily and WITH her using Craig's method. During your prayer times together, speak God's truth and promises over your wife's life, especially when she's struggling with doubt or fear.

Reflect & Write: What truth about God's character or promises does your wife most need to hear right now? How can you speak that over her during prayer?

Prayer: Lord, help me speak Your truth into my wife's life in ways that encourage and strengthen her faith.

The Teaching Leader - Day 7

BUILDING ON WHAT YOU'VE STARTED

But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

JOSHUA 24:15

After a week of learning to lead your wife spiritually, you're beginning to understand that leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about taking initiative to point your marriage toward God, even when you don't feel qualified.

This week you've pushed through the awkwardness of praying out loud, learned that you don't need perfect biblical knowledge to lead spiritually, and discovered that your wife's heart opens up when she feels safe sharing with you. You've seen how powerful it is when you speak God's truth over her life.

Most importantly, you've learned that spiritual leadership doesn't require perfection or seminary training. It requires a man willing to seek God and invite his wife to join him in that pursuit, even when it feels uncomfortable at first.

Joshua didn't wait for his family to decide whether they wanted to follow God. He made the decision and then led them in that direction. That's your calling as a husband. You set the spiritual tone for your marriage by your choices and initiative, not by your expertise.

The foundation you've built through consistent prayer - both for her and with her - will support everything else you learn about leading your family. You've proven to yourself and to her that you can do this, even when it doesn't feel natural yet.

Application: Commit to continuing both types of prayer you've developed this week: praying **FOR** your wife privately every day, and praying **WITH** her using Craig's method (simple, short, consistent). Don't let up now that you're gaining momentum and confidence.

Reflect & Write: What has changed in your relationship with your wife this week? What felt most challenging, and what gave you the most confidence?

Prayer: Father, thank You for helping me take these first steps even when they felt awkward. Give me wisdom and strength to keep growing as the spiritual leader You've called me to be.

The Serving Leader - Day 8

ONE SIMPLE WAY TO HELP HER TODAY

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.

MARK 10:43

Last week you built a foundation of spiritual leadership through prayer. This week, we're adding something concrete: finding practical ways to help your wife.

Don't overthink this. Start with one simple thing you can do today that would make her life a little easier.

Maybe she always makes the coffee in the morning. Tomorrow, make it for her before she wakes up. Maybe she usually handles the kids' bedtime routine. Tonight, tell her to relax while you take care of it. Maybe there's a household task she always does that you could handle without being asked.

The goal isn't to completely transform how your household works. It's to show your wife that your growing relationship with God is making you more attentive to her needs, not less. When she sees that your spiritual leadership means more help for her rather than more demands on her, she'll welcome it.

Your wife has been hoping you would notice what she carries and step up to help. She doesn't need grand gestures or dramatic changes. She needs to see you paying attention to her daily reality and looking for ways to lighten her load.

Start small, but start today. Pick one specific thing and do it without announcing it or expecting praise. Just quietly help her because you love her.

Application: Today, do one specific task that your wife usually handles. Don't tell her you're going to do it. Just do it.

Reflect & Write: What's one task your wife usually does that you could handle today? How do you think she would respond if you just took care of it?

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to see the daily burden my wife carries. Help me find practical ways to serve her and make her life easier.

HOW TO FIGURE OUT WHAT SHE ACTUALLY NEEDS

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 PETER 3:7

Yesterday you helped your wife with one specific task. Today, let's talk about how to figure out what she actually needs from you. Many men want to help their wives but honestly don't know where to start or what would be most helpful.

Here's the simplest approach: ask her. But not in a vague way. Instead of "How can I help you?" try asking specific questions: "What's the most stressful part of your day?" "What task do you wish you didn't have to do?" "What would help you feel less overwhelmed this week?"

Also, pay attention to what she talks about or mentions repeatedly. If she often talks about how tired she is after work, maybe she needs help with dinner or kids' activities. If she mentions feeling behind on household tasks, maybe she needs you to take over some of those responsibilities.

In a different Bible translation, Peter calls this living with your wife "according to knowledge." That means you study her. You learn what encourages her, what stresses her out, what makes her feel loved, and what makes her feel ignored. Then you use that knowledge to serve her well.

Don't assume you know what she needs based on what you would want. Women and men often have different needs and different ways of feeling cared for.

Application: This week, ask your wife one specific question about what would help her most, then act on her answer.

Reflect & Write: What specific question could you ask your wife to better understand how to help her? What do you think she needs most right now?

Prayer: Father, help me understand my wife's specific needs rather than assuming I know what would help her. Give me wisdom to ask the right questions and listen well to her answers.

WHEN YOUR HELP ISN'T RECEIVED WELL

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time
we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

GALATIANS 6:9

Maybe you tried to help your wife this week and it didn't go as expected. Maybe she said, "I can do it myself," or seemed unappreciative of your efforts. Maybe you did something wrong and she had to redo it. Maybe she even seemed suspicious of your sudden helpfulness.

Don't get discouraged. This is normal when you're changing patterns in your marriage. Your wife might need time to adjust to you taking more initiative. She might be protecting herself from disappointment if she's seen you start things before and not follow through.

If you did something incorrectly, don't take it personally. Ask how she prefers it to be done and learn from her feedback. If she seems suspicious, don't get defensive. Just keep consistently helping without making a big deal about it. Your actions over time will prove your sincerity.

Sometimes wives have become so used to handling everything themselves that it feels strange when their husbands start helping. Give her time to trust that you're serious about this and that your help will be consistent, not just a temporary phase.

The key is persistence without pressure. Keep looking for ways to serve her even if she doesn't respond the way you hoped initially.

Application: If your attempts to help haven't been received well, don't give up. Keep serving consistently and let your actions prove your sincerity over time.

Reflect & Write: How has your wife responded to your attempts to help her? If it wasn't what you expected, how will you continue serving anyway?

Prayer: Lord, help me serve my wife consistently even when she doesn't respond the way I hoped. Give me patience to earn her trust through persistent faithfulness.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HELPING AND SERVING

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

There's an important difference between helping your wife and serving her. Helping is when you pitch in occasionally when it's convenient for you. Serving is when you consistently put her needs before your comfort and preferences.

Helping says, "I'll do this when I have time." Serving says, "Her need is more important than my relaxation right now." Helping waits to be asked. Serving notices and responds without being asked. Helping expects appreciation and recognition. Serving finds joy in making her life better, whether she notices or not.

This week, you might have discovered that serving your wife sometimes requires sacrifice on your part. Maybe you need to help with dinner when you're tired from work. Maybe you need to handle the kids when you'd rather watch TV. Maybe you need to do household tasks during time you wanted for yourself.

Paul's words about valuing others above yourself become practical here. You don't have to do everything perfectly or transform your entire life overnight. Just take one small step today. Choose one moment where you put her needs before your preferences. That's how servant love grows.

Application: This week, look for opportunities to serve your wife even when it's inconvenient for you. Choose her needs over your preferences.

Reflect & Write: What's the difference between how you've been helping your wife versus truly serving her? What would change if you served rather than just helped?

Prayer: Father, help me serve my wife sacrificially, not just when it's convenient. Give me joy in choosing her needs over my comfort.

UNDERSTANDING HER EMOTIONAL NEEDS

In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church.

EPHESIANS 5:28-29

As you've been serving your wife practically this week, don't forget that she also has emotional needs that require your attention. Just like you automatically take care of your physical needs when you're hungry or tired, you should be just as attentive to your wife's emotional needs.

Your wife needs to feel valued, appreciated, understood, and cherished. She needs to know that you notice when she's stressed and that you care about her inner world, not just her to-do list. She needs your full attention when she's talking, not half-hearted listening while you check your phone.

This might mean celebrating her successes, even small ones. It might mean asking about her day and actually being interested in her answer. It might mean noticing when she's overwhelmed and asking how you can help emotionally, not just practically.

Many men are good at solving problems but sometimes struggle with simply listening and empathizing. Sometimes your wife doesn't need you to fix anything. She just needs you to hear her heart and validate her feelings.

Application: This week, focus on one specific emotional need your wife has. Notice what encourages her emotionally and respond accordingly.

Reflect & Write: What emotional needs does your wife have that you could serve better? How can you show her that her feelings matter to you?

Prayer: Lord, help me understand and serve my wife's emotional needs, not just her practical ones. Give me sensitivity to her heart.

The Serving Leader - Day 13

INCLUDING YOUR CHILDREN IN SERVING MOM

*Fathers, do not exasperate your children;
instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*

EPHESIANS 6:4

If you have children, this week of learning to serve your wife provides a perfect opportunity to teach them about biblical manhood and how families should work. Your kids are watching how you treat their mother, and what they see will shape their understanding of marriage and family relationships.

Include your children when you serve their mom. Let them help you make her breakfast in bed. Have them pick flowers to give her. Teach them to notice when she's tired and ask how they can help. Show them that strong men take care of the women in their lives.

If you have sons, you're teaching them how to treat their future wives. If you have daughters, you're showing them what kind of treatment they should expect from their future husbands. Either way, your example is shaping how they'll approach their own marriages someday.

Don't just tell them to be kind to mom. Show them what that looks like. When they see you consistently putting her needs first and looking for ways to serve her, they learn that real strength is used to bless others, not to demand service from others.

Application: If you have children, include them in at least one act of service toward your wife this week. Teach them to serve alongside you.

Reflect & Write: How can you include your children in serving your wife? What lesson about marriage and family do you want them to learn from your example?

Prayer: Father, help me model servant love for my children. Use my example to teach them how to love and serve others well.

The Serving Leader - Day 14

MAKING SERVICE YOUR NEW NORMAL

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast,
it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-5

After a week of intentionally serving your wife, the question is whether this becomes your new normal or just a temporary experiment. Your wife has been noticing your efforts this week. She's seen you looking for ways to help her, paying attention to her needs, and putting her good before your comfort.

Real love, according to Paul, is not self-seeking. It doesn't keep track of what it's done or expect immediate rewards. It just keeps serving because that's what love does. The goal is making servant love such a regular part of your marriage that it becomes natural rather than something you have to remember to do.

This doesn't mean you become a doormat or never have time for things you enjoy. It means your default response becomes "How can I serve my wife?" rather than "How can my wife serve me?" It means you look for opportunities to make her life better because you love her, not because you're trying to earn points.

Your wife is starting to see that your spiritual growth is making you more loving, not more demanding. This creates trust and makes her more receptive to your leadership in other areas. When she knows you're committed to her good, she's more likely to follow your lead.

Application: Choose one specific way you've served your wife this week that you want to continue doing regularly. Make it a permanent part of how you love her.

Reflect & Write: What has changed in your relationship with your wife through serving her? Which acts of service do you want to continue beyond this week?

Prayer: Lord, make servant love my natural response to my wife. Help me serve her consistently because I love her, not because I'm trying to prove something.

YOUR IDENTITY BEFORE YOUR ACTIVITY

The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption as sons. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”

ROMANS 8:15

After two weeks of learning to pray and serve, you might be feeling good about your progress or discouraged because things haven’t gone smoothly. Either way, here’s what matters most: you are God’s son before you’re your family’s leader.

Who you are matters more than what you do, which is why it’s important to know you are God’s son. You are loved and accepted by God because of who you are in Christ. His beloved son, chosen before the foundation of the world, forgiven completely, and equipped by His Spirit for every good work. Your worth isn’t determined by your family’s responses to your leadership efforts.

Spiritual leadership must flow from your relationship with God, not from your performance for your family. When you lead from your identity as God’s beloved son, you lead with confidence and grace. When you lead from a need to prove yourself, you lead with anxiety and manipulation.

Paul reminds us that we don’t have a spirit of slavery that makes us afraid. We have a spirit of adoption that makes us confident. You can take risks in leadership because your worth is secure. You can handle your family’s mixed responses because your Father’s love is constant.

This kind of change takes time. Nothing of this magnitude happens quickly. Be patient with yourself as God shapes your character.

Application: Before you do anything for your family today, spend time remembering who you are as God’s son. Let that identity fuel your leadership.

Reflect & Write: How does remembering your identity as God’s son change how you approach leadership in your home?

Prayer: Father, help me remember that I’m Your beloved son first and my family’s leader second. Let my security in Your love drive how I love them.

LEADING FROM LOVE, NOT FOR RESULTS

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:7

Here's a question that might make you uncomfortable: Are you leading your family to bless them, or to get something from them? Are you praying and serving because you love them, or because you want them to respond a certain way?

It's easy for good leadership to become manipulative when your motives get mixed up. Maybe you started praying with your wife hoping she'd become more affectionate. Maybe you began serving her expecting more appreciation or less criticism. Those aren't necessarily wrong desires, but they can't be your primary motivation.

Love, according to Paul, always perseveres. It keeps serving even when the results aren't immediate or obvious. It keeps praying even when your wife seems unchanged. It keeps leading even when your family doesn't seem to notice or appreciate your efforts.

You can't control how your family responds to your leadership. You can only control the heart you bring to it. When you lead from love rather than for results, you're free to keep growing regardless of their reactions. When you lead for results, you become manipulative and eventually resentful when those results don't come.

Application: Examine your motives this week. Are you leading to bless your family or to get something from them? Adjust your heart accordingly.

Reflect & Write: What results have you been hoping for from your leadership? How would your approach change if you led purely from love?

Prayer: Lord, purify my motives. Help me lead my family from love alone, not from a desire to get specific responses from them.

WHEN YOUR PERFORMANCE GETS PRAISED (OR CRITICIZED)

*Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God?
Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people,
I would not be a servant of Christ.*

GALATIANS 1:10

Maybe your wife has been appreciative of your efforts these past two weeks. She's noticed your prayers and service, and she's responded positively. That feels good, doesn't it? Or maybe she hasn't responded the way you hoped. Maybe she seems suspicious of your changes or unimpressed by your efforts.

Here's the danger: letting your family's response determine your sense of success or failure as a leader. When they praise your efforts, you feel like you're winning. When they don't respond as hoped, you feel like you're failing. Both reactions put you on an emotional rollercoaster that has nothing to do with actual spiritual growth.

Paul asked the Galatians whether they were trying to win human approval or God's approval. Your calling as a husband and father comes from God, not from your family's feedback. Their positive response is a blessing, but it's not your report card. Their lack of response is disappointing, but it's not a verdict on your leadership.

Lead consistently regardless of the feedback you receive. Your family's mixed responses don't change God's calling on your life or His love for you. Keep growing in character whether they notice or not.

Application: This week, focus on being faithful regardless of how your family responds to your leadership efforts.

Reflect & Write: How has your family's response affected your motivation to lead? How can you stay consistent regardless of their feedback?

Prayer: Father, help me lead for Your approval alone. Don't let my family's responses, positive or negative, determine my faithfulness to Your calling.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHENTIC AND MECHANICAL

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites!

You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean.

In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

MATTHEW 23:27-28

Your family can tell the difference between genuine spiritual leadership and going through the motions. They know when you're praying with them because you care about their hearts versus when you're praying because it's on your checklist.

Jesus had harsh words for religious leaders who looked good outside but had dead hearts inside. You can pray mechanically, serve grudgingly, and lead manipulatively while appearing godly.

Authentic leadership flows from a heart changed by God's love. You pray because you genuinely want to connect with God alongside your family, asking about their real struggles, not just going through routine. You serve because you truly want to bless your wife, noticing when she's overwhelmed and stepping in without being asked. You lead because you care about their spiritual growth, having real conversations about faith during car rides, not just formal devotions.

Mechanical leadership becomes burdensome for everyone. Your family feels the obligation rather than the love behind your actions. Authentic leadership is sustainable and attractive because it comes from genuine care.

Application: Examine your heart this week. Are there areas where you're going through the motions rather than leading from genuine love?

Reflect & Write: Where might you be leading mechanically rather than authentically? How can you engage your heart more fully in those areas?

Prayer: Lord, keep my heart soft and genuine as I lead my family. Don't let me become mechanical or hypocritical in my spiritual leadership.

GOD'S HEART TOWARD YOU SHAPES YOUR HEART TOWARD FAMILY

We love because he first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19

The way you see God directly affects how you lead your family. If you view God as harsh and demanding, you'll tend to be harsh and demanding with your wife and children. If you see God as patient and graceful, you'll be more likely to extend that same patience and grace to your family.

Many men struggle with spiritual leadership because they're trying to give something they've never really received. They attempt to show unconditional love while believing God's love for them is conditional. They try to be patient with their family's failures while believing God is constantly disappointed in their failures.

John reminds us that we love because God first loved us. Your capacity to love your family sacrificially flows from your understanding of how sacrificially God has loved you. Your ability to be patient with their growth comes from experiencing God's patience with your growth.

This is why your personal relationship with God is so crucial to family leadership. You can't give away what you don't possess. If you're harsh with yourself, you'll be harsh with your family. If you experience God's grace personally, you'll extend that grace to those you love.

Application: Spend extra time this week reflecting on God's love, patience, and grace toward you. Let that overflow into how you treat your family.

Reflect & Write: How do you typically view God's heart toward you? How does that affect the way you lead your family?

Prayer: Father, help me understand how much You love me so I can love my family with that same heart. Let Your grace toward me overflow to them.

Day 20

BEING VS. DOING IN MARRIAGE

Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

PROVERBS 31:11

Your wife doesn't just need you to do the right things. She needs you to be the right kind of man. There's a difference between a husband who serves his wife because he's supposed to and a husband who serves his wife because he's become the kind of man who naturally serves others.

Performance can be maintained for a while, but character is sustainable for a lifetime. Your wife can sense the difference between actions that flow from genuine love and actions that flow from duty or manipulation. She'd rather have a husband who genuinely cares about her heart than one who just does all the right things for the wrong reasons.

The Proverbs 31 woman's husband had full confidence in her. But notice, this confidence wasn't based just on what she did, but on who she was. Her character made her trustworthy. In the same way, your wife needs to have confidence in who you are as a man, not just what you do as a husband.

This is why character development is more important than behavior modification. When you become the kind of man who naturally loves God and others, the right actions flow naturally from that character. When you just try to do the right things without character change, it feels forced and eventually becomes unsustainable.

Application: Focus this week on who you're becoming as a man, not just what you're doing as a husband. Let character drive behavior.

Reflect & Write: What kind of man do you want to become? How would that character naturally express itself in your marriage?

Prayer: Lord, change my heart so that loving actions flow naturally from who I am, not just from what I think I should do.

Day 21

PREPARING FOR GREATER AUTHORITY

*Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much,
and whoever is dishonest in very little is also dishonest in much.*

LUKE 16:10

These past two weeks of prayer and service haven't just been about improving your marriage. They've been about preparing your character for greater leadership responsibilities. God tests our faithfulness in small things before entrusting us with bigger things.

The way you've handled the simple tasks of praying for your wife and serving her practical needs reveals something about your heart. Have you been faithful even when it was inconvenient? Have you persevered even when the results weren't immediate? Have you led with genuine love rather than selfish motives?

Your character in these foundational areas prepares you for the more challenging aspects of family leadership: making difficult decisions, providing direction during conflict, and exercising authority with wisdom and grace. If you can't be trusted to pray consistently, can you be trusted to lead during crisis? If you serve grudgingly in small things, how will you sacrifice willingly in big things?

Jesus taught that faithfulness in little leads to faithfulness in much. The habits and character you're developing now in prayer and service will determine how well you handle greater leadership challenges in the future.

Application: See this week's character development as preparation for greater leadership responsibilities. Be faithful in the small things God has given you.

Reflect & Write: How has your character grown through these weeks of basic spiritual leadership? What greater responsibilities might God be preparing you for?

Prayer: Father, make me faithful in small things so You can trust me with greater responsibilities. Continue shaping my character for the leadership You're calling me to.

AUTHORITY EXISTS TO PROTECT AND PROVIDE

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect.

1 TIMOTHY 3:4

For three weeks, you've been building spiritual leadership through prayer, service, and character development. Now it's time to understand the aspect of leadership that makes many men uncomfortable: biblical authority. This isn't about being a dictator or always getting your way. It's about taking responsibility for your family's protection and provision.

Your authority isn't given so you can be served or control others. It's given so you can create safety and security for those you love. Like a shepherd who uses his staff to guide sheep away from danger, you use your influence and decision-making power to protect your family from harm and provide what they need to flourish.

This means taking initiative in decisions that serve your family's long-term good, working with your wife rather than leaving her to handle everything alone. It means helping set boundaries that protect your family from harmful influences. It means sharing ownership of your family's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being rather than assuming someone else will handle the hard decisions.

Your wife needs to see you engaging when difficult situations arise. She doesn't want to carry the entire burden of family decision-making by herself. She wants a husband who will step up and say, "Let's figure this out together" or "I can handle this" when protection or provision is needed.

Application: This week, look for opportunities to take initiative in protecting or providing for your family. Step up to handle situations rather than waiting for someone else to deal with them.

Reflect & Write: What's one area where your family needs more protection or provision? How can you take initiative to address it?

Prayer: Father, help me understand that authority is a tool for serving my family. Give me wisdom to use it for their protection and provision.

The Protecting Leader - Day 23

MAKING DECISIONS YOUR FAMILY CAN TRUST

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

PROVERBS 27:14

Having authority in your home doesn't mean making decisions without input from others, especially your wife. It means taking responsibility for ensuring that important decisions actually get made rather than avoided or delayed indefinitely.

Here's what biblical decision-making looks like: When your family faces important choices, you take the initiative to gather information, discuss options with your wife, seek God's wisdom through prayer, and then make a decision. You don't avoid difficult choices hoping they'll resolve themselves.

Your wife is your chief advisor, and her wisdom is essential to good leadership. Sometimes you'll agree with her perspective. Sometimes you'll decide to follow her wisdom even when your initial instinct was different. Sometimes you'll need to make a choice she doesn't initially support, but you'll explain your reasoning and help her understand your thinking.

The key is that you're actively engaged in the process rather than passive. Your wife shouldn't have to beg you to make decisions or feel like she's carrying the entire burden of family direction. She should see you taking initiative to seek wisdom and work toward resolution.

Application: If there's an important decision your family has been avoiding, take the initiative this week to discuss it with your wife and work toward a resolution.

Reflect & Write: What decision has your family been putting off? How can you take leadership in addressing it this week?

Prayer: Lord, give me wisdom for the decisions that affect my family. Help me seek good counsel while taking responsibility to lead.

The Protecting Leader - Day 24

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY'S VALUES

But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

JOSHUA 24:15

One of your most important protective responsibilities is guarding your family's spiritual and moral foundation. In a culture that's increasingly hostile to biblical values, your family needs you to create an environment where faith is normal, celebrated, and lived out consistently.

This doesn't mean isolating your family from the world or becoming paranoid about every influence they encounter. It means being intentional about the values you emphasize, the conversations you have, and the environment you create in your home. It means helping your family process cultural messages through the lens of biblical truth.

Joshua didn't wait for his family to decide whether they wanted to follow God. He made that decision for his household and then led them in that direction. That's your calling as a husband and father. You set the spiritual tone for your home through your choices, priorities, and leadership.

This might mean having conversations about what influences are affecting your family, helping your children navigate cultural pressures, or creating an environment where biblical values are clearly celebrated and lived out. It means consistently demonstrating that God's ways are better than the world's ways through your choices and priorities.

Application: This week, identify one area where you can better protect or strengthen your family's biblical values. Take action to address it.

Reflect & Write: What values do you want to be clear and strong in your home? What's one specific way you can protect or reinforce those values?

Prayer: Lord, give me courage to lead my family according to Your values, even when it's countercultural. Help me create a home where faith flourishes.

The Protecting Leader - Day 25

SETTING BOUNDARIES WITH LOVE

Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

PROVERBS 27:5-6

One of the most difficult aspects of loving authority is knowing when to say no to people you care about. Sometimes protecting your family means setting boundaries that others don't like or understand. Sometimes it means having difficult conversations that feel uncomfortable but are necessary.

This might mean setting limits with extended family members who bring chaos or consistently undermine your marriage. It might mean saying no to social commitments that would stretch your family beyond healthy limits. It might mean addressing habits or behaviors in your household that are harmful, even when confronting them creates tension.

The wise writer of Proverbs understood that sometimes love requires wounds. A true friend will tell you hard truths because they care about your wellbeing. In the same way, protective authority sometimes means being willing to create temporary discomfort for the sake of long-term health and safety.

Your wife needs to see that you're willing to have difficult conversations and make hard choices when your family's wellbeing is at stake. She needs to know that you won't just avoid conflict to keep the peace.

The key is doing this from love, not anger or control. When you set boundaries or have difficult conversations, your motivation should be protecting and blessing your family, not getting your way or asserting dominance.

Application: This week, identify any boundaries your family needs that you've been avoiding. Address one of these areas with love and wisdom.

Reflect & Write: What boundary does your family need that you've been hesitant to set? How can you address this with love rather than harshness?

Prayer: Father, give me wisdom to set appropriate boundaries and courage to have difficult conversations when they're needed for my family's good.

The Protecting Leader - Day 26

THE MAN YOUR FAMILY NEEDS YOU TO BE

*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith;
be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13

Over the past 26 days, you've been growing into the man your family has always needed you to be. They don't need you to be perfect, but they need you to be present, engaged, and growing.

Your wife needed to see you take spiritual initiative, and you've learned to pray for her and with her consistently. She needed you to serve her needs, and you've discovered how to love her through practical action and emotional attention. She needed you to lead with wisdom and strength, and you've begun exercising authority that protects and provides.

If you have children, they've needed to see what biblical manhood looks like, and you've been modeling it daily. They've learned that real strength serves others and that godly men take responsibility for their families.

Paul's words capture what your family needs: a man who stands firm in faith, shows courage in difficulty, demonstrates strength in leadership, and does everything from love. You're becoming that man through God's grace and your faithful choices.

This isn't about perfection. It's about becoming the faithful, growing man your family can count on. They're watching you become more like Christ.

Application: This week, ask your wife and children what changes they've noticed in you. Celebrate the growth while committing to continue developing.

Reflect & Write: What kind of man has your family needed you to be? How have you grown toward that over these weeks?

Prayer: Father, help me become the man my family needs. Faithful, growing, and always pointing them toward You.

YOUR INFLUENCE REACHES BEYOND YOUR HOME

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.*

2 TIMOTHY 2:2

The spiritual leadership you've been developing doesn't just impact your immediate family. It creates ripples that extend far beyond your home. Your children are learning how to lead their future families by watching you. Your wife is experiencing what it means to be loved like Christ loves the church. Your example is shaping the next generation's understanding of biblical manhood.

When your sons see you praying with their mother, serving her needs, and leading with humble authority, you're teaching them how to be husbands. When your daughters watch you treasure and protect their mother, you're showing them what they should expect from their future husbands.

Paul understood that spiritual influence multiplies across generations. The things he taught Timothy would be passed on to other reliable people who would teach others. Your faithful leadership today is training future leaders who will impact families you'll never meet.

Your coworkers are noticing changes in how you approach authority and relationships. Your friends see a man who takes his family seriously. Your example gives other men permission to step up in their own families.

The habits you've built and the character you've developed are investments that will pay dividends for decades. You're not just improving your current family relationships. You're helping to restore biblical manhood in your community and beyond.

Application: This week, consider how God might use your growth to influence other men. Look for opportunities to encourage others in their family leadership.

Reflect & Write: How might your growth in leadership influence others beyond your immediate family? What legacy are you building?

Prayer: Lord, use my growth to influence others for Your kingdom. Help me be an example that encourages other men to lead their families well.

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Twenty-eight days ago, you wondered if you could really lead your family spiritually. You felt unqualified, uncertain, maybe even overwhelmed. Today, you have proof that God can use any man who's willing to take small, faithful steps.

You've learned to pray for your family and with your family consistently, even when it felt awkward. You've discovered the power of serving your wife's needs, even when it required sacrifice. You've examined your heart and motives, ensuring your leadership flows from authentic love. You've begun exercising authority that protects and provides.

Paul's promise to the Philippians is also his promise to you: God who began this good work in you will continue it until completion. These 28 days aren't the end of your growth. They're the foundation for a lifetime of becoming more like Christ.

Your wife has seen real changes in how you approach leadership. Your children are learning what godly manhood looks like. You've created patterns that will serve your family for decades. Most importantly, you've discovered that God uses imperfect, growing men to create homes that reflect His character.

Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep leading. Your family needs the man God is making you into. Trust God to continue the work He's started in you.

Application: Commit to one specific practice from these 28 days that you'll continue for the next year. Make this a permanent part of how you love and lead your family.

Reflect & Write: What's the most important change in your life from these 28 days? How will you continue growing as a leader beyond this devotional?

Prayer: Father, thank You for the growth You've brought about in my leadership. Continue this work in me for the rest of my life. Help me always point my family toward You.

A LEGACY OF FAITHFUL LEADERSHIP

These 28 days have transformed you from a man who wondered if he could lead into a man who knows he's called to lead. You've built a foundation of prayer, service, authentic character, and loving authority. And that's exactly what it is: a foundation. The real building starts now.

Your family has experienced what it means to have a husband and father who leads like Christ. They've seen prayer become normal, service become natural, and authority become a source of blessing rather than burden. You've created an environment where biblical manhood is celebrated and lived out daily. These aren't small things. You've accomplished something real these past 28 days.

But this is just the beginning. God has more growth ahead for you, more opportunities to serve your family, and more ways to reflect His character in your home. Remember what we emphasized in Week 3, and what we say at Crossroads all the time: who you are matters more than what you do. The man your family needs you to be is the man God is making you into, day by day, choice by choice.

Your faithful leadership will create a legacy that influences generations. Your children will raise their children differently because of how you'll continue to learn to lead. Your example will encourage other men to step up in their own families.

Your growth demonstrates the power of the gospel to transform ordinary men into extraordinary leaders. Not through perfect performance, but through authentic character that reflects Christ.

Keep building on this foundation. The habits you've formed will support the man you're becoming. Keep growing in faithfulness. Keep pointing your family toward Jesus. The best days of your leadership aren't behind you. They're still ahead.

Walking this path alongside you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zac Case". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping "Z" and "C" that connect, and "ac" and "ase" written in a cursive script within the loops.



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