

A Theology of Family Leadership: Leadership That Bleeds!
(Genesis 2:15, 3:6, 3:15)

Intro: Here are 9 areas where the husband and father should lead out in the home. Remember; life is not a playground, it's a battlefield. God's calling to men (masculine mandate) is to work/build/serve and keep/protect/care for everything placed in our charge.

1. Vision: This is where we are going (Matt. 28:18-20, Matt. 22:35-40, Is. 43:7, 48:11, Prov. 29:18)

The man in the home is the primary keeper of the vision. Developing the vision is to be done in consensus with your wife (and children if old enough), but it is to be *initiated* by you. This is the big picture of what *priorities* your family should have, what God wants your family to look like, and what kind of home environment you want. You sit down and ask, what do we want our family to look like 5-10 years from now?

2. Direction: This is how we get there (Neh 3, Acts 6:1-7)

Here is where you map out the *details* of the vision. These are the daily, weekly and monthly steps you are going to take in order to bring about the vision you have already agreed upon. For instance (hypothetical): My wife and I have a weekly date night and I take my children out individually two times per month. We minister and serve together at least once a month. We will love and serve the church weekly. We go camping each year. I take my boys on hunting and fishing trips each year (etc.). If you have a good vision, but no direction, it will not work. You may want your sons to learn how to play baseball (vision) but if you never throw a ball with them (direction) they will not learn. You do not need to produce a 50-page document but you do need to agree on some of the basic steps.

3. Instruction: Let me show you how (Prov. 1:8, Eph. 5:25-26, 6:4, Deut. 6:4-9)

We are washing our wife and children with God's Word as we read and teach it to them daily. There are formal times of Bible reading or story telling, but there is also a lot of informal teaching also. God's Word and His gospel are central in our home.

4. Imitation: Watch me (1 Cor. 11:1, 2 Tim. 3:10-11)

This is the *heart* of spiritual leadership. There is no room for the old, "Do what I say and not what I do." This is failed leadership. What we want are *inspiring examples* and *clear demonstrations* of proper living before God. We should be able to tell our children, "If I say it, you can say it. If I don't say it, you don't say it." This gives us remarkable consciousness of our own speech, and it shows our children that proper speech can be achieved. What happens if we say the wrong words? Then demonstrate something else for our children and wife: the apology. "I am sorry I said that. Will you forgive me?" Many men think they should never apologize to their children or wife for moments of sin and failure (for fear it demonstrates weakness), but this only hardens the heart of a child or wife. A good spiritual leader says with the Apostle Paul, "*Follow me inasmuch as I follow Christ.*"

5. Inspiration: Isn't this great (group) (Col. 1:3-4)

As the leader in the home, you are responsible for the *morale* of the group. You must regularly instill in the members of your family that this is one great family! Who else, outside of your home, is going to do this? Let's face it, there is not a constant state of euphoria in the home, but there should be a constant reminder from the leader that he thinks this is a great family!

6. Affirmation: You're doing great (individual) (2 Tim. 1:2-5, 1 Cor. 1:4)

Everyone needs sincere affirmation, and they need it from the one who is leading them. The greatest leaders in the world are those who know how to *encourage* and *inspire*. The leader is responsible for overall morale and the key to this is individual encouragement. You must regularly pull your wife and children aside and say, "I'm thankful for you. You're doing great. I'm thrilled to be your dad/husband, etc." In a culture that is constantly pushing wives away from their husbands and children away from their parents, the impact of affirmation is amazing and powerful. *Look for evidences of God's grace in their lives.*

7. Evaluation: How are we doing? (Rev. 2-3, 1 Tim. 4:16, 1 Cor. 11:28)

This may be the hardest one. Men do not like to self-evaluate because we tend to think much more highly of ourselves than we ought (pride). But the spiritual leader must regularly lift his head up, look around and see if this thing is going where it should. This is one of the true burdens of leadership and you must bear it. Sometimes it is the *recognition* that our schedules have gotten out of control and we must restructure our time. Sometimes we *realize* we have spoken harshly, or have otherwise not communicated in the best way and we need to clear the air. It's certainly not always negative and most the time we talk about good things. This must be *done regularly*.

8. Correction: Let's make a change (James 1:23-24, Romans 12:2)

Evaluation is no good unless you agree on a *plan* to make the needed corrections.

9. Protection and Provision: I'll take care of you (1 Tim. 5:8, 1 Sam. 17:34-37, Matt. 6:9)

This is the *overarching sentiment* of men leading in the home. This sentiment is expressed with *great humility* and with the full knowledge that no man can protect their family from every possible harm. It is done with the intention of communicating that, "*I will never leave you. I will spend my last drop of energy and love and life taking care of you, and I can be counted on by God's grace.*" I realize that men may die, that men may lose their jobs and have no work, and that tragedy comes into the lives of men (cancer, etc) which no man can protect against. But there is still some sense in which men should communicate this general principle to their families. Even in these tragedies and difficulties, a man can exercise his protection and provision by modeling *dependence upon the Lord, and trust in Him*. Men can also *protect their home from bitterness*, ill feelings toward the Lord, etc.

¹For more great biblical material like this see "A Guide to Biblical Manhood" by Dr. Randy Stinson and "The Masculine Mandate" by Dr. Richard Phillips