

Practical Family Leadership

a

12 Step Recovery Program

Men's Breakfast

September 7, 2002

“Practicals” - things to do to express leadership, care encouragement, & affection in our homes

INTRO - The Challenge of Practical Leadership

“There is a danger endemic to preaching, which is having your hands and heart cauterized by holy things. Phillips Books illustrated it by the analogy of a train conductor who comes to believe that he has been to the places he announces because of his long and loud heralding of them. ... Though we can never perfectly embody the truth we preach, we must be subject to it, long for it, and make it as much a part of our ethos [what you are as a person] as possible.” **R. Kent Hughes, Romans, p. xi**

“It’s harder to lead a family than to rule a nation.” **Chinese proverb**

“Some people are worried about the extinction of whales, condors, snail-darters, or baby seals. ... I’m a lot more worried about the extinction of the men who know how to lead a family.” **Steve Farrar, Point Man, p.13**

NOTE The Seriousness of Our Leadership ...

QUOTE: Steve Farrar’s “casualty list” on p.17-18 in *Point Man*

“...Let me ask you something, what are you doing to keep your marriage off the casualty list? You’ve seen divorce hit your friends or maybe your extended family. Why won’t it happen to you? ... What are doing to keep your kids off the casualty list? Not what is your wife doing, not what is the church youth director doing, not what is the pastor doing, but what are you doing?” **Steve Farrar, Point Man, p.18, 19**

“Fathers do not have the job of directly supplying the spiritual power their families need. That is God’s job. But a father has the responsibility to see to it that God’s power is flowing freely to each and every member of his family. A father is to serve as the family ‘pastor’, providing spiritual leadership for his home.” **Michael Farris**

The Biblical Mandate for Your Leadership

A. Of Wives

“The husband IS the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” Eph 5:23

*“ Because the husband id the head of the wife, he finds himself in a position of inescapable leadership. He cannot successfully refuse to lead. If he attempts to abdicate in some way, he may, through his rebellion, lead poorly. But no matter what he does, or where he goes, he does so as the head of his wife.” **Douglas Wilson,** *Reforming Marriage**

AA (Abdicators Anonymous)... Today's need for a new Male Recovery Program

B. Of Children

“For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice;” Gen 18:19

“fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Eph 6:4

“Do not hold back discipline from the child, Although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. 14 You shall beat him with the rod, And deliver his soul from Sheol.” Proverbs 23:13-14

Why “Practical” Family Leadership?

*“We are a culture awash with information that we have received while remaining seated. We have made information an end in itself, rather than a means to and end.” **Keith Collins,** *Local Nobody*, p.1*

- Internet ... TV ... Sermons

“If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.” Jn 13:17

“But prove yourselves doers of the Word, not just hearers who delude themselves.” Jam 1:2

--Are We Like the **TRAIN CONDUCTOR**--- Deceived into thinking we're Doing the Things that We're Hearing About?

We are in need of More APPLICATION than More KNOWLEDGE. ... Thus the emphasis on “PRACTICALS”

How Many Here Don't Have Families to Lead?

1. Prepare yourselves for when you will. Bad habits don't die by signing a Marriage License
2. You Are Walking With Men Who Do... Be Learning how to encourage them

PRACTICAL: What does it mean to be practical?

Webster: practical = usable, workable; useful and sensible. 3. Concerned with application of knowledge to useful ends.

“Turning theory into practice”... “Where the rubber meets the road”... “Living in the real world”... “Ivory tower ideas becoming real”

- **TIME & PLACE** ... God has Chosen To Limit Our Existence in Time and Physical Space. If things don't touch these areas it **WON'T BECOME REALITY** in our lives.

The Challenge to become Practical is often the Challenge of Decisions & Discipline. It's in the area of Wanting It Badly Enough & Having a Practical Plan to accomplish it.

Today is more about **PUTTING INFRASTRUCTURE** in place than it is about bringing Momentary Conviction ... What Practical Things Can We DO to Improve Our Leadership in Our Families?

12 Step Recovery Program for Men

1. Recover a Personal Prayer Life

- **Regular Time & Place?**

- **Content:**
 - Develop an Outline... A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)
 - Develop a List... Family, Personal Character & Calling, the Lost in your life, church ministries & leadership, missions
 - NOTE: We'll look at content for wife and children under step #3

- **Resources:**
 - Tape "Preparing our Prayer Lives to Stay in Step with the Spirit" (8-18-02)
 - "Handbook to Prayer" by Ken Boa

2. Recover Personal Bible Study

- If you are only eating on Sunday morning, you are starving to death and FOSTERING IMMATURITY

- **Regular Time & Place?**

"for regular, disciplined reading a place is needed as free from distraction and as conducive to study as possible. Our Savior went to a garden, Peter had a rooftop and Elijah an upper room. There is an advantage in reading the Scriptures day after day in the place which is firmly associated in your mind with that activity." ...

"Effective Bible study is largely a matter of good habits of work. Begin with firm determination; begin at once. Never wait until you are in the mood, or you may wait for weeks. Get in the mood by starting to read: the Bible creates its own mood. The way to read the Bible is actually to read it, not wishing and meaning and resolving and intending and thinking about reading the Bible, but actually reading it. You will not advance on step until you have done that." Sinclair Ferguson, Reading the Bible, p. 14

- **Content & Plan**
 - *Regular Reading Approach:* Through the Bible in a Year (or 2 Years)
 - *Focused Study Approach:* Study of a particular book, topic, or character

3. Recover a Prayer Life with Your Wife

- **Regular Time & Place?**
- **Content**
 - Addendum 1 "The Husband as Priest"
 - Family Prayer Targets

4. Recover a Study Time with Your Wife

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; 26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church" Eph 5:25-29

"And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church." 1 Cor 14:35

"A man may not be a vocational theologian, but in his home he must be the resident theologian. ... a husband must be prepared to answer his wife's doctrinal questions, and if he cannot, then he must be prepared to study so that he can remedy the deficiency." **Douglas Wilson**, *Reforming Marriage*, p.33-34

- **Regular Time & Place?**
- **Content**
 - Bible Study and Reading
 - Parenting & Marriage Materials
 - Devotional Book

5. Recover a Vision Statement for Your Wife

“Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained” Pr 29:18

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- ***Time & Place?***
- ***Content***
 - Biblical Parameters: Study through Titus 2 teaching materials
 - Personal Specifics: Ponder the particular season of your wife's life, her unique abilities and influences
 - Be able to promote what is primary vs. secondary for your wife
 - *Pursuing & Helping their Husbands*
 - Give leadership to how your wife can be a helper to you. Make your priorities based on God's calling in your life clear
 - *Caring for their children and their home*
 - Give leadership to how much time and what kind of activity needs to be devoted to caring for your children & home. Give leadership to decisions about activities that take her away from these primary goals (including school volunteering, church volunteering, jobs, extended family, etc.)

6. Recover a Prayer Life with Your Children

- ***Time & Place?***
- ***Content***
 - Family Prayer Targets - 31 Day Prayer Plan
 - Teach Them to Pray
 - *Matt 6:9-13 prayer model*
 - *A.C.T.S. prayer model*
 - *Model burden and verbiage by your example*

7. Recover a Study & Instruction Time with Your Children

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; 7 and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deut 6:5-9

- ***Time & Place?***
- ***Content***
 - Bible Interaction Journal
 - “Training Hearts Teaching Minds” by Star Meade
 - “Concise Theology” by J.I. Packer
 - Review of Church Study Materials

8. Recover a Vision Statement for Your Children

- ***Time & Place?***
- ***Content***
 - Write out a vision statement that will help you pursue specific goals for their lives
 - Write out a plan to accomplish these things
 - Addendum 2 Michael Farris

9. Recover Decision Making

- **Time & Place?**
- **Content**
 - Do a leadership audit in your home and analyze where you are providing leadership and where you are abdicating. What decisions are there to make in your household and who is making them?
 - Addendum 3 "to Lead" by John Piper
 - Who's Setting the Pace for Your Family?
 - *Who Sets the Spiritual Pace?*
 - *Is Your Family Driven by Cultural Trends of Style & Time Usage or Being Led by Your Convictions?*
 - Children's clothing (particular daughters)
 - Children's music choices
 - Level of social & extra curricula activities (these should be driven more by spiritual concerns than scholastic concerns)
 - Decisions about friends & dating relationships

10. Recover the Role of Encourager

- Do a biblical study on encouragement
- Think through specific ways that you can bring encouragement and applause to your wife and children
- Resources: Tapes on Encouragement

11. Recover the Practice of Making Regular Deposits & Investments in Your Family

- *Marriage*: Plan special events (date nights, weekend getaways, etc.); Do thoughtful acts (cards, flowers, gifts, etc.)
- *Children*: Plan fun activities; Pursue their interests

12. Recover Your Role of Bringing Protection & Restraint to Your Family

You're not supposed to say "yes" to all desires and pursuits, and you don't always get to be Mr. Popular around the house

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Cor 10:13

"And the LORD said to Samuel: 'See I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. 12 At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family - from beginning to end. 13 For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them.'" 1 Samuel 3:11-13

"He confronts sin and calls his wife to repentance. Perhaps this is the most difficult assignment facing a husband, for several reasons. First, confronting sin and calling a wife to repentance may rock the domestic boat. A husband may decide he doesn't want to incur his wife's wrath. But he needs to obey God's call regardless of how his wife will respond." Bob Lepine, *Building Strong Families*, p. 108

Addendum 1

THE HUSBAND AS A PRIEST

(Excerpted from *Building Strong Families*, chap. 4)

A husband is by God's design, the priest of his family. This was clear in the patriarchs of Israel, who assumed a priestly role by interceding for their families, as Abraham did when God announced His judgment of Sodom, and by offering sacrifices to Yahweh. Noah, after seeing the wrath of God poured out, called his sons together as soon as they were on dry land to offer a sacrifice to God. The patriarchs, who were the family tribal leaders in ancient Israel, knew they had a duty to lead their wives and children into God's presence for worship, to remind them of God's grace and mercy in forgiving their sins, and to intercede on their behalf. Husbands today have the same priestly assignment.

When our children were a year or two old, Mary Ann and I sometimes found ourselves on long trips with a crying child in the car seat. During one such trip, I was trying to find some way to quiet our daughter, and I launched into an acappella version of "It IS Well With My Soul." The sound of singing startled Amy enough to stop her crying momentarily, Mary Ann joined in on the second line. Before long, the novelty of our singing wore off, and Amy was back to full volume. As she got louder, so did we. It took ten or fifteen minutes of "Crown Him With Many Crowns" and "All Hail The Power Of Jesus' Name," but Amy finally fell asleep. But we were having a great time singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts and on our lips. (Eph. 5:19)

In the same way that the priest in the Old Testament superintended the worship of the Israelites, a husband should function as the worship leader for his marriage. That involves more than singing hymns or praise choruses in the car, of course! A husband should be the one to initiate prayer with his wife, not only at meals but throughout the day. He should be the one to make regular church attendance a family priority. He should be the one to read the Scriptures to his wife and children. These are the kinds of regular habits that a husband ought to initiate, beginning on the first morning of the honeymoon.

Too many husbands assume that their spiritual leadership in this area will begin once the children are older. In truth it begins the day the spiritual responsibility of a young woman is passed from her father to her husband. In our contemporary individualistic, egalitarian culture, many husbands reject their priestly responsibilities with their wives (I was one of them), thinking, *She's fully capable of having her own quiet time or doing her own Bible readings. Besides, Ill just embarrass myself.* The mature godly man will not shy away. He will assume that his role as priest for his wife is a necessary function of being called her husband.

A husband-priest is also responsible before God to be an intercessor. He has the responsibility and privilege to speak to God on behalf of his wife. It is not that she doesn't have access to the throne of grace herself. She has the same privileges in the heavenly courts as her husband. The Bible teaches that all believers are part of a "royal priesthood" (Pet. 2:9), and there is no intermediary between man and

God except for the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). Still, if a man aspires to be a godly husband, he will assume responsibility to oversee the spiritual condition of his wife. To love and serve his wife as Christ loves His church, a husband must intercede on her behalf. In John 17, where Jesus intercedes for his followers, we find a pattern of intercession a husband can follow in praying for his wife:

1. Begin by praying that God would be glorified in and through her life. Above all else, a husband should pray for what brings glory to God.

2. Next, a husband ought to pray that his wife will know God. The apostle Paul prayed for himself, "that I may know him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. 3:10-11, NASB). A husband can ask the Lord that his wife might grow in her knowledge of God and her depth of insight (Phil. 1:9).

3. A husband ought to pray for God's protection, physically and spiritually, for his wife. He can pray that God would protect her as she walks to her car in the parking lot at the mall, or as she drives the kids to soccer practice in rush hour traffic. But more than that, a husband ought to pray that his wife will hold fast to her faith, even in the midst of difficult times or persecution.

4. A husband ought to pray for his wife to grow in holiness, sanctified by the truth of God's Word (John 17:17). His desire should be that his wife would be set apart and useful in God's service. This may be hard for a husband to pray, because his wife's life might reflect a higher commitment to holiness than his own! If so, it should challenge him to a new level of personal holiness.

5. A husband ought to ask God that he and his wife would be of one heart and mind in their relationship with each other. He can pray that they would continue to draw closer to each other, rather than yielding to the temptations to drift apart that all couples experience. When he is experiencing conflict with his wife, he can pray for God to intervene. John Yates, in his helpful book *"How a Man Prays For His Family,"* encourages every husband to pray diligently that God would move him and his wife toward unity in their marriage. "If your wife has irritating habits or attitudes," Yates writes, "it is possible that you - her husband, lover, supporter - are not the right person to bring about those changes in her life. But you can, as a prayer partner, work on these things by talking to God about them and seeking His help on her behalf."³

6. He can also pray that his wife would find companions and soul-mates who share not only her faith in Christ but also her convictions about how to live as a godly woman and a godly wife. He can pray that the enemy would not disrupt those relationships. A wife needs the strength that comes from solid relationships with others in the body of Christ, who share what the apostle called "a faith of the same kind as ours" (2 Pet. 1:1).

Addendum 2

(Excerpted from Michael Farris' book, *The Home Schooling Father*, p.14-15)

The parents in this class and I began to share the spiritual goals that we had for our children. Before this none of us had ever stopped to make a list of such goals. We realized that we were likely to reap vague spiritual results as a consequence of our failure to have a clear set of spiritual goals.

We discovered that another benefit of having clearly defined spiritual goals was to make possible meaningful assessment of how we are doing. It also became possible to map out specific plans for our children's spiritual training and development.

No army general would ever try to train soldiers in the haphazard way we try to train children. The army has an organized plan and a training course of increasing rigor designed to produce soldiers capable of winning the battle. Our duty to train our children is no less important. It is equally necessary for us to develop goals and plans for the training of the spiritual soldiers whom God has entrusted to us.

Our class identified twelve spiritual goals that we want to make sure that our children attain before they leave home as adults:

1. My child will be sure of his or her salvation.
2. My child will love and understand God's Word.
3. My child will know and willingly obey God's rules of right and wrong.
4. My child will be maturely walking with God.
5. My child will know his or her individual spiritual gift(s) and call from God.
6. My child will be able to teach spiritual truths to others.
7. My child will be an effective witness.
8. My child will spend time daily with God.
9. My child will have a servant's heart.
10. My child will be self-disciplined
11. My child will be in fellowship and under the authority of a local church.
12. My child will understand the power of prayer.

When I examined this list I realized that there were several of these goals which my older children had already attained. But I also realized that some of these important goals would slip through the cracks in the busy years of adolescence if I didn't make a planned effort to ingrain these characteristics into my children's lives.

Addendum 3

.... TO LEAD..."

(Excerpted from *What's the Difference*, chap. 2 by John Piper)

One problem with language is that words tend to carry very different connotations for different people. Hence the word "lead" will sound strong and domineering to some, but moderate and servant-like to others.

Another problem is that one word carries many different nuances and implications for different contexts and situations. For example, the word "lead" could refer to what people do when they direct an orchestra, or persuaded a friend to go to the zoo, or inspire a group for a cause, or command a military platoon, or make the first suggestion about where to eat, or take the driver's seat when a group gets in a car, or take the initiative in a group to push the button in an elevator, or choose a door and open it for another to go through, or chair a committee, or sing loud enough to help others, or point a lost motorist to the freeway entrance, or call the plays on a football team, or call people together for prayer.

Therefore, I need to explain in some detail what I have in mind by the mature masculine responsibility to lead. Otherwise false ideas could easily come into people's minds that I do not intend. Following are nine clarifying statements about the meaning of mature leadership.

1. Mature masculinity expresses itself not in the demand to be served, but in the strength to and to sacrifice for the good of woman.

Jesus said, "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the one who serves" (Luke 22:26). Leadership is not a demanding demeanor. It is moving things forward to a goal. If the goal is holiness and Heaven, the leading will have the holy aroma of heaven about it, the demeanor of Christ.

Thus after saying that the "the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church," Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and *gave himself up for her*, that he might sanctify her" (Ephesians 5:23,25). Jesus led his bride to holiness and heaven on the *Calvary* road. He looked weak, but He was infinitely strong in saying NO to the way of the world. So it will be again and again for mature men as they take up responsibility to lead.

2. Mature masculinity does not assume the authority of Christ over woman, but advocates it.

The leadership implied in the statement, "The husband is the head of the wife as *Christ is the head of the church*" (Ephesians 5:23), is not a leadership that gives to the man all the rights and authority that Christ has. The analogy between Christ and the husband breaks down if pressed too far, first because, unlike

Christ, all men sin. Christ never has to apologize to His church. But husbands must do this often.

Moreover, unlike Christ, a husband is not preparing a bride merely for himself but for another, namely Christ. He does not merely act as Christ, but also for Christ. At this point he must not be Christ to his wife lest he be a traitor to Christ. Standing in the place of Christ must include a renunciation of the temptation to be Christ. And that means leading his wife forward to depend not on him but on Christ. And practically, that rules out belittling supervision and fastidious oversight. She also stands or falls before her own master, Jesus Christ.

3. Mature masculinity does not presume superiority, but mobilizes the strength of others.

No human leader is infallible. Nor is any man superior to those he leads in every respect. Therefore a good leader will always take into account the ideas of those he leads, and may often adopt those ideas as better than his own. This applies to husbands at home and elders in the church and all other places where leadership is critical.¹⁰ A man's leadership is not measured by his obliviousness to the ideas and desires of others. A leader of peers may be surrounded by much brighter people than himself. He will listen and respond. And if he is a good leader, they will appreciate his initiative and guidance through the ups and downs of decision-making. The aim of leadership is not to demonstrate the superiority of the leader, but to bring out all the strengths of the people that will move them forward to the desired goal.

In Ephesians 5:28-29 the wife is pictured as part of the man's body as the church is part of Christ's body. So in loving his wife a man is loving himself. This is clearly an application to marriage of Jesus' command, "Love your neighbor as yourself." This rules out a leadership that treats a wife like a child. A husband does not want to be treated that way himself.

Moreover Christ does not lead the church as His daughter but as His wife. He is preparing her to be a "fellow-heir" (Romans 8:17), not like a servant girl. Any kind of leadership that in the name of Christlike headship tends to produce in a wife personal immaturity or spiritual weakness or insecurity through excessive control or picky supervision or oppressive domination has missed the point of the analogy in Ephesians 5. Christ does not create that kind of wife.

4. Mature masculinity does not have to initiate every action, but feels the responsibility to provide a general pattern of initiative.

In a family the husband does not do all the thinking and planning. His leadership is to take responsibility *in general* to initiate and carry through the spiritual and moral planning for family life. I say "in general" because "in specifics" there will be many times and many areas of daily life where the wife will do all kinds of planning and initiating. But there is a general tone and pattern of initiative that should develop which is sustained by the husband.

For example, the leadership pattern would be less than Biblical if the wife in general was having to take the initiative in prayer at mealtime, and get the family out of bed for worship on Sunday morning, and gather the family for devotions, and discuss what

moral standards will be required of the children, and confer about financial priorities, and talk over some neighborhood ministry possibilities, etc. A wife may initiate the discussion or planning of any one of these, but if she becomes the one who senses the general responsibility for this pattern of initiative while her husband is passive, something contrary to Biblical masculinity is in the offing."

Psychologist Dr. James Dobson is so concerned about the recovery of the leadership of husbands at home calls it "America's greatest need."

A Christian man is obligated to lead his family to the best of his ability. If his family has purchased too many items on credit, then the financial crunch is ultimately his fault. If the family never reads the Bible or seldom goes to church on Sunday, God hold the man to blame. If the children are dis-respectful and disobedient, the primary responsibility lies with the father...not his wife...In my view, America's greatest need is for husbands to begin guiding their families, father than pouring every physical and emotional resource into more acquisition of money.²

5. Mature masculinity accepts the burden of the final say in disagreements between the husband and wife, but does not presume to use it in every instance.

In a good marriage decision-making is focused on the husband, but is not unilateral. He seeks input from his wife and often adopts her ideas. This is implied in the love that governs the relationship (Ephesians 5:25), in the equality of personhood implied in being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and in the status of being fellow-heirs of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). Unilateral decision-making is not usually a mark of good leadership. It generally comes from laziness or insecurity inconsiderate disregard.

On the other hand dependence on team input should not go to the point where the family perceives a weakness of indecision in the husband. And both husband and wife should agree on the principle that the husband's decision should hold sway if it does not involve sin. However, this conviction does not mean that a husband will often use the prerogative "veto" over the wishes of his wife or family. He may in fact, very often surrender his own preference for his wife's where no moral issue is at stake. His awareness of sin and imperfection will guard him from thinking that following Christ gives him the ability of Christ to know what is best in every detail. Nevertheless, in a well-ordered Biblical marriage both husband and wife acknowledge in principle that, if necessary in some disagreement, the husband will accept the burden of making the final choice.

6. Mature masculinity expresses its leadership in romantic sexual relations by communicating an aura of strong and tender pursuit.

This is very difficult to put into words. But sexual relations are so basic to human life we would be delinquent not to at least try to say how masculinity expresses itself here.

It is the mingling of tenderness with strength that makes the unique masculine quality of leadership in sexual relations. There is

an aura of masculine leadership which rises from the mingling of power and tenderness, forcefulness and affection, potency and sensitivity, virility and delicateness. It finds expression in the firmness of his grasp, the strength of taking her in his arms, the sustaining of verbal adoration, etc. And there are a hundred nuances of masculine pursuit that distinguish it from feminine pursuit.

It is important to say that there is, of course, a feminine pursuit in sexual relations. That is why the word "initiate" is not an exact way of describing masculine leadership in sexual relations. The wife may initiate and interest in romance and may keep on initiating different steps along the way. But there is a difference. A feminine initiation is in effect and invitation for the man to do his kind of initiating. In one sense then you can say in those times the man is *responding*. But in fact the wife is inviting him to lead in a way as only a man can, so that she can respond to him.

It will not do to say that, since woman can rightly initiate, therefore there is no special leadership that the man should fulfill. When a wife wants sexual relations with her husband she wants him to seek her and take her and bring her into his arms and up to the pleasures that his initiatives give her.

Consider what is lost when women attempt to assume a more masculine role by appearing physically muscular and aggressive. It is true that there is something sexually stimulating about a muscular, scantily clad young woman pumping iron in the health club. But no woman should be encouraged by this fact. For it probably means the sexual encounter that such an image would lead to is something very hasty and volatile, and in the long run unsatisfying. The image of a masculine musculature begets arousal in a man, but it does not beget several hours of moonlight walking with significant, caring conversation. The more women can arouse men by doing typically masculine things, the less they can count on receiving from men a sensitivity to typically feminine needs. Mature masculinity will not be reduced to raw desire in sexual relations. It remains alert to the deeper personal needs of a woman and mingles strength and tenderness to make her joy complete.

7. Mature masculinity expresses itself in a family by taking the initiative in disciplining the children when both parents are present and a family standard has been broken.

Mothers and fathers both are to be obeyed by their children (Ephesians 6:1). Mothers as well as fathers are esteemed teachers in the home (Proverbs 1:8, 6:20, 31:1). They carry rights of authority and leadership toward their children, as do their husbands. They do not need to wait till Dad get home from work to spank a disobedient child.

But children need to see a dynamic between Mom and Dad that says, Dad takes charge to discipline me when Mom and Dad are both present.³ No woman should have to take the initiative to set a disobedient child right when her husband sits oblivious by, as though nothing were at stake. Few things will help children understand the meaning of responsible, loving masculinity better than watching who takes the responsibility to set them right when Mom and Dad are both present.

8. Mature masculinity is sensitive to cultural expressions of masculinity and adapts them (where no sin is involved) in order to communicate to a woman that a man would like to relate not in any aggressive or perverted way, but with maturity and dignity as a man.

This would mean dressing in ways that are neither effeminate nor harsh and aggressive. It would mean learning manners and customs. Who speaks for the couple at the restaurant? Who seats the other? Who drives the car? Who opens the door? Who walks in the front down the concern hall aisle? Who stands and who sits, and when? Who extends the hand at a greeting? Who walks on the street side? How do you handle a woman's purse? Etc. Etc. These things change from culture to culture and from era to era. The point is that masculine leadership will not scorn them or ignore them, but seek to use them to cultivate and communicate a healthy pattern of complementarity in the relationships between men and women.⁴ Mature masculinity will not try to communicate that such things don't matter. Mature masculinity recognizes the pervasive implications of manhood and womanhood, and seeks to preserve the patterns of interaction that give free and natural expression to that reality. A dance is all the more beautiful when the assigned steps are natural and unselfconscious.

9. Mature masculinity recognizes that the call to leadership is a call to repentance and humility and risk-taking.

We are all sinners. Masculinity and femininity have been distorted by our sin. Taking up the responsibility to lead must therefore be a careful and humble task. We must admit as men historically there have been grave abuses. In each of our lives we have ample cause for contrition at our passivity or our domination. Some have neglected their wives and squandered their time in front of the television or putzing around in the garage or going away too often with the guys to hunt or fish or bowl. Others have been too possessive, harsh, domineering, and belittling, giving the impression through act and innuendo that wives are irresponsible or foolish.

We should humble ourselves before God for our failures and for the remaining tendency to shrink or overstep our responsibilities. The call to leadership is not a call to exalt ourselves over any woman. It is not a call to domineer, or belittle or put a woman in her place. She is, after all, a fellow-heir of God and destined for a glory that will one day blind the eyes of natural eyes of every man (Matthew 13:43). The call to leadership is a call to humble oneself and take the responsibility to be a servant-leader in ways that are appropriate to every differing relationship to women.

It is a call to risk getting egg on our faces; to pray as we have never prayed before; to be constantly in the Word; to be more given to planning, more intentional, more thoughtful, less carried along by the mood of the moment; to be disciplined and ordered in our lives; to be tenderhearted and sensitive; to take the initiative to make sure there is a time and a place to talk to her about what needs to be talked about; and to be ready to lay down our lives the way Christ did if that is necessary.