

Real Men Are Godly Men

Looking for Men of Leadership

Steve Flatt

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The best single word description for leadership is the word, "influence." You lead people by influencing them. More specifically, you influence people to do some things that they would not ordinarily do. No group, organization, or collection of people will go very long without some kind of leadership.

Sometimes we confuse leadership with status or position. But those two aren't the same. All too often you run into an individual who has got a lofty position, but he's just a number one bureaucrat. How many times have you run into a vice president of this or that organization that couldn't lead a dog in from the rain with a T-bone steak? Leadership is influence. As one sage put it, "If you think you're leading and nobody is following, then all you're doing is taking a walk."

Leadership comes in many forms, various styles and qualities, but a person who is truly a leader will have influence at his disposal and that influence brings authority and power.

God calls on men to accept leadership roles in their homes and in the church.

Now I realize this is out of step with our culture, but the Bible has never been all that concerned about political correctness. The principle of male leadership in the home goes all the way back to creation. God made man first. The woman was made for the man, from the man, she was brought to the man, and she was named by the man. Even though it is significant that Eve sinned first. When God came down to earth to see what had happened to his paradise He went to Adam, because, Adam was the leader. He was the one with spiritual responsibility and held accountable.

We are not talking about values, work, who's more important, or who's more cherished by God. Paul stated it this way "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female..." (Galatians 3:28) A man is not worth one whit more than a woman. We are addressing function, and roles that create order. God has created three basic groupings of people:

- a. Society - he grants authority to governments and has told us we need to pray for leaders of governments.
- b. Church - he has granted authority to elders, or to shepherds, or pastors or overseers.
- c. Home - he grants authority to husbands and fathers.

Paul said, "Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." (I Corinthians 11:3) If you read that in its context and also compare it with everything else said in this Scripture, you will see that Paul is talking about within the home context. He's not saying that just any man who walks down the street has a right to tell any woman what to do and become her authority. But the head of every woman within that home context is her husband.

Some people find that offensive, and I've always wondered why. Ladies, does it offend any of you that the head of man is Christ? It doesn't offend me. He's my head. Does it offend any of us that the head of Christ is God? Then why should we be offended that God also designated the head of woman to be the husband, the man?

The Holy Spirit through Paul stated in Ephesians 5:22: "Wives, submit [place yourselves under your husbands' authority GWT] to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church." I need to stop there and say some things.

There are some folks who are doing some funny linguistic gymnastics with the word, "head." One of the common theories right now is the use of the word, "head," in Ephesians 5:23 and I Corinthians 11:3, that it doesn't mean authority, it doesn't mean leadership. It means origin, like the head of a river is up there where the first little stream comes together. That's the head, it's the origin. There are a myriad of problems with that interpretation. Go back to I Corinthians 11:3, the same word is used when it said that God is the head of Christ. Well, if that means he is the origin of Christ if he is the creator of Christ, that goes against all the Scriptures in the Bible that teach us about the nature of the Godhead. John 1 and Colossians 1:15 and all the passages that would say that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit are uniquely all deity in the godhead and have always existed with each other.

The word, "head," doesn't mean origin, it means exactly what we tend to think it would mean. It means a source of authority.

It means the same thing that it means in Ephesians 1:22. "And God placed all things under his feet..." (talking about Christ) "and appointed him to be head over everything for the church." It implies authority. Going back to Ephesians 5:23-24, "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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

In my earlier years, I believed women would resent teaching male leadership in the home and a few may. But I found that most women resent not the teaching about male leadership in the home, but the refusal by their husbands to accept that leadership. For every one woman I have seen who has said a word to me about resenting male leadership, I've talked to twenty who just wished they could see some genuine, biblical, spiritual male leadership in the home.

Misuses of Leadership

There are at least two major ways that leadership and authority are misused in the home.

1. Dominate and control. You may remember the name, Nikita Khrushchev, he was the leader of Russia back during the Cold War days, when he made his first visit to the United States and Washington in the early '60s, and he was taken to the Washington Press Club. There, 500 reporters interviewed Khrushchev in a room. He couldn't speak any English, so through a translator the very first question that came to him was, "In your speech today, Mr. Khrushchev, you talked of all the hideous evils committed under Stalin, but you, sir, was his closest colleague. What were you doing during all those years?" And when Khrushchev heard that question through the translator, he jerked the headphones off and in broken English stood up and said, "Who asked that?!?!?" Silence fell over the room. He barked out again, "I said, who asked that?" You could have heard a pin drop as nobody moved. After waiting a good 30 seconds with glaring eyes, Khrushchev said, "That's what I was doing."

You see there is a kind of leadership that gets its way by threatening, by bullying, by intimidating, even by hurting. Sadly, there are millions of men today who think this is the kind of behavior that makes a real man in the home. Now that thinking is nurtured by a false media that tells us that the real man is the one who can shoot and kill and karate the most people. It's fed in the sports arena today. A guy can't in a football game on television, he can't just make a tackle anymore, can he? He's got to make a tackle, get up and do a dance, shake a finger, and trash-talk his opponent to show that you're a real man by dominating the competition.

Domination is the chief use of power by the world. It is the tool of Satan. There's not a time where Jesus Christ says that a man, or anybody else, should ever exert power by domination. Sometimes, Christians, get

the wrong idea. We think if we just have enough force, we could just take over the world for the right. No, we can't. That's not Jesus' way. The world may think domination makes you a real man and a real leader, but it's not Biblical.

In Matthew 20:25-22 Jesus' disciples were arguing about who would be dominant, who would be in control. Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant. (NIV) "The rulers of nations have absolute power over people and their officials have absolute authority over people. But that's not the way it's going to be among you. Whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant." (GWT)

Domination and control are not God's way. When people are regularly overpowered, there wells up within them resentment and hatred. Sometimes, someday, somehow, they will rebel.

I've had to deal with things that I never even wanted to know - wives being subjected to verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in the home, by the very people that God charged to protect them. These dominated his victims cowering before him, beaten and intimidated, and the scars are inestimable. The man, who leads his wife and his children that way, is the epitome of a coward. While he may make his family tremble today, I guarantee you that one of these days, in the judgment day; he will be the one trembling before God. It's never a right way through domination and control.

2. Abdication. Forty percent of all the children in America don't have their fathers around. They're not with them at all. Many of the other 60 percent have fathers who are workaholics or are interested in a dozen other things. Men not accepting leadership and authority is as bad as abusing it. Now oftentimes, a husband is not there because they never were there. They impregnated a woman and never showed up. Other times it's through abandonment. Sometimes it's through divorce. But if the man isn't there, then his leadership isn't there either.

Tony Evans is a very well-known black minister in the Dallas area, and he was sharing this speech before a large group. Let me read a paragraph or so. He said: "I am convinced that the primary cause of the national crisis is the feminization of the American male. When I say feminization, I'm not talking about sexual preference; I'm trying to describe a misunderstanding of manhood that has produced a nation of sissified men who abdicated their role of spiritually pure leaders, forcing women to fill the vacuum. As reason gives way to fear, people look for a place to pin the blame in our society. In a Ted Koppel special on juvenile delinquency, accusing fingers were pointed at the criminal justice system, an unfair economy, and persistent racism." Evans went on to say: "While each of those issues is worthy of our attention they are all symptoms of a more serious disease. Basic economics is no excuse for promiscuity and racism doesn't get teenage girls pregnant, the fact is, if dad doesn't provide spiritually responsible leadership in the home, baby is in big trouble."

Men need to be in the home. But sometimes, leadership is abdicated when man still is there in the home, because his attention is elsewhere. Steve Farrar in his excellent book, *Standing Tall*, said, "It's my conviction that children all over America are dying emotionally, physically, and spiritually because the men in their lives are just standing around." That's an interesting expression.

Dr. Robert Schuller told a story to Paul Harvey, it really hits home with me. He had just put out a book, it had been a bestseller and he had been on a tour to promote that book. He had gone to eight cities in four days, and he called into his office. His secretary reminded him, "Now when you get back, you need to go to the luncheon that was raffled off for a charity." Somebody had paid \$500 to have lunch with Dr. Schuller. When he got home and went to lunch, he was surprised to find out that the person had spent their entire life savings to have lunch with

him. The reason he knew it was their entire life savings was because it was his teenage daughter. He said he began to weep at the lunch and he said, "I knew from that moment, some things had to change."

Men, what price would you pay, or rather, what price would your wife and kids pay to see you become the spiritual leader of your home? An even better question is: What price will they pay if you don't?

Practical ways to demonstrate spiritual leadership

1. Follow the model of Jesus Christ. As quoted above Ephesians 5 stated that wives are to submit or place themselves under their husbands' authority in everything. But the very next verse, states "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her," and three verses later it states "In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." Jesus Christ didn't lead by domination; he didn't lead by abdication. He was the ideal leader and he's the model of what God desires a man to be. Perhaps the best single counsel to a man struggling to be a better leader in the home is just read some of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John every single day.

2. Model by service. Scripture teaches authority counter-culturally. The culture says dominate, but in the Bible, the ministry of the power is the ministry of the towel (service). Biblically, the way of greatness isn't through power and domination, Jesus taught "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant." (Mark 10:43) Real authority comes through service.

Jesus accurately said, "I came not to be served, I came to serve." Now husbands practically means that we get to be the first to serve in the family unit. We set the tone. We take the lead just as Jesus did when he walked in that Upper Room in John 13 and nobody wanted to take a towel and a basin, and the leader took it and went and served and they never forgot it. It changed their lives.

3. Focus on encouragement. Focus on encouragement for your family. Encouragement is a great word. Do you know what the word, "encouragement," means? It means to put courage in. That's what we do for our families. We put courage in our families. We empower our children to have the courage to do the right thing when everybody else around them offers a different counsel.

4. Teach your children to respect their mother. Start teaching by your example, while your children are very young. Later it may include some pretty straight and tough instructions as your children reach early adolescence and want to stretch their wings and gain their independence. Often, they exercise some rebellion, particularly toward the one that they see as the weaker vessel, and that would be the mother...Dads, this is a critical time for male leadership. After one husband who stood up and straightened out a teenage son's attitude toward his mother, the wife came to him and said, "Honey, in all our years of marriage, you've done some wonderful things for me. You've given me wonderful gifts. We've been on great trips. But nothing you've ever done has meant more to me than the way you demanded respect for me from our son. You'll never know how much that lets me know the way you value me."

Dads, beyond how it makes your wife feel, this is the solution to the sexual harassment problem. This is the solution to the rape problem. This is the solution to the spousal abuse problem. Boys, who love and respect their mother, don't abuse women. It's just that simple.

5. Demonstrate that you are under authority. That's the key. Demonstrate that you are under authority. A man has to be a good soldier before he can be a good general. No one can be the real spiritual, decisive leader of his family until he is a worthy follower of Christ. Amazing Grace #1214 -- Steve Flatt - June 18, 1995