

Husbands Initiate Leadership Beyond the Comfortable:
Overcoming Personal Comfort by Bringing Holy Comfort to Others

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Abstract

Title: Leadership, Husbands Initiate Beyond the Comfortable:
Overcoming Personal Comfort by Bringing Holy Comfort to
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All Christian husbands are as I, by God's definition, leaders. Often, however, many of us tend toward relinquishing our position and become passive and un-initiating, to the point of even enjoying *our comfort of not leading*.

We are leaders and must therefore find a way in Christ to *lead beyond the comfortable*. We in the church must take aim at this area of weakness in many men's lives and examine the lusts of the heart that contribute to our lack of leadership and hopefully provide a redeemable solution under God and show how to overcome in the Lord to be the right leader he calls us to be.

I personally need to examine leadership because I seem to have limited ability to maintain leadership and particularly its key ingredient initiation. Therefore, this paper aims to identify circumstances of comfort that lead to weak leadership, define what initiation in leadership is, examine how to rightly parse out its place in men's life and living, identify what to do to overcome the comfort of not leading, and install clear vision of initiating. We do so by looking at lusts of the heart and redeeming it under the Cross of Christ to deliver the beliefs and thoughts as a base from which to practice leadership. Perhaps this paper can be an input to help biblical counselors, and any so inclined married layman, as they investigate this severely important calling and requirement of us Christian husbands, especially in the world we are currently living in.

Introduction

Purpose Statement

The Goal

The goal of this thesis is to help biblical counselors counseling Christian husbands who are passive, quiet, timid with weak leadership habits to see what lusts might be motivating them away from the God-given task of leadership of their wife and home. The counselor must then call them to repentance and stimulate in them real growth in becoming a stronger leader by having them put on key characteristics in Christ.

What is the Problem?

Christian men can suffer from the faulty thinking that they do not possess the qualities required for leadership, and, without a way to get beyond what they already experience, they worship passivity, which can border on laziness as they serve a god of comfortableness and thus effectively transfer the mantle of leadership to their wives. Weak leading Christian husbands – as all Christians – are in the world but not of it. Being in the world they may know that the world's ways of leading are not godly. But some Christian husbands are both weak in leadership skills and ignorant of godly leadership qualities to practice, so they passively sit in their "comfortable" state without stepping up to their God appointed position.

How Diagnosed?

How can we tell if a Christian man/husband is leading correctly, i.e., godly? First, let us see if our counselee's husbandry leadership is worldly by comparing it to criteria of secular leadership. For example, we can ask the following questions to see if he is leading with "fleshly" criteria of the natural man. Is his leading being self-confident, "knowing men", making his own decisions, being ambitious, originating own methods, enjoying commanding others, motivated

by personal considerations, and being independent?¹ Next, let us see if our counselee's husbandry leadership is sound Christian leadership by comparing it to criteria of godly leadership. For example, we can ask the following questions to see if he is leading with godliness. Is he leading with confidence in God, knowing God, seeking to find God's will, making himself inconspicuous, finding and following God's methods, delights to obey God, motivated by love for God and man, and is God dependent?² Depending on how he answers that we can arrive at a reasonable conclusion.

A possible third measure we can make is to see what effect his leadership has, or has not, upon his wife. To what extent is his wife respecting him? For he is called to love his wife and his wife is to respect her husband. And the order is this: first the husband is to love his wife, then and also the wife is to respect her husband. For God first loves us (1 John 4:19) and we respect and love Him. God does not conditionalize love based on our respect, nor should the husband conditionalize love to his wife based on how much respect the wife gives him. The measure of the wife's respect will reflect his love to his wife. These are some measuring sticks against which we can see how our brother is doing in leading rightly.

The Heart

Having both a physical body and a spirit/soul as created by God, we have an outer man that is physical and inner man that is the heart. Since our heart's belief system directs our thoughts, and our thoughts precede and strongly influence our actions, we must examine our counselee's heart to see how he measures up to God's criteria of leadership. If our counselee's

¹ Sanders, J. Oswald, "Spiritual Leadership", Moody Press, Chicago, IL, (1967), 21

² Ibid.

heart has veered off – if ever he was on track – into the state of passive comfortableness he would be in sin. He may “feel” his passivity is acceptable “leadership” but that does not line up with God’s calling. We must probe and examine exactly where his heart stands because we know that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it” (Jeremiah 17:9)? And it is our job as biblical counselors to find it out. “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Proverbs 20:5).

Secular Solution Warning

Leadership in Christ is not to be confused with leadership that is stereotypically seen in the world as worldly leadership methods are not the same as those for leadership in the Kingdom of God. Worldly leadership methods are used *by* men in the world, *for* men in the world, to produce men’s *own end* in the world – not to the biblical chief end of man which is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Christian husbands who fit the profile of this thesis *will not* find tools in the world rightly to lead their wives as God wants them to because the world is without Christ. Without depending on Jesus, the Word of God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and lives of our counselee – the weak “comfortable” Christian husband –, there is no hope.

Counseling, from Comfort to Suffering

From the fall of Adam, we are sinners, and we too are sufferers. The counseling challenge of men who have accepted comfortableness over leading is that leading is accompanied with suffering for Christ. So, the fact that they are already comfortable and not suffering for doing good for Christ seems to indicate a spiritual problem. The Christian husband’s weak leadership – not leading but being comfortable by avoiding leading – is a sin of omission that will eventually lead to suffering (divine chastisement) because the way of transgressors is hard (Proverbs 13:15 - KJV). So, whether the husband leads or does not lead he

will suffer (the extent of suffering is not ours to say as that would likely vary per husband. But there should be some form of suffering, just as physical exercise produces perspiration). To counsel well we must instruct our counselee that it is better to suffer for doing good rather than doing evil (1 Peter 3:10-12). All Christian leaders must embrace *suffering* as a strategy.³ Paul the apostle chose it because he knew true joy laid therein as the concurrent product of it, as he says in Colossians 1:24a, "now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake." Suffering is designed to "fill [us] up" (in what we lack) by challenging us to endure and incarnate Christ which will grow the testimony of the gospel to others.⁴ Jesus declared, "for whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it" (Mark 8:35). We also read in 2 Timothy 3:12, "indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted", i.e., suffer. Yet Paul's joy seems boundless "sorrowful yet always rejoicing" (2 Corinthians 6:10). What is the key to this joy? We find it in Romans 5:2: "we exalt in hope of the glory of God". These precepts are the meta-life – the Bible's instructions – from which to counsel these men. Leaders *suffer*.

Biblical Counseling Christians

As a counselor it is imperative that you ascertain as best as possible that the counselee husband is a true Christian with saving faith in Jesus Christ. For unless the counselee is a true Christian and new creation in Christ there is no power of the Holy Spirit that will change the counselee (2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 1:9).

³ MacArthur, John, "The John MacArthur Handbook of Effectual Biblical Leadership", (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 2019), 231-238

⁴ Ibid.

Proposal

But what must these weak leader husbands do to make the turn around to initiate leadership in Christ? There are four proposed steps that husbands must take if they are to reverse their passivity and start initiating godly leadership. First, to start to overcome their desire for comfortableness associated with passivity and failure to lead they must confess it. Second, to unstick the inertia of their comfortableness; they must actively begin to "put off" the momentum of their passive habits by practicing prayer and bringing every thought captive to Jesus. Third, they must submit themselves to, i.e., "put on", the uncomfortable practice of taking up the cross, which implies not only a deliberate change of direction that is uncomfortable, but one that is exactly the opposite way of selfish passive husbands. That means practice being others oriented, including listening with patience and endurance. Fourth, and lastly, now having a renewed desire and willing heart - and here is the whole point of motivation - weak husbands essentially flip the ungodly paradigm on its head and seek not to comfort themselves at the expense of others, but the comfort of others at the expense of their own comfort. Not in placating them but bringing God's righteousness and Jesus' spirit of truth and grace into their lives. This seems the preeminent thing of doing the right thing, i.e., leadership in Christ: comfort others as the Holy Spirit comforted you (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). So, as a follower of Jesus Christ, the husband must be uncomfortable in sacrificing himself – and specifically his comfort (defined below) for the benefit of his wife, and family.

Counseling from The Bible

This thesis suggests reforming passive husbands into godly leaders by following the common counseling stages found in 2 Timothy 3:16. The process will teach, rebuke, correct, and

train Christian husbands in righteousness with the specific view to delivering them out from the comfortable passive into the comforting engagements, i.e., biblical leading.

In Short

Sinful actions that husbands exhibit vis-à-vis leadership emanate from the heart and require biblical analysis and Scriptural application. A Christian husband who does not lead has a spiritual problem.

Intended Audience and Scope

Audience

Intended audience is biblical counselors counseling Christian husbands.

Intent

The intent of this study is to highlight the shortcomings of leadership in a sector of Christian husbands who tend to be overlooked who are more passive and go through life on the sidelines not making waves.

Bounds

This research is predicated on the fact that the counselee is a Christian husband currently married.

Definition of Terminology

Comfort

Comfort as a noun means having a feeling of relief; contented well-being satisfied having an enjoyable experience.⁵ Comfort in terms of our counselee can have many nuanced facets. Safety can contribute to comfort as the counselee likes knowing rules and dynamics of

⁵ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/comfort>".

engagement; having expectations within boundaries; and enjoys living in a world where outcomes are predictable. Also, competency can contribute to comfort as the counselee has confidence in ability to secure the desired outcome. Often one feels able to lead because of his competency, so perhaps our counselee does not feel competent. Additionally, perhaps our counselee seeks to avoid the discomfort of taking on the mantle of leadership. He may procrastinate, which is just putting off stress to another time in the future. Often procrastination occurs due to being overwhelmed. He wants to ignore the overwhelming things because they are not comfortable. But true comfort is the Scriptural form of comfort, where the Holy Spirit has a consolation for us and comforts us in Christ. As Christians we don't have to be passive and hope that the Holy Spirit will bring comfort. Rather, we can seek the comfort of the Holy Spirit by focusing on the promises of God that the Holy Spirit will deliver. And we can call out to the Holy Spirit in prayer and petition for the comfort that we would need for comfort/consolation. God flows graces which are the consolation in the comfort from the Holy Spirit. Godly comfort is identified in 2 Cor 1:3-7: "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort."

Initiate

Initiate has two meanings depending on the form. In the transitive form initiate means "to introduce by a first act; to commence; to begin or enter upon", so the husband must begin to

engage in an activity with his wife. For example: the husband must initiate praying together with his wife. The second form of initiate is the intransitive form which has no object and thus has the meaning: "to do the first act; to take the initiative". So, the husband must take the initiative to lead himself. Now, according to Strong's Hebrew Concordance word #2596 "chanak" means to train up, dedicate, discipline doing something. From this we can know that the leadership defined here is the transitive form.⁶ So, the husband must initiate activity with his wife. In order to do so he must first begin with the intransitive form, to initiate himself, i.e., overcome inertia of passivity and not leading.

Motive

Something (such as a need or desire) that causes a person to act. God weights the motives (Proverbs 16:2), people can have wrong motives (James 4:3), or they can have good motives as in cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Patience/Longsuffering

Patience is an attitude marked by exhibiting calmness while "waiting for something due or hoped for" uncomplainingly, even through various forms of sufferings, bearing "injustices which we cannot remedy and provocations we cannot remove."⁷ It is an essential Christian virtue (Psalm 40:1; Psalm 37:7; Ecclesiastes 7:8; Luke 8:15; Romans 8:25). Longsuffering is used in the Bible in places of patience with the specific meaning of "slow to wrath." It is an attribute of God "bearing long with sinners and slowness to execute judgment on them."⁸ It is one of "the fruits of the Spirit" in man (Galatians 5:22) that we are exhorted to show one another

⁶ BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "initiate", <https://biblehub.com/topical/i/initiate.htm>".

⁷ BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "patience", "<https://biblehub.com/topical/p/patience.htm>".

⁸ BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "longsuffering", <https://biblehub.com/topical/l/longsuffering.htm>".

(Ephesians 4:2 Colossians 1:11; Colossians 3:12, etc.), and it is part of Love "Love suffers long and is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

Endurance

Endurance as a verb in its intransitive form means having an attitude marked by "remain[ing] firm, as under trial or suffering; to suffer patiently or without yielding; to bear up under adversity; to hold out."⁹ See Hebrews 10:32; 12:2; 1 Peter 2:19; Matthew 10:22.

Character

Character in terms of traits is "quality, or the sum of qualities, by which a person ... is distinguished from others"... having "strength of mind; resolution; independence; individuality" ... with "moral quality; the principles and motives that control the life".¹⁰ (See 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Acts 17:11; Romans 5:4; Romans 14:19). Suffering produces character (Romans 5:3-4).

Research Methodology

Most of my research will be done through Biblical resources (the Bible and commentaries), library searches (both public and private), journal articles (mostly if not exclusively JBC Archive, 2017), and internet searches.

Defining the Problem

This section examines a problem that weak leading Christian husbands have, namely not understanding the heart of leadership and several of its critical components that are ordained by

⁹ BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "endurance", "<https://biblehub.com/topical/e/endure.htm>".

¹⁰ BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "character", "<https://biblehub.com/topical/c/character.htm>".

God so that they may please Him for His glory and our good.

Lack of Understanding

Husbands to Learn

Not knowing what the components of leadership are, nor understanding the key ingredients that contribute to being a leader under God, the weak husband often opts out of leading and defaults into comfortableness and passivity. They need admonishment and/or encouragement, education, and discipleship toward overcoming their sinful comfort. Therefore, before they can practice godly leadership, they must first study it, know why it is important, know what advances or diminishes it, and then know how to teach husbanding leadership to younger Christian husbands. This model toward understanding represents the prescription per Ezra. "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Secular View

Psychological self-help books and management leadership training manuals have methodologies aimed at leadership in worldly organizations and are of course not rooted in the Bible and, therefore, have no godly authority for true Christian husband leadership.

Biblical View

The Bible is inerrant and sufficient to inform us of all godly characteristics and principles, including the characteristics of Christian leadership and, therefore, has godly authority for true husband leadership.

The Wife

The counselee (i.e., the weak leading Christian husband) may have a wife who is smarter, more communicative, more organized, and/or more forward thinking than he is, or not.

Nonetheless he is designated by God to be the leader in their home. So how does he proceed?

Marriage Dynamic

It is necessary to discern the marriage dynamics of both the husband and the wife to assure that neither is sinning in the relationship such a way that prevents the husband from leading correctly, and the wife from following correctly.

Headship

Headship is position of God over Christ and Christ over man (husband) and husband over woman (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-33). God has Christ submissive to him. Christ has husband submissive to him. Husband has wife submissive to him (also Colossians 3:18). Our counselee must recognize that he has the role of headship in the marriage, and that what flows from headship is love (Ephesians 5:33). Whether or not our counselee knows he is head and leader our counseling purpose is to engage him to do so.

Individual Personalities

Each spouse brings to the marriage his and her own personality: God given attributes, as well as learned behaviors. One of those measurables is how much they engage in relationships. Each has a tendency towards either isolating themselves from (need for safety), or fully engaging

themselves in (need to immerse to be alive) the marriage.¹¹ Each of these tendencies will impact the style of leadership of the husband in marriage, depending on who he is relative to his wife.

Any of the following four combinations will render its own challenges and sets of issues that the husband must work through in Christ: (1) engaging husband, isolating wife, (2) isolating husband, engaging wife, (3) both husband and wife engaging, (4) both husband and wife isolating. "Without a biblical model to explain the place relationships should have in your life, you will likely experience imbalance, confusion, conflicting desires, and general frustration."¹²

Social Milieu

World At Large

All secular societies of the world at large (including post-modern post-Christian America) have rejected God and the Bible.

America

No longer is the social fabric in America based on diligence for moral excellence and spiritual leadership.

Female Leadership

The push for strong female leadership exists in most corners of secular society today in post-modern America.

Husbands Leadership

Minimization of biblical husband leadership in society has been pushed by the feminist movement, sexual revolution, same-sex marriage rights, transgender platform, and all forms of

¹¹ M Lane, Timothy S., Tripp, Paul David, "Relationships: a mess worth making", 2008, New Growth Press, Greensboro, NC, 17

¹² Ibid.

immoral tolerance and advocacy, which are all the far-reaching anti-Christian, destructive, subterfuge movements in society these days. So, it is no surprise that young Christian men who are passive, timid, and quiet in the world today have trouble getting their footing, and confronting the cultural societal pressure, to lead at home.

Worldly Success

The push for worldly success, i.e., jobs, careers, toys, and escapes from reality, at the expense of character development is a fatal blow to biblical leadership in Christian husbands.

Church Milieu

Women Pastors

Woman pastors and elders are supported and endorsed by progressive liberal churches, i.e., leading in non-biblical ways.

Liberal Push

Liberal self-service clergymen and very educated women propagated sentimental values of timidity, piety, and disdain for competition through arts and literature while true virile religion started to lose its grip on society in culture in the nineteenth century American Victorian Era.¹³

False Teachers

False teachers – like the charismatics, and health and wealth gospel preachers – plague the Church and draw away these counselees from true godly character and discipline.

Dissenting Christian Authorities

Many reputable Christian authorities on the front lines of ministry, such as Dr. John MacArthur (“Called to Lead: 26 Leadership Lessons from the Life of the Apostle Paul” and “The

¹³ Douglas, Ann, “The Feminization of American Culture”, 1977, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, New York, New York

Book on Leadership”), Dr. John Street (Men Counseling Men”), and Dr. Stewart Scott (“Exemplary Husband”) corroborate the many forms of anti-Christian movements in the world systems.

A Secular View of Leadership

This section takes a very brief look at what the secular world asserts as best practices and skills necessary to be a leader. As a counselor this is important to be aware of because (a) our counselees likely live and work amid these leadership realms, and (b) these secular models drive a great deal of church leadership, who in turn are influencing our counselees. So gaining background on these influences should be helpful.

Secular Type Definitions

Passive Aggressive

There exists a type of secular leader who is passive-aggressive, non-confrontational, tolerant, who endorses the redefinition of meanings (see LGBTQ)¹⁴, embraces equity and diversity, "values harmony and relationships over directness and honesty"¹⁵ and maintains conformance to this agenda. These politically correct, “non-offensive” managers at work can seem to be "kind and gentle" worldly leaders. As they succeed the implication is that they are “good leaders”. So, if our counselee comes from this arena, he can believe that similar passive approach to home leadership is acceptable, and that any failure at leadership is not his fault or problem.

¹⁴ Lim, Fidelindo DNP CCRN, Jones, Paul Andrew MS, et. al. "A guide to fostering an LGBTQ-inclusive workplace", Nursing Management (Springhouse): June 2019 - Volume 50 - Issue 6 - p 46-53

¹⁵ Desai, Rajvi, "Why Some People Shy Away From Confrontation", Mar 3, 2020, <https://theswaddle.com/psychology-non-confrontational-attitude/>

Confrontational

Another type of secular leader is the confrontational leader who is comfortable with command and control; is the alpha male, is independent, action oriented, is smarter than most people, has extraordinarily high levels of performance.¹⁶ Our counselee tends to not possess this quality set and therefore can justify that his current passive, comfort oriented, non-confrontational leadership at home is okay because his leadership is supposed to look different than the world.

Secular Actions and Best Practices of Leadership

Embedded Values

Winning worldly leaders *embed values* that include self-confidence, speed, simplicity, “stretch”,¹⁷ education, ideas, energy, and “edge”.¹⁸

Winning Environment

Winning leaders *generate a “winning environment”* for their people¹⁹ with excitement, where ideas win, and people flourish and grow.

Constant Rebuilding

With the future as their palette, worldly leaders *must rebuild* their operations to meet new

¹⁶ Ludeman, Kate, Erlandson, Eddie, "Coaching the Alpha Male", Harvard Business Review - The Magazine (May 2004), <https://hbr.org/2004/05/coaching-the-alpha-male>

¹⁷ Tichy, Noel M., "The Leadership Engine: how winning companies build leaders at every level" (1997), harpers Business, a division of Harbor Collins publishers, New York, New York, 179

¹⁸ Ibid., 173

¹⁹ Ibid., 178

demands – there is constant need for change to adapt.²⁰ So, leaders engage followers emotionally and rationally to build the case for organizational change to build better products, and then to successfully sell them, for a winning future.²¹

No Weakness

People “can perform only from strengths. One cannot build performance on weaknesses ... we need to know our strengths in order to know where we belong.”²²

Perks for Secular Leadership

Rewards

Good leaders in secular work gain respect, motivated employees, choice of best talent, more authentic employees, enhanced creativity.²³ And of course monetary increases.

Recognition

Good leaders get corporate-wide exposure through mechanisms like: wall of fame, a short film on their achievements, top performers club, and addition to the company’s website. These forms of recognition boast their corporate value and gains them social recognition.²⁴

²⁰ Tichy, Noel M., "The Leadership Engine: how winning companies build leaders at every level" (1997), harpers Business, a division of Harbor Collins publishers, New York, New York, 181

²¹ Ibid., 178

²² Drucker, Peter F., "Classic Drucker," (2006), Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts, 4

²³ Emelia, "What are the Rewards of Being a Leader", The Creativity Resource Guide, The CMH Group dba creativemindhabs.com, (2022), <https://creativemindhabs.com/what-are-the-rewards-of-being-a-leader/>

²⁴ Possibleworks.com, "21 Effective Ideas for Employee Rewards and Recognition Program", viewed 4/22/2022, <https://possibleworks.com/blog/21-effective-ideas-for-employee-rewards-and-recognition-program/>

A Biblical Perspective of Husband Leadership

Regardless of whether the husband is quiet or not, there are godly expectations of how to lead his home. Although there are many table stake ingredients to godly husbandry, some biblical leadership qualities may be considered key ingredients to affecting this leadership.

Qualities of Husband's Leadership

Qualities/Facets of Leadership

There are many qualities/facets of leadership that a Christian husband must have to lead his wife and family well. They include at least thirteen: (1) vision (John 6:38); (2) pursuit, i.e. not lazy; (3) lovingly kindness; (4) true shepherding, not hierling (1 Peter 5:2); (5) tactics, led by example (Matthew 6:5–15); (6) characteristics of a godly man (Timothy 3:1–3 and Titus 1:5–9); (7) oversee, manage his household well with oversight and not control (1 Peter 5:2–3); (8) involved in doing the right thing, with courage in the face of pushback; (9) diligent, no rationalizing away or selfishness (1 Peter 5:2; Philippians 2:3–4); (10) protector from danger physically and spiritually (John 10:11-13); (11) provider of wife's spiritual and physical needs (one Timothy 5:8) ; (12) instructor to discuss concerns and give instructions; (13) course corrector / disciplinarian aligned with vision (strategic and tactical) and (1 Thes 5:14); (14) restorer of souls as in Psalm 23.²⁵

Love is the Greatest Command

If the Christian husband is doing his job in loving his wife (1 Corinthian 13) as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 25-32), then the effect of that will be respect to him from his wife that he so desires (Ephesians 5:33). Interpolating from that principle we can say that leadership

²⁵ Scott, Dr. Stuart, "The Exemplary Husband", 2002, Focus Publishing, Bemidji, MN, 117-130

flows from love and therefore all the improving on all the leadership categories can take place as the husband works first on love per 1 Corinthians 13.

What Leadership Does

Leadership is God fearing, trustworthy, and hates bribes (Exodus 18:21). Leadership is faithful, sober-minded and sober, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, self-controlled and not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, and able to manage his household. (1 Timothy 3:1-7). Leadership loves genuinely, hates evil, holds onto good, honors and shows brotherly affection, is fervent in spirit, serves the Lord, rejoices in hope, is patient in tribulation (long suffering), is constantly in prayer, contributes to the needs of the saints and seeks to show hospitality (Romans 12:9-13). Leadership is exemplary in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity. (1 Timothy 4:12). Leaders must be servants to others (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:12-15; Luke 22:24-27). Leadership seeks counsel (Proverbs 11:14). Leaders must give an account for their charges' souls. (Hebrews 13:17)

What Leadership Does Not Do

Leadership must not destroy and scatter the sheep (Jeremiah 23:1). Leadership does not grow weary of doing good, does not give up. (Galatians 6:9). Leadership does not strive in rivalry, is not conceited (but instead is humble and counts others more significant than themselves) (Philippians 2:3). Leadership in Christ does not lord it over others by exercising authority expecting to be served (Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45; John 13:12-15; Luke 22:24-27).

Differentiation In Style

Quiet or Loud

The Bible does not distinguish between quiet or loud personalities regarding the requirement to lead. No matter the volume of their personality, the Christian husband is called to godly leadership (Ephesians 5:25-33; Colossians 3:19).

Different Gifting

No two Christian husband's leadership will look *exactly* alike because God's gifts to each husband differs. As God gave different gifts to us according to His grace (Romans 12:6a) we each have a gifted function to perform in the body of Christ (Romans 12:4). And as we have a variety of gifts, we also have variety of services and varieties of activities, apportioned to each one individually as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:4,5,6,11). And we are encouraged to earnestly desire the higher gifts (1 Corinthians 12:31). Likewise, each husband's leadership qualities (see above) are "apportioned individually" and therefore are individually unique such that no two husbands will lead in exactly the same way. For example, it seems some husbands may have strength in kindness and doing chores (Matthew 6:5-15) but may be weak providing and protecting (easily intimidated and rolled over by men). While other husbands may be strong in providing and protecting but weak in kindness and instruction. Therefore, as apostle Paul encourages us to earnestly desire the higher gifts (this extends to leadership beyond our comfortable), all husbands should aspire to "leads, with zeal" (Romans 12:8b). Accompanied with different "heat" in one's life our counselee will lead tactically like no other but should strategically lead in similar godly veins.

Key Ingredient

Initiating

As Jesus was the *author, initiator, captain* of our faith, He did it all for us and suffered for it (Hebrews 2:10; 12:2). And as Christ who is the head, and initiator and captain of the husband, so should husbands be the head, initiator, and captain for their wives (Ephesians 5:23-24). When the husband initiates love to his wife, he makes it easier for her to submit (hupotassó: to place or rank under, to subject, to obey) to his leadership. After he *initiates* love, the result from his godly bride/wife is a flowing of respect to her husband.

Sins Preventing Christian Husbands from Leading

Comfort, Selfish Comfort

Self-isolationist – "Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment" (Proverbs 18:1). "Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain" (Psalm 119:36)! "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" (James 3:16-17).

Comfort versus pleasing people – How is "comforting others" different from "pleasing people". Trying to please people is the goal of getting their favor and approval for a certain benefit for your own sake from them. On the other hand, giving comfort to others is where we come along side those who are deep into problems as a result of sin (either theirs or others against them) and restore them gently (Galatians 6:1-5). The goal is God's favor and approval having love as the chief end, not a means to our own end.

Fear

Timidity – Timidity means "wanting courage to meet danger; easily frightened; timorous; not bold; fearful; shy."²⁶ Synonyms are nervous (easily agitated or annoyed, sensitive; excitable. Greek 4423. ptoesis- a fluttering, excitement, hence terror); shy (easily frightened; reserved); disheartened.²⁷ "Timidity would come by the failure to look towards the Reason-Principle or by looking towards some inferior phase of it."²⁸ Sometimes timidity occurs "by the mere absence of adequate stimulus"²⁹ Either way, "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7). "He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith" (Mark 4:40)?

Cowardice – Cowardice is "extreme timidity; base fear of danger or hurt; lack of spirit"³⁰; "wanting courage; spiritless, proceeding from fear of ..." ³¹ "And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore to him, Are not you also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not" (John 18:25). "Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew" (John 18:27). "So, when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing near to the ship: and they were afraid" (John 6:19). "Nevertheless, among the

²⁶ Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, "timid", <https://biblehub.com/topical/t/timid.htm>

²⁷ Biblehub, "Timid", <https://biblehub.net/searchtopical.php?q=timid>

²⁸ Plotinus, "The Six Enneads — Third Ennead, Sixth Tractate. The Impassivity of the Unembodied", https://biblehub.com/library/aquinas/summa_theologica/whether_daring_is_opposed_to.htm

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary, <https://biblehub.com/topical/c/cowardice.htm>

³¹ Biblehub, "Timid", <https://biblehub.net/searchtopical.php?q=timid>

chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:42).

Fear of man – “The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe” (Proverbs 29:25). “So, we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me’” (Hebrews 13:6)? “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Anxiety – Anxiety is a disturbed state of uneasy concern while awaiting the outcome of a future event and wanting a certain result but not having any control over it, nor having any trust in God’s sovereign plan. “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). “Casting all your care on him; for he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7). “And take no thought for your life ... is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment” (Matthew 6:25-34)?

Omissions

Lack of communication – Jesus communicated in various ways: by large physical gestures/action (e.g., overturning tables of the money changers), by smaller details non-verbal expressions (e.g., drawing on the ground), by voice (e.g., speaking words of healing, direction, compassion, and truth). Omission of communication is sinful. For example, husband and wife are biking, single file on the sidewalk, husband in front and wife just behind. Some large truck for tree care was parked in a driveway just ahead. The husband decides to stop but did not communicate it to his wife as he assumed she knew what he was doing. She did not, and fervently asked what he was doing. Fair point, if he had communicated to her there would be no

question where he was going. When husbands communicate then his wife and others who follow him, i.e., children, will know what he is doing and where he is leading, and it will not be a mysterious trust. Now trust is a good thing to discuss as a trait of a good follower, but it is not a trait for the leader to presume upon. A good leader will behave rightly as a leader and communicate regardless of whether or not the follower trusts.

Hiding – Consider the environment of the counselee: is there a sense of wickedness from which he is hiding to protect himself (Proverbs 28:12,28)? Or is his hiding a case of concealing his transgressions? He "will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

Excuses – Husbands receive a tremendous blessing and privilege of marriage, companionship of a wife and possibly a family. They must not neglect such a sacred privilege by making excuses to pardon themselves of the duty of such a great calling. See Luke 14:18. God will not be pleased.

Opposite of leading

Is our passive, un-initiating husband (i.e., our counselee) doing the opposite of leading? Although passive unengaging husbandry seems not offensive and might also seem pleasant in some circles, it is perhaps more dangerous than one could think. Let us look at the two steps of the "two-point swing" model: 1 => 2 => 3 (step one is going from "1" to "2"; step two is going from "2" to "3"). Let us first look at this model as it applies to the example of thievery. When is a thief ("1") no longer a thief ("3")? The answer is, not when he is no longer stealing ("2") because then he is just a thief on vacation. Rather the thief ("1") is no longer a thief when he is working a job earning a living AND giving some of what he earns away ("3"). Likewise, leadership by husbands takes the same form. Not leading would be akin to thievery like obfuscating, road

blocking, or vetoing godly voices ("1"). While the passive husbandry that is not obfuscating, road blocking, or vetoing godly voices, but just kind of following, i.e., not leading, is the middle ground ("2"). Certainly, that seems not as bad as obfuscating and road blocking. While the real leadership is the active engagement that is called for in Romans 12:8 to lead with zeal ("3")! So, what about someone who is just not stealing, nor are they working and giving? And what about the husband who is just not leading, nor are they initiating and giving? It could be argued that this middle state ("2") is a "lukewarm" situation; a do nothing state. It is neither the living in the kingdom of God actively, nor is it active in sin. It is possible that it is a sin of omission. Perhaps this is the kind of sin that Jesus warns us of in Revelation 3:14-22 to not be lukewarm as he called out the church of Laodicea. This is a dangerous state. Like the expression “evil prevails when good men do nothing”, “evil prevails when Christian husbands who are supposed to lead do nothing”

A Plan for Counseling this Counselee to be a Biblical Leader

This section proposes a solution for reformation toward biblical husband leadership based on the stages of 2 Timothy 3:16. This section includes discussion topics with the counselee, and homework assignments. The normative biblical counseling process opens with a couple of sessions to perform data gathering to identify the full extent of the background of the counselee that includes all pertinent physical and spiritual aspects of his life. Within these first two sessions it is imperative to ascertain whether the counselee is a true believer in Jesus Christ. The question is, “Does this counselee have saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ”? His spiritual condition will affect the total direction of the counseling. We start with the counselee filling in the ACBC PDI form and then ask questions about his beliefs (Hebrews 11:6). At the conclusion of the normal

counseling commitment, it may be necessary for the counselor periodically to verify that the husband is faithful to the work that the Lord has him to do in his life that will make him the full leader God has created him to be.

Learn the Biblical Model

Teaching

Passive husbands who are attempting to lead must first learn and understand what the issues are, and what is involved in biblical leadership of his wife and home.

Weak Leadership is First a Spiritual Problem

The fall - Though being placed as the original husband/leader Adam failed the integrity test. As he pointed to Eve, as if to justify himself and try to get out of his sin, he only reveals his passivity and lack of responsibility (Gen 3:12).

The want - A desire or penchant for ease of life – comfortableness – that amounts to laziness seems to be one of the biggest contributors to weak leadership. The reason it leads to weak leadership is because worshipping any idol will wreak havoc in one's life. A particular havoc of worshipping the comfortable (peace, peace) idol is the transfer of his leadership responsibility to his wife. In doing so our counselee has become disengaged, self-comforting, and isolated. So, the fruits born are passivity, "passing the buck," and rationalizing bad habits.

Deceiving Self - Our counselee has deceived himself into believing that all is okay and there is peace, peace when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14). This husband convinces himself that all is well.

Wife's list – As our counselee deceives himself to thinking all is well (peace, peace), meanwhile his wife has a list of many, many issues. Issues that the wife who is designed to be the helper easily recognizes but for which there is no reception by her husband.

Secular influences - Allowing himself to be drawn into secular influences that leads him away from biblical leadership into secular, non-leadership activities, our counselee is failing to move toward God which will not bode well for his future. This is a spiritual problem.

Leading without Christ – The “other side of the horse” from which a passive non-leading husband can fall off would be if he tries to strongly lead without the love of Christ. He could end up engaging in command-and-control leadership, barking out orders from his position of authority, which is neither leading nor loving his wife. He lords it over his wife with a spirit of self-service (1 Peter 5:3; Mat 20:25). This is a spiritual problem.

Man is a Dichotomist Creature

Man is a dichotomist creature and therefore some physical issues may impinge his spiritual being that hinder him from leadership/initiating well/rightly. It is important to understand sleeping patterns, alcohol usage, medical issues, medications, over-the-counter and illegal substances, and habits, etc., which can negate the husbands ability to sacrificially lead.

Though the husband may have physical limitations, they are never to be used as excuses. In fact, he must “discipline [his] body and keep it under control” just as the apostle Paul did as he emphasized the importance of striving for the spiritual “imperishable” prize driving himself to “exercises self-control in all things ... I discipline my body and keep it under control” (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Therefore, our counselee is certainly not beyond suffering – remember, he has not gotten to the point of suffering – for leading and righteousness’ sake – as Jesus or Paul or any of the apostles.

Forms of Initiation

Initiation in leadership has two definitions that must be considered for counseling, plus other considerations: starting point and results.

The counselee must take the initiative like Jesus did. Jesus laid down his life. Man did not take it. Jesus initiated (John 10:18). God also initiated what Jesus would speak, so it was not from Jesus himself, but the Father who sent him. (John 12:49). This is the verb intransitive form of the verb initiate. There is no object associated with this form of initiating. Initiating is unilateral to unstick inertia.

The counselee must also initiate activity with his wife. According to the Hebrew section of Strong's Concordance word #2596 "chanak" means "to train up, dedicate, discipline doing something".³² This is the verb transitive form of the verb initiate where there is an object on whom the initiation take place, i.e., his wife.

The counselee must install a clear vision of initiating. So, our counselee must learn to take the initiative and be bold by, first, developing the vision of what the godly nature of his relationship with his wife should look like, second, make a plan, and then, third, take the initiative and execute the plan - to love her; to pray for her; to be humble with her think in terms of sanctification, and, to do acts of kindness to her (Ephesians 4:32; 1 Peter 3:7).

Employment in Christ

Our counselee can accomplish godly leadership by employing the right strategy (Love), and with executing the right tactics (see next paragraph), all with the right motives (from a pure heart, Matthew 5:8; and a clear conscience, Hebrews 13:18), toward developing the right godly leadership qualities (See "*Qualities/Facets of Leadership*"³³).

The right tactics our counselee must execute include: (1) speaking and promoting *truth* always (for God is spirit and truth), (2) *enduring* in prayer and communion with God, and never

³² BibleHub.com, Topical Index, "initiate", <https://biblehub.com/topical/i/initiate.htm>".

³³ Scott, Dr. Stuart, "The Exemplary Husband", 2002, Focus Publishing, Bemidji, MN, 117-130

give up through patience and long suffering, (3) being *trustworthy* in all things and maintain confidentiality for love covers a multitude of sins; (4) being *gracious*, merciful, encouraging, forgiving and receiving forgiveness; (5) *knowing the Word of God* to use for protection (it is the sword of the spirit); (6) being *vigilant*, alert always, do not get too happy but rather be joyful even in trial; (7) being *uncompromising* and steadfast to protect blessings of God and intimacy with him. All these tactics aim at fighting directly against the tactics that Satan uses to try defeat the Christian.³⁴

Acts of Faith

Results of initiative are to be taken as acts of faith, such that our counselee may not necessarily see immediate results of initiation with his wife, but he can have immediate gratification knowing his right work of initiating in leadership is seen by God. In other words, he must have patience/long suffering and endurance.

Becoming Uncomfortable

Our counselee tends to be an isolationist, quiet, hiding, and making excuses. These are to say he seeks to be comfortable. In Christlike leadership he must renew his mind to work out his salvation in fear and trembling and be willing to be uncomfortable by giving up some personal want in favor of doing something to comfort another. He should look forward to that goal in Christ! He must take the *initiative to initiate*. It certainly will hurt his *flesh*. But, once deep into serving others the blessing of service will totally displace the previous desire for selfishness (Matthew 25:31-40). He should be uncomfortable, but not be uncomfortable for uncomfortable sake. Rather he should (1) combat *making excuses* by being filled with Holy Spirit and truth, (2)

³⁴ Scott, Dr. Stuart, "The Exemplary Husband", 2002, Focus Publishing, Bemidji, MN, 117-130

(3) combat *isolationism* by being others focused, practicing one-anothering, (3) combat *hiding* by being communicative in all aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication, and (4) combat *quietness (akin to idleness)* by working on godly solutions.

Balanced Engagement and Balanced Freedom

Our isolationist counselee's leadership is to be as godly as possible, which means both initiating things to do for/with his wife, and, creating space for her to be a godly woman and wife so she has room to grow. As he loves her, he will make it easier for her to be godly.

Measure Ourselves Against the Spirit's Truth

Reproof

We must know our counselee's current husbandry leadership status so we must measure it. This will give us the stake-in-the-ground from which we move to address the heart issues and bring all under the Cross of Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit initiate the love and leadership of our counselee toward his wife.

Begin With the Husband

Initiation to love, and any repenting for failure to love, begins with the husband. To get the power to initiate love horizontally, the husband must be in (vertical) love with God. The husband who is not in love with God cannot initiate love, nor is he going to produce the leadership in Christ. Therefore, he will fail not only in leadership but also fail to receive the more respect from his wife that he desires. Now the wife can still be respectful to her husband (1 Peter 3:1-2) but that will only be a partial respect and not the full respect from a full heart because that fullness would include the respect for some of the right things the husband may do AND the submission to Jesus with the rest of his life. That would be the fullness.

Rightly Parse

Let us examine how to rightly parse out comfortableness' place in the husband's life.

Identify the lusts of the heart

Using the three-tree diagram we must examine the "bad tree side" to identify idols of heart. We must investigate the counselee's desires, lusts, life agenda, and what thinking occurs from that. Then we must look for the actions/fruit that are born from them. Areas to probe for the existence of idolatrous lusts could be: (a) sitting back in comfort, (b) rationalizing things away, (c) selfishness (1 Peter 5:2; Philippians 2:3-4), (d) excuses, (e) hiding, (f) fear, (g) timidity, (h) cowardice, (i) anxiety, (j) withdrawn, (k) ceasing communications, (l) throwing stumbling blocks to his godly wife.

Barriers to initiating

What are the barriers to godly success for our un-initiating counselee? Is he afraid to start because he does not want to fail? This is a heart issue. Is he too lazy to start? This is a heart issue. Does he procrastinate? This is a heart issue. Does he not know how to start or what to do? This is an educational issue. Does he need some physical help? This is a physical issue. Does he not want to start? This is a heart issue.

Benchmark: godly oriented Christian leader

Measure our passive Christian husband's spiritual leadership state against spiritual criteria of a model Christian leading husband. Ask the following questions. Does he have confidence in God? Does he know God? Is he seeking to find God's will? Is he making himself inconspicuous? Is he finding and following God's principles and precepts in life? Does he delight to obey God?

Is he motivated by love for God and man? Is he God dependent? These measuring sticks³⁵ show us how successful, or not, our brother is toward leading rightly.

Benchmark: godly qualities of Christian leader

Question them along the lines of qualities of godly leadership to explore the fuller area of biblical leadership: Ask: Do you have a vision for your family (John 6:38)? What are your pursuits in life (lazy)? How are you showing lovingly kindness? What is your heart for shepherding (1 Peter 5:2) like? How do you address the "honey-do" list - tactical, lead-by-example (Matthew 6:5–15)? Do you exhibit the characteristics of a godly man (Timothy 3:1–3 and Titus 1:5–9)? Do you oversee, manage your household well with oversight and not control (1 Peter 5:2–3)? Are you involved in doing the right things - strategic godliness? Do you have courage in the face of pushback? Are you diligent: not sitting back in comfort, not rationalizing things away, not selfish (1 Peter 5:2; Philippians 2:3–4)? How do you protect your wife from physical and spiritual danger (John 10:11-13)? How do you provide for wife's spiritual and physical needs (1 Timothy 5:8)? Are you an instructor that discusses concerns and gives instructions to wife and family? Are you a course corrector/disciplinarian aligned with vision (strategic and tactical) and (1 Thes 5:14)? Do you take the time to restore souls as in Psalm 23?

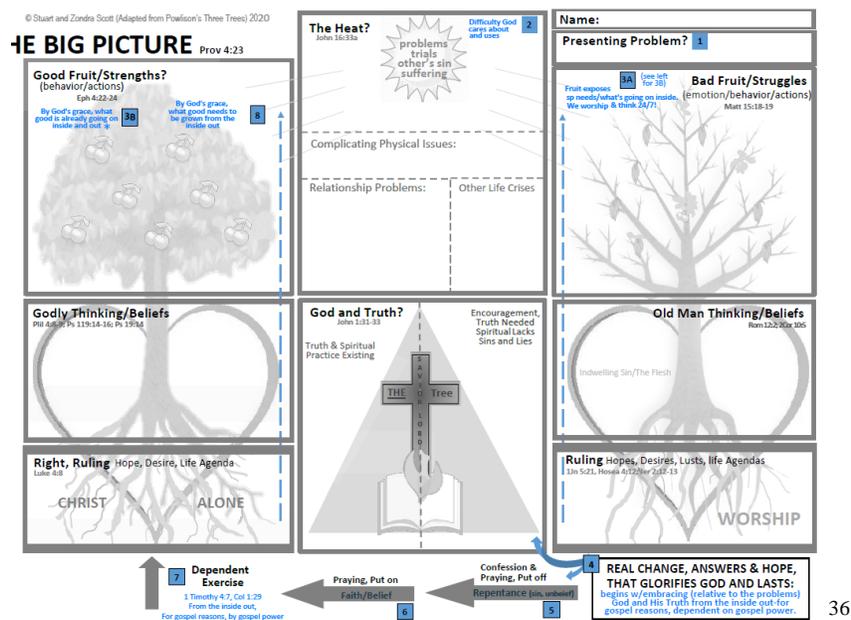
Repent of Where Having Fallen Short

Correction

Our counselee must confess and repent and bring all thoughts captive to Christ to be redeemed by the Holy Spirit. Here we must lead our counselee to change his thinking and actions with Scripture.

³⁵ Sanders, J. Oswald, "Spiritual Leadership", 1967, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, p.21

Redeem the passive, disengaged leadership under the cross of Christ by walking our counselee through the “Big Picture/Three-Tree” diagram. This process is critical to identifying the particulars that your counselee must *put-off* and *put-on*.



Consider applying 1 Thessalonians 5:14: (a) Admonish the idle [disorderly, or undisciplined], (b) Encourage the fainthearted, (c) Help the weak, (d) Be patient with them all.

Course correcting can be made with discipline of a godly strategy, and with godly tactics (see above). But it is Holy Spirit illumination that will be required in our counselee so that he can have the heart change necessary to be able to change and lead correctly under God. This only occurs as our counselee increases his communion with God. Course correcting/disciplining aligned with vision can be made with godly tactics.

Train by Practice of Biblical Principles to Lead Biblically

Training

After our counselee has learned the biblical model and made it his own (stages 2 and 3), it will be imperative for him now to train himself to be consistent in it. This stage of godliness will prove to be the most difficult because so many of the counselees have trained themselves to be sinfully passive, accommodating, and permissive without even knowing it (cf. 2 Peter 2:14). One outstanding example of this is that they often relegate biblical leadership to an “almighty” checklist, which is a subtle way to deceive themselves into thinking that they are leading when they are not. Another is that they rationalize any faulty or sinful excuse for biblical leadership away or think that what they are doing is the real thing. Rather, they must train themselves in this area of godliness (1 Tim 4:7), by both renewing their minds (Eph 4:23) and practicing (Heb 5:14) how to be a wise initiator (i.e., balanced, not vacillating to one extreme or the other) per the specific results found for tactics and strategies needed from the “Big Picture” analysis.

Biblical practices

What biblical practices must he do to overcome the comfort of not leading? First, he must pray daily and petition God to strengthen him in his existing gifts and grant him understanding and knowledge of other gifts that leaders in Christ require. Second, he must confess his failures to God and his wife. Third, he must repent from his failure to lead to God and his wife. Fourth, he must practice godliness (godly characteristics) to overcome with the power of the Holy Spirit. Put on the new beliefs and thoughts and actions that are the base of godly leadership. Fifth, he must communicate with his wife continuously per the “four rules of biblical communication” (See Ephesians 4:25-32).

Administrative/practical practices

What administrative/practical practices will help to overcome the comfort of not leading? First, he must have accountability. It will be good to have a discipleship partner preferable an elder in the church who meet criteria of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Second, it will be beneficial to log his activity. He must be diligent at self-assessment by logging himself, noting times of failure and times of success all according to Christ's standard. Third, he should set spiritual goals targeting improvement in one area of leadership in which he is weak and improving one area in which he is strong. Fourth, he must maintain good physical stewardship; maintain physical well-being by sleeping well, eating healthy and exercising regularly and well because we are dichotomous creatures, and these will impact our leadership ability.

Conclusion

Narrow Road

The road is narrow to be able to lead well/right in God's eyes and it begins with a circumcised heart, a God fearing, shepherd's heart, and godly *initiation*.

Secular World Temptations

Be careful of the secular world's leadership perspectives and tactics because they proceed without Christ and the regenerating work through the Holy Spirit. Secularism attempts to captivate our counselee into the world's leadership plan without any thought of godliness. Therefore, our job as biblical counselors must include revealing to our counselee that idolatry of worldly leading is generally at odds with godly principles, and that lustful temptations of the world in his heart will prevent him from fulfilling his godly leadership role.

The Right Things

Husbands who are competent to "do things rightly" but lack initiation are failing leadership by being content and comfortable with just checking things off a tactical checklist. Unfortunately, the honey-do list loses sight of the big picture of leadership's strategic component - "doing the right things". So, what constitutes the right things? Well, it is beyond the checklist certainly. It must be activities and priorities that are non-negotiables in God's eyes that we find in Scripture – His commands and principles, His preceptive will – of which he must obey and labor – initiate – in his life and those in his family's lives.

Initiating Key

Initiating is a key ingredient to leadership often overlooked or unrecognized which our counselee must learn to fully embrace and implement in his life, and practice regularly. It is initiating by which he must engage himself. It is by initiating that he engages others; prompts them into righteous activities, and helps, that would bring glory to God, for the good of himself and the good of those who follow him. For example, he could initiate prayer, both by himself, and together with his wife. Initiating is a key ingredient to leadership that men need to practice regularly. Three principles to initiate are: *dedication to Christ* (Heb. 12:2), *love for the flock* (John 15:12, 13), and the *sense of destiny* (Mark 1:15-17).³⁷

Real Time

Leadership cannot be in arrears but in real time with all of life on the line. That is, leadership must be proactive, not reactionary, and making decisions in a timely manner and not procrastinated.

³⁷ Baird, J.M., "Leadership", The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (1977), Glenside, PA.

Suffering in Leadership

Suffering in the leadership is to be *joyful*, as apostle Paul tells us in Colossians 1:24a: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake". In fact, us husbands must be deliberate and talk to ourselves while enduring the trial. This is how we are to minister to ourselves and tell other husbands *how to* also. In fact, it is during trials that I have personally noticed a pattern such that it does not matter if I complain. Complaining only adds to the trouble. So, I have learned to say I'm *doing well* amidst the trial and personal pain: not to deceive myself – because the pain is real – but because the trial is for growth and burning off the dross of a comfortable life and will, in the end, be rewarded. Because it is not an earthly “doing well” that is happening necessarily but rather it is the intangible *doing well* in the Lord – it is *doing well* for the spiritual "imperishable" prize of 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. It is being a soldier of Christ who loves the hard as Christ loves. It is the joy of the Lord that is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10).

Key Scripture

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).

Communion with Christ

Lastly, there is a great and helpful directive from the great Puritan author and leader John Owen who preached that the more often we praise God and the more often we spend time in prayer to Him, our communion with Him increases wherein we have joy, peace, fellowship, comfort, and protection. Contrarily, lessening our communion with God, i.e., neglect our devotion to Him, compromises our spiritual strength and putting us in a danger of giving into temptation more readily. That threatens our relationship. The more we strengthen our relationship with Him in communion, however, the more we strengthen our ability to turn from sin because God is quick to forgive and abounding in compassion and faithfulness. This really puts a strong emphasis on the importance of our Christian obedience. We must put away neglecting our reception of the Holy Spirit's movement in our lives that we may increase our attention to the things of God through the Holy Spirit. Thus, by that obedience we pick up the graces and the mercies and are able to *put-off* the old man and *put-on* the new man in Christ. We thus move away from temptations of this world and into communion with God all the more, by the increasing our obedience and attending to time with Him – to increase our true comfort so we can comfort others.

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