

POINT MAN:

HOW A MAN CAN LEAD HIS FAMILY



**A DISCUSSION GUIDE FROM THE
BOOK BY STEVE FARRAR**

Families are falling apart all across America, and even though we would like to think that Christian families are different, they are not. The difference between the church and our secular society in the rates of divorce, affairs, neglect of families for careers, and other aspects that are tearing apart the family, is so small it is down right scary! What will change this trend in our country? Only one thing - when we as men, as husbands, as fathers, decide to truly embrace and *desire* the role that God has appointed us to!

This discussion guide is designed to be a part of a men's study group and to go along with the book, *Point Man: How A Man Can Lead His Family* by Steve Farrar. It is put together to help us explore what it means to lead our families from a biblical perspective so that we can challenge ourselves to lead our families the way God has called us to.

In each section there is a reading assignment from the book, a passage to meditate on and pray about for each week, questions to discuss in the group setting, quotes from each chapter that provide some direct challenges for us to consider, assignments that are designed to help us apply the concepts to our own family leadership, and finally a place for evaluation on how we are doing in regards to making the necessary changes.

To get the most out of this study you will need to read the chapter for that week, attend the group meeting, be willing to evaluate your family leadership (being honest and open with yourself and your brothers), implement the changes (not just discuss them in the group), and be willing to have someone hold you accountable to ensure you are making the changes that your family needs.

I hope that you find this discussion guide challenging and that it serves as a faith building experience not just for you, but for your whole family.

In His Service,

Jonathan Crowell



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 1:

POINT MAN ON PATROL

READ: CHAPTER 1 - POINT MAN ON PATROL

SCRIPTURE:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” (Ephesians 5:25-31, ESV)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Leading a family through the chaos of American culture is like leading a small patrol through enemy occupied territory.”

“What are you doing to keep your marriage off the casualty list?”

“I’ve asked you how you intend to keep your marriage off the casualty list. Let me ask you something else. How are you going to keep your kids off the casualty list?”

“We need some men who have a passion to be better fathers than they are accountants. We need some men who have a passion to be better dads than they are attorneys, salesmen, foremen, pastors, or doctors.”

“You were appointed. Like it or not, you carry the responsibility. You are the point man.”

“If a man is passive and indifferent to the things of God and the spiritual leadership of his home, then attack is not necessary. He is already neutralized.”

“Gentlemen, I know that you love your families. You love your wife. You love your children. You would be willing to die for them. In most wars, that’s what men are asked to do... But in this war, it’s different. In this war, Jesus Christ is looking for men who will live for their families.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What was a “point man” during the Vietnam war, and how does it relate to our role as head of our household?
2. What role do you think the leadership (or lack thereof) of husbands and fathers have in the statistics about divorce, teen pregnancy, teen drug abuse, etc.? Do you buy into the idea that it’s at least partly “our” fault?
3. What is Satan’s strategy to attack our relationship with our wife? How about our kids?
4. We easily see how a physical separation can be detrimental to our relationships with our wives or our children. What are your thoughts on the fact that the separation between us and our wives can also be emotional? How much more of a challenge is it to ensure that the emotional connection is there?
5. What is your reaction to the thoughts on quantity time and quality time? Is this a challenge for how you lead your family?
6. Re-read the story on page 30 about Tom Peters, the author of many self-help books on business and professional excellence. In making the choice between excellence in family or business, what is his advice?
7. Is our job the part of our lives where we get our greatest sense of accomplishment? Is this in line with what God intends for the family?
8. I know that every one of us would be willing to die to protect our families. How are we living for to protect them?

ASSIGNMENTS:

RECOGNIZE THE ENEMY’S ATTACKS.

Take some time over the next few days to consider how Satan has attacked your family. Write down specific events and struggles that your family has dealt with or is currently dealing with and the effects that it is having on your relationship with your wife and your children.

CALL IN REINFORCEMENTS.

Now that you have spent some time evaluating the condition of your family, take these to a brother you can confide in and share with him your struggles and concerns for your family, then spend some time in discussion and prayer over these issues.

TAKE ACTION.

MAKE the time to pray about these concerns to God AT LEAST three times this week!
Ask God to open your eyes to how these struggles have affected you and what changes you need to make to be able to lead your family better.

EVALUATION:

AFTER CONTINUING IN PRAYER FOR YOUR FAMILY FOR THE PAST WEEK TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON THE CHANGES YOU FOUND THAT YOU NEED TO MAKE. WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS BELOW.



NOW TAKE SOME TIME TO DISCUSS WITH A BROTHER YOU TRUST THE CHANGES THAT YOU NEED TO MAKE. HAVE HIM PRAY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. PUT IN PLACE A SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE CHANGES YOU NEED TO MAKE.

DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 2:

SAVE THE BOYS

READ: CHAPTER 2 - SAVE THE BOYS

SCRIPTURE:

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-7, ESV)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“If our boys are not equipped to lead families, then the families of the next generation will not have leaders.”

“The formula is simple: LESS TIME = LESS INFLUENCE”

“We save our boys by giving them a role model to follow. When our boys have a clear role model, they intuitively know how to function when they assume the responsibility of marriage and parenting. But in this generation, there are too many crippled boys who have no idea what it is to be a man.”

“Error increases with distance. In my estimation, that’s a primary principle of fathering. If you are going to save the boys, you have to be there.”

“The choices that you make with your family today will determine the quality of life in your family tree for generations to come.”

“We must save our boys so that we can save the family.”

“One man can make a difference.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. With the rise of feminism, how have husbands/fathers become the “sixth man” in the story on page 35?

2. Should we teach our boys that their future wives should follow their lead, or should we teach them to lead? What's the difference?

3. How did the Industrial Revolution change family life for most people? Most of us aren't suited to go back to an agrarian society, so what are practical ways we can deal with the changes that the Industrial Revolution brought?

4. LESS TIME = LESS INFLUENCE. Error increases with distance. What do these principles mean to us as fathers? How about as husbands?

5. Ephesians 6:4 tells us to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord. What are the consequences of being a passive husband or father?

6. The qualifications for an elder in Titus deal with the way he leads his family, as well as the qualifications in 1 Timothy for elders and deacons, what is the significance in that? If someone does not lead his family well, can he truly lead the church well?

7. Biblical leadership looks a lot different than worldly leadership. What are some of those differences? (Luke 22:24-26; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate what kind of leadership you use in your home. Here are some prompts to help get the thoughts started: As you father, what example are you setting for your children to follow? Is it one that seeks to serve or to be served? Do you lead in a way that your family naturally follows or do you have to demand that they follow your lead? What does your family see you give your time to? What is your plan for leading each member of your family to a faith in Christ?

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Re-read the goals that Steve had for his sons on pages 44-45. Ask yourself the same question with regards to your family, “What do I specifically need to do to train them to become leaders of their families?” Come up with goals you have for your family to share with each other at the next meeting.

EVALUATION:

AFTER CONTINUING IN PRAYER FOR YOUR FAMILY FOR THE PAST WEEK TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON THE GOALS YOU HAVE DEVELOPED FOR YOUR FAMILY. WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS BELOW.

NOW TAKE SOME TIME TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR FAMILY THE GOALS YOU HAVE FOR THEM. PRAY TOGETHER OVER THESE GOALS AS A FAMILY. PUT YOUR GOALS UP IN A VISIBLE PLACE SO THAT THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN SEE WHAT YOU ARE LEADING THEM TOWARDS.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 3:

REAL MEN DON'T

READ: CHAPTER 3 - REAL MEN DON'T

SCRIPTURE:

“Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Real men don't commit adultery.”

“An affair is an escape from reality, or a search for meaning outside the marriage.”

“[Adultery] is leaving behind your responsibilities...Real men don't have affairs because they are responsible. Real men keep their commitments. Even when their personal needs are not being met the way that they would hope. Even when they are disappointed in their wives for some reason. And that is precisely the time when we need to be on our guard more than ever.”

“It is what we do in these easy situations that will either make or break you. If you don't make the right choices here, within a matter of weeks or even days you are going to get emotionally hooked.”

“Whether you mean to or not, you will begin to compare her with your wife, and your wife is going to lose. Why will your wife lose? Because if there are needs in your life that your wife is not currently meeting, and this woman has a great deal of respect and interest in you, your wife can't help but come in second.”

“The attraction is simply this: You are tired of fighting the battle at home, and with this new companion there is no battle.”

“We are in the greatest danger of all when we think we are safe. When a guy begins to think that this could never happen to him, then he needs to think again.”

“The lure of adultery is that another woman will truly meet your needs. The lie of adultery is that no other woman on the face of the earth, no matter how alluring, interesting, or beautiful, has the capacity to fully meet the needs of another human being. That’s why adultery is the ultimate hoax. It promises what it cannot deliver.”

“Real men protect themselves against adultery. Real men think about the consequences of such an act. As they do, they ponder the facts, not the fantasies. They consider the long-range implications of having a fling. They count the cost.”

“Forgiveness is available to all. But forgiveness does not automatically restore the privilege of leadership. Let me offer a critical principle: ***In the New Testament, forgiveness is free, but leadership is earned.*** It is earned by the power of a man’s life. Sin although forgiven, always sets off practical consequences. A mature, spiritual leader who sins and repents is forgiven, but he is not exempt from the series of aftershocks that will come his way from his disobedience.”

“The offices of husband and father are also character professions.”

“Righteousness must not only be found in our pulpits, but in our homes. The home is the church in miniature, and every Christian father has been appointed pastor of his own home. Christian men, whether they are leading in the church or in their home, must seek after righteousness.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you agree that an affair is an escape from reality? If so, how?
2. Explain how an affair starts and develops. Then discuss how the process can be interrupted during the various stages of its development.
3. Do you agree with the assessment that the lie of adultery is that it promises what it cannot deliver? Why or why not?
4. What specific steps or safeguards do we have in place to protecting our marriages and our families from the lure of adultery?
5. “[Leadership] is earned by the power of a man’s life.” How does this statement fit with the leadership that we are exhibiting?

6. How should a sin problem be handled in dealing with a man's leadership? What requirements should be met before a man can be restored to leadership?

7. Recognizing that we are not going to be perfect, that we will sin, how do we live in a way that allows us to maintain our character and leadership in our homes?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate how you are protecting your marriage and your family from the lure of adultery. Ideas to consider: Do I feel like this won't happen to me? Do I have safeguards in place as habits to help protect my marriage and my family? Have I been unfair to my wife by expecting her to meet needs of mine that I haven't voiced to her? Am I striving to live with as much integrity at home as I want people in public to believe I have?

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Make some time to sit down with your wife. Talk about the needs that you both have, where you both are at in meeting those needs, and how those needs can best be met by each other.

EVALUATION:

AFTER CONTINUING IN PRAYER FOR YOUR MARRIAGE FOR THE PAST WEEK TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON THE HUSBAND/ WIFE RELATIONSHIP IN YOUR HOME. WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS BELOW.

NOW MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR WIFE TO TALK WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF MARRIAGE AND WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE IT WORK. PRAY TOGETHER OVER YOUR MARRIAGE AND THE FUTURE MARRIAGES OF YOUR CHILDREN.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 4:

ONE-WOMAN KIND OF MAN

READ: CHAPTER 4 - ONE WOMAN KIND OF MAN

SCRIPTURE:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.” (Matthew 5:27-30)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Commitment is saying that no matter what comes in the future, you’re going to stick it out. Commitment means that you have obligated yourself to follow through on your word. A commitment is your personal guarantee that you will do what you promised.”

“In marriage, as well as the Christian life, it’s not how you start that counts, it’s how you finish.”

“I want you to note that phrase, ‘the husband of one wife.’ That phrase could be literally translated, ‘a one-woman kind of man.’ That is really the sense of the statement. One of the primary qualifications for a leader in the church is that he must be a one-woman kind of man.”

“But having eyes only for your wife doesn’t mean that a guy doesn’t see or notice other women. That’s impossible. And yet, because of our commitment to be a one-woman kind of man with our eyes, we don’t look at other women in a way that would diminish our commitment to our wife. A one-woman man has purposefully cultivated a special kind of blindness.”

“I learned that I must anticipate and determine how I will act before I ever get into a tempting situation.”

“Temptation rarely comes in working hours. It is in their leisure time that men are made or marred.”

“There are times in the Christian life when extreme action is not only appropriate, but necessary.”

“The major battlefield in spiritual warfare is the mind...The mind is where the enemy seeks to control us. If he can influence our minds, he can influence our behavior.”

“Temptation itself is not sin, but a call to battle.”

“A man who wants to be committed to his wife in his thought life.... Such a man protects himself from thinking or fantasizing about other women.”

“You have to get aggressive in your approach to temptation. Too many of us have lowered our standards and given ourselves unspoken permission to fail with sexual temptation.”

“Adultery does not begin with the sex organ, it begins with the mind.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Cortez burned his ships so his men couldn't retreat. How does our society view the permanence of marriage? How does God?
2. Job 31:1 talks about making a “covenant with our eyes.” In Matthew 5:28, Jesus says that looking at a woman lustfully is equivalent to adultery. Why does God place such a premium on men controlling their thought-lives? (Matthew 15:19-20)
3. Is it wrong to be tempted? When is the line crossed between temptation and sin?
4. How big a problem is pornography for Christian men? Is saving ourselves for our wives limited to just the physical act, or our thought-life as well?
5. Was David forgiven of his adulterous fling with Bathsheba? Did he continue to suffer consequences for it after he was forgiven?
6. What character differences are seen in the difference between, “husband of one wife” & “one woman kind of man”?
7. What are some practical ways that we can help each other in this area? How can we extend that to our families?
8. When do you struggle with your thoughts the most?
9. What should we teach our children about the limits of purity? Have we put our emphasis on the physical/ sexual acts or on everything that leads to those acts?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate how much you struggle with your thoughts. To get started with this strive to be conscious of the way that you speak to & about women who are not your wife, whether they are people you know, actresses in movies, or those seen on the internet. Then go over the five areas of commitment that he mentioned (eyes, mind, lips, hands, & feet) comparing them to how you spoke to and about other women to evaluate how you did. Write your thoughts below:

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Each person's struggles are different, so take some time to develop ways to deal with your struggles.

EVALUATION:

AFTER PRAYING ABOUT THE AREAS YOU NEED TO WORK ON SIT DOWN AND WRITE OUT SOME SPECIFIC WAYS YOU INTEND TO IMPROVE IN THE AREAS YOU ARE WEAK. WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS BELOW:

NOW MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND A TRUSTED BROTHER TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT YOUR STRUGGLES & YOUR PLANS. PRAY OVER EACH OTHER, THE STRUGGLES AND THE PLANS.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 5:

ANOREXIC MEN & THEIR BULIMIC COUSINS

READ: CHAPTER 5 - ANOREXIC MEN & THEIR BULIMIC COUSINS

SCRIPTURES:

“But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

“Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:14-15)

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” (James 1:22-25)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

*“Thousands of Christian men have spiritual anorexia, and that is why they are ineffective in leading their families. What is spiritual anorexia? *Spiritual anorexia is an aversion to reading the Scriptures.*”*

“I asked more than a thousand Christian men across the United States how often in an average week they interacted with the Lord through the Scriptures. Forty-five percent reported not time a week or less. The majority of these men are committed Christians and attend church more than once a week. They are not on the fringes of the church. Most would be considered pillars of their local congregation. Yet nearly half of them are spiritually anorexic.”

“A solid education of biblical truth is not optional for the family leader.”

“I cannot afford to be spiritually anorexic when I’ve been given the responsibility to lead my family.”

“Spiritually speaking, bulimia is the consistent reading or hearing of the Word without personal application... *Spiritual bulimia is an aversion to applying the Scripture to my life.*”

“[In] the Christian life the opposite of ignorance is not knowledge, but obedience. God does not want to take a new Christian and move him from ignorance to knowledge. He wants to move him from ignorance to knowledge *to obedience.*”

“Obedience means that I apply His Word to my life and circumstances. If I don't do that, then I am binging and purging.”

“The antidote for spiritual anorexia and bulimia is scriptural meditation. Meditation enables us to digest the truth of God's Word. A superficial, quick reading of Scripture doesn't cut it.”

“A man who wants to be spiritually mature must put his roots deep in the Word of God.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What's the difference between anorexia and bulimia? How do they each relate to our reading and application of the Word?
2. Is it possible to revere the Bible, but never read it? What are some ways that we tend to give it lip service, but don't put it into practice?
3. What's the point of Bible study? To have done it? To gain factual knowledge? To win debates?
4. What are some practical ways we can find daily time in the Word?
5. Do our wives and kids ever see us reading our Bibles? What kind of impact might seeing this have on them?
6. In what ways are you spiritually bulimic? How can a brother bring that to your attention in a way that will bring you closer to God?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

How much time do you spend in God's word in a week? Keep track of this next week. Record how much time you spend in reading the word and in meditation on the word. Write your findings below.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Now that you have seen how much time you actually spend in God's word, set the goal of how much time you want to spend with God each week and write it below. After your goal is set, prepare a plan to move you from where you are to where you want to be. Write your plan below:

EVALUATION:

IT IS TIME TO IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN. THE KEY IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL IS ACCOUNTABILITY, SO SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH A BROTHER AND HAVE HIM HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT DURING THIS NEXT WEEK.

NOW MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT YOUR HOW YOUR PLAN WENT. WHAT WAS RIGHT & EASY? WHAT WAS HARD? WHAT THINGS DID YOU FIND THAT KEPT GETTING IN THE WAY? PRAY OVER EACH OTHER'S OBSTACLES AND CONTINUE THE PLAN FOR ANOTHER WEEK.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 6:

AEROBIC KNEELING

READ: CHAPTER 6 - AEROBIC KNEELING

SCRIPTURE:

“Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.” (Romans 12:9-13)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Men who want to lead their families effectively must become spiritual self-starters.”

“How do you stay in shape spiritually? If you are going to run the race with endurance and train yourself in godliness, what kind of exercises do you do?...*Prayer is the exercise of the man who is a spiritual self-starter.*”

“Prayer and Scripture go together, and we are most effective when we have a good balance of the two. The man who studies the Bible without praying will develop a good mind with a cold heart. The man who prays with knowing Scripture will consistently pray outside the will of God, for that is where His will is revealed.”

“You do well to exercise your body, but the priority in your life should be spiritual exercise. Too many of us have these priorities reversed.”

“If we are going to be spiritual leaders for our wives and children, can we opt for anything less? We need to make time to soak ourselves in God’s Word; we need time to chew on what the Scripture is saying to us; we need to come before God and ask Him to give us the wisdom we need to be His men in this world.”

“I need time with the Lord to remind me that it’s not my private battle, it’s His.”

“If truth were known, we would find that many of go weeks without spending time in scriptural meditation and prayer. No wonder we feel defeated and overwhelmed! We have no spiritual energy or power. We have no spiritual endurance. That is why we so easily cave in to temptation. We have nothing to fight with.”

“Let’s be honest. If five minutes of jogging won’t bring about physical endurance, then why would five minutes of prayer and Bible reading provide spiritual endurance?”

“Everything that is important we plan. And that is precisely why most of us don’t pray. *We simply don’t plan to pray.* It’s not that we don’t want to or don’t intend to. It’s not an issue of desire. It’s an issue of planning. Because we haven’t planned to pray, somehow we never quite get around to it.”

“I know of nothing more effective for maintaining a pure heart and keeping one’s life balanced and on target than being a part of an accountability group.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What’s the purpose of our prayer life? To get things? For our friends and family to get well when they’re sick? Or is it to get to know the CEO of the universe? To know His heart and His will in our lives?
2. Who and what should we pray for? Should we maintain a prayer list and organize it like Steve Farrar suggests?
3. Have you ever tried planning a personal time of prayer? Did you keep it up? What does it take to be more diligent in our prayer life?
4. What are good topics for public prayer? Do our kids ever hear us praying for them? Do they hear us lifting up to God our desire for wisdom in a big decision, or our desire to reach a particular neighbor or co-worker with the message of Christ?
5. Why should we pray more specifically rather than generally?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

What does your prayer life look like? Keep track this next week. Keep track of the following: (1) How many times I prayed, (2) Who I prayed for, (3) What I prayed about, & (4) How long I spent in prayer. Write your results below:

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Now that you have seen a visual representation of your prayer life, are you satisfied or is there room for some improvement(s)? Pick one (or two) areas to start working on and write them below. After you set your goal(s), prepare a plan to move you from where you are to where you want to be. Write your plan below:

EVALUATION:

NOW IT IS TIME TO IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN. THE KEY IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL IS ACCOUNTABILITY, SO SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH A BROTHER AND HAVE HIM HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT DURING THIS NEXT WEEK.

NOW MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT YOUR HOW YOUR PLAN WENT. WERE YOU ABLE TO STICK WITH YOUR PLAN? WHAT WAS HARD ABOUT IT? ARE YOU GROWING IN YOUR ABILITY TO RELAX AND TO FOCUS IN PRAYER OR IS YOUR MIND ALWAYS DARTING TO AND FRO? DO YOU FIND JOY IN PRAYER OR IS IT USUALLY MORE OF A DUTY? PRAY OVER EACH OTHER'S OBSTACLES AND CONTINUE THE PLAN FOR ANOTHER WEEK.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 7:

HUSBAND & WIFE TEAMWORK IN THE MARRIAGE COCKPIT

READ: CHAPTER 7 - HUSBAND & WIFE TEAMWORK IN THE MARRIAGE COCKPIT

SCRIPTURE:

“Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” (1 Peter 3:7)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“How tragic that family 747s crash every day simply because husbands and wives have never understood how they are to operate and function as a team.”

“Did you catch that first sentence and the emphasis upon the quality of the the husband’s leadership? It all goes back to trust. Trust is what motivates people to follow our leadership, whether at work or home. And trust must be earned, gentlemen.”

“Scripture indicates that God holds the man responsible for decisions made in the family.”

“But how does a win measure the sacrificial love of her husband? For some reason, wives have the uncanny ability to measure our sacrificial love with the accuracy of a yardstick. They can recognize it from miles away. They intuitively know there is a direct correlation between service and sacrifice. And it usually come out in the little things that spring from a right attitude.”

The word understanding carries with it the idea of insight and tactfulness. No one enjoys being misunderstood. It’s one of the truly miserable experiences in life. The woman who has a husband who knows when to put his arms around her and simply hold her close will inevitably feel understood. Sometimes that’s the most insightful and tactful thing we can do.”

“The word translated ‘honor’ carries with it the idea of value. A mature man provides the kind of leadership to his wife that lets her know how valuable she is to him...You may deeply appreciate your wife in you heart, but when was the last time you verbally expressed your appreciation to her? Perhaps you don’t remember, but I would be willing to bet that *she* does. It’s easy to forget the importance of verbal praise in the routine of day-today living.”

“Accountability is a willingness to explain your actions. Mutual accountability simply means that husband and wife are to be accountable to one another. You explain your actions to her and she explains hers to you.”

“We need to get one thing straight. Submission is not just an issue for wives... [S]ubmission is a responsibility that applies to every one of us. Submission is inescapable and universal. Everyone submits... We are all under authority.”

“Let me be clear. Mutual submission does not mean that the husband and wife take turns being the head of the home. That is the man’s permanent assignment. It does mean that the husband demonstrates and models the concept of submission in his own life when the situation calls for such a response... It means, gentlemen, that you take the lead in your submission to Christ to such an extent that you become a model for your wife. A man’s willingness to serve his wife and meet her needs will provide an environment and a stimulus for her to respond in submission to his leadership.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In light of 1 Peter 2 & 3 about submission, what do you think of Steve Farrar's football analogy? Is the Montana-Rice Principle scriptural?
2. What does submission mean? What does it NOT mean? What does headship mean? What does it NOT mean?
3. What's the difference between authoritarianism and sacrificial leadership? How does our choice of styles affect our wives and kids?
4. What role does communication play in effective leadership of the home? What role does communication play in an authoritarian relationship? What are ways to get better at communicating with our wives?
5. What role does trust play in effective leadership? What happens when our wives don't trust our leadership? How can we earn the trust of our family?
6. Do you feel that your wife struggles with submission? In what ways? Is this reflective of the leadership you provide for your family?
7. Are your children allowed to discuss your decisions with you? Can we do this and still be the one in authority? How is this done in your home?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate the concepts of this chapter: What does your relationship with your wife look like? Are you two a team? Does she feel that her input is valued in decision making? What type of parenting do you lean toward? Does your family see you modeling submission to Christ in a way that leads them to submit to you?

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Now that you have spent some time doing a self-evaluation, sit down with your wife and discuss how she feels about being able to approach you when you need to make decisions. Then take some time to sit down with your children and discuss how they feel about being able to approach you regarding the decisions you make. Together, as a family, develop a plan where your family can approach you about decisions concerning them you have made or are in the process of making, without you feeling like they are rejecting your authority and which also allows them to feel that they are being heard. Remember a VITAL part of them being heard is the possibility that their input will influence the decision making process. Write your plan below:

EVALUATION:

NOW IT IS TIME TO IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN. THE KEY IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL IS MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY, SO TAKE YOUR PLAN AND PUT IT UP WHERE THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN SEE IT. IN THE NEXT DECISION MAKING PROCESS, MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW THAT PLAN. IF YOU DON'T, ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 8:

THE BIRTH OF A TANGENT

READ: CHAPTER 8 - THE BIRTH OF A TANGENT

SCRIPTURES:

“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of the warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.” (Psalm 127:3-5)

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:30-34)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Christian homes are the salt of the earth. But if we stop producing salt, what will happen to our influence?”

“Perhaps more than ever before, the desperate need of our culture demands godly homes which produce godly children. God will protect and care for your children. Ultimately, they belong to Him anyway. We should not let the erosion of our culture prevent us from having children and trusting God to use them to make a difference. Go ahead and have kids and give your concerns to the Lord.”

“If you stop and think about it, financial security is a figment of the American mind. It could all be gone tomorrow. The only security in the entire world is found in Jesus Christ. Every other kind of security is an illusion.”

“God begins to take away our selfishness by giving us children for whom we would do things we would never do for anyone else.”

“Those afflicted with great selfishness, like myself, will find that as the years go by, God will use your children to chip away at the selfishness clogging your life. Before long, you'll find yourself doing things for other people you never thought possible. That's what the Bible refers to as spiritual growth.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Having children is certainly not a Biblical requirement of Christians. While it's definitely looked favorably upon in the Word, our culture doesn't emphasize the benefits of having children. What are some of the benefits?
2. What do you think are the reasons our society has grown accustomed to the idea that having two incomes, 1.75 kids, and a Hummer in the garage is "normal?"
3. One of the principle motivations for many couples who decide not to have kids (or to have very few of them) is acknowledged to be selfishness. Child-rearing takes time, money, and commitment. How would we explain the benefits of having and raising children to someone who is struggling with this selfishness?
4. Can Christians be advocates of larger families without being judgmental of those with smaller ones?
5. If your family is small or large, what are some ways that you have felt judged because of that? How can we as a church family do a better job of being accepting of the different nuclear family structures in our congregation?
6. In light of James 1:27, when is adoption worth considering? Should it always be a last resort? How can we as a church help families who want to pursue adoption?
7. While having children is not a Biblical requirement of Christians, it is a requirement for those who want to lead God's church (1 Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6). Why do you think this is? What are the skills you should develop as a parent that you need in church leadership?
8. Are there circumstances where you would NOT recommend that a couple bring children into the relationship? If so, what are they?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate the concepts of this chapter: Look into the birth rate among Christian homes in comparison to the birth rate among homes of other belief systems, such as: agnosticism, atheism, Hindu, Jewish, Mormon, and Muslim. Record your findings below:

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Now that you have spent some time doing some research, how does that affect your thoughts on this topic? Discuss this topic with your family. Spend some time addressing any concerns your children might have about the idea of having and raising children in today's culture. Be sure to take their concerns seriously and address them as accurately as you can without conveying the idea that their concerns are wrong. Be sure to record their questions and concerns below:

EVALUATION:

GIVE YOUR FAMILY 3-4 WEEKS TO THINK ABOUT THIS TOPIC. BE SURE TO BRING THIS TOPIC BACK UP AND ADDRESS ANY OTHER CONCERNS THAT THEY HAVE THOUGHT OF. HOW DID THE SECOND CONVERSATION GO? WERE THERE ANY CONCERNS THAT WERE THE SAME AS FROM THE FIRST TIME? WERE THERE ANY NEW QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS? HOW DO YOUR CHILDREN FEEL ABOUT THE IDEA OF HAVING AND RAISING A CHRISTIAN FAMILY?

TAKE SOME TIME TO TALK WITH YOUR WIFE ABOUT HOW TO ADDRESS THEIR FEELINGS AS A PARENTING TEAM.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 9:

HOW TO RAISE MASCULINE SONS & FEMININE DAUGHTERS

READ: CHAPTER 9 - HOW TO RAISE MASCULINE SONS & FEMININE DAUGHTERS

SCRIPTURES:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

“Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:9-11)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Ephesians 6:4 is a compass that enable a father to give his children correct guidance toward finding their sexual identities... We live in a world of confusing and wrong sexual information. An Ephesians 6:4 father is the compass that boys read to find the correct path to masculinity and girls read to find the right road to femininity.”

“Let me shoot straight with you. If we will function as the loving heads of our homes, respect and love our wives, and follow the guidelines of Ephesians 6:4, our children will not grow up to be homosexuals.”

“In every case I have seen they were so raised [involving homosexuals who were raised in evangelical Christian homes], their fathers were either spiritually anorexic or bulimic. These children may have had the Scripture drilled into them at home and church, but somewhere along the line, their fathers did not give them the accurate bearings they so desperately needed.”

“The idea behind the word exasperate is ‘do not embitter’... This kind of anger in children springs from continual and habitual unfair treatment... Habitual unfairness over the years results in an accumulation of anger that eventually emitters children toward their father.”

“We can damage our young boys by overprotecting them and by creating fear that they may get hurt. Little boys who are constantly overprotected are in jeopardy of having their masculinity warped. Obviously, we are to teach them to use good judgement. But we are not to squelch their aggressiveness. They will survive the scars and broken bones of boyhood. But they cannot survive being feminized through the perpetual fear of getting hurt. God made boys to be aggressive. We are to accept it and channel it.”

“[Discouragement] is one of the easiest ways to embitter a child without realizing what you’re doing. It can easily become a habit we are unaware of...a deadly habit.”

“By forgetting that the child is growing up, has a right to have ideas of his own, and need not be an exact copy of his father.”

“Parents work very hard these days; and they’re acquiring things that they feel are important for their children. And yet vastly more important things are happening. *They’re not spending time with their children, at least not very much.*”

“The word translated in Ephesians 6:4 as ‘bring them up’ means ‘to nourish, to provide for with tender care.’ Masculine men are tender men. As we will see in a minute, this does not mean that they cease being strong with their children. It just means that they have a balance.”

“Children can quickly become embittered toward father when tenderness is missing. Just exactly what is tenderness? It’s a sensitivity toward others...Tenderness has different facets like a carefully cut diamond. If you look at tenderness from one angle, you’ll see sympathy. If you look from another, you’ll notice compassion. Tenderness also carries the ideas of responsiveness, warmth, and kindness.”

“They need dads who are interested in the stuff of their lives. *They need dad who will listen before they spank.* They need dads who will give them plenty of hugs and kisses...Children need dads who are kind.”

“It is especially important that fathers be tender toward their daughters. A man who does not convey acceptance, warmth, tenderness, and compassion can easily embitter his daughter deeply.”

“Boys must be raised in the same way. They must experience that same warmth, tenderness, and affection. When a boy is embittered by a father without a gentle and understanding side, the effects can be devastating. When a boy has a father who has modeled tenderness, it will be much easier for that boy to give the same tenderness and understanding to his children when he becomes a father.”

“Ephesians 6:4 says children are to be raised in the discipline and admonition of the Lord... [Discipline refers primarily to *what is done to the child*... [Admonition] refers primarily to *what is said to the child*. The purpose of this discipline and admonition is to build the child. Children need to know what the limitations are. They need fathers who love them enough to set boundaries and keep them.”

“Do you take the lead in matters of discipline in the home, or do you leave it to your wife? According to Ephesians 6:4, it is clearly your responsibility. That doesn’t mean, of course, that your wife doesn’t discipline the children. But it does mean you are the one that sets the standards, enforces the standards, models the standards, and appropriately disciplines when the standards are violated.”

“There is a balance between firmness and tenderness that good fathers constantly try to achieve. Most of us tend to err on one side or the other. But we must drive to maintain that balance for the sake of our children.”

“The phrase ‘...of the Lord’ refers to the quality of training in the home. This is what ensures quality control... His [the father’s] primary purpose is to train the child, not abuse the child. The fact that he is under the influence of this quality control - rather than out of control - is in and of itself an example to his children of the way they are to handle their children when they become parents.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What is your reaction to the writer’s thoughts on how we raise our children affecting their sexuality?
2. Which of the six ways that a father can embitter his children do you struggle the most? (1) Overprotection; (2) Favoritism; (3) Discouragement; (4) Expecting them to be a copy of us; (5) Neglect; (6) Bitter words & physical cruelty.
3. The scriptures teach fathers to be firm, and to discipline and "chasten" their sons. What kind of damage do we do to kids when we are overprotective and coddling of them? What are the consequences of the other extreme, being too firm?
4. What are some practical safeguards we can put in place to help us as fathers to avoid these pitfalls?
5. We tend to think only of the short term consequences of our actions. What are the longer term consequences to our sons and daughters if we don't model a godly, compassionate, but masculine identity to them?

6. Which of the four recommendations given to help us develop tenderness in our relationships with our children do you struggle with the most? (1) Listen to them & respect their feelings; (2) If you have been wrong or too harsh, clearly confess your wrong, & ask for their forgiveness; (3) Listen to the input your wife gives you about each child; (4) Be “high touch” and dispense liberal doses of encouragement to both sons & daughters.

7. Do you and your wife function as a team when it comes to discipline in the home? If not, what kinds of changes do you feel need to be made?

8. Is it fair of us to expect submission from our families? How does your family see you modeling submission?

9. Unless a conscious effort is made, parenting is passed down from generation to generation. What are some of the positives that you have received from your father that you intend to pass on? What are some of the negatives that you received from your father that you intend to change?

10. What forms the basis of the rules used in your parenting? How often do you discuss this with your children? Is it only in times of punishment or is it also during times of teaching when they are not in trouble?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Take some time to evaluate how the concepts of this chapter apply to the way you are leading in your home. Write your thoughts below:

Now it is time to talk to your wife about the way she feels you are leading in your home. Write her thoughts below:

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Spend some time prayer over the thoughts that both of you & your wife have shared, especially focusing in on the areas of difference. Ask God to give you wisdom in how to grow in your leadership.

EVALUATION:

MAKE A PLAN TO IMPLEMENT 1-3 CHANGES THAT WILL MOVE YOU CLOSER TO BEING THE LEADER THAT YOUR FAMILY NEEDS YOU TO BE. WRITE THOSE CHANGES BELOW:

NOW MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND A TRUSTED BROTHER TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT YOUR STRUGGLES & YOUR PLANS. PRAY OVER EACH OTHER, THE STRUGGLES AND THE PLANS.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 10:

TELLING YOUR KIDS WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL THEM

READ: CHAPTER 10 - TELLING YOUR KIDS WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL THEM

SCRIPTURES:

“The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, to understand words of insight, to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness, justice, and equity; to give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth— Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance, to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their griddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching” (Proverbs 1:1-8)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“It's your responsibility to teach them the fundamentals of sexuality and how everything “works.” It is essential, especially in our culture, that children get their information about sex from their parents. The reason it is so essential is that there are quite a few others who want the job.”

“Maybe the thought of talking to your son about sex embarrasses you. Allow me to suggest that although you may feel some embarrassment, there is nothing to be embarrassed about. As Dr. Howard Hendricks expresses it: ‘We should not be ashamed to discuss that which God was not ashamed to create.’”

“I'm convinced that the reason most people don't educate their children about sex is that their parents did not educate them. As a result, sexual ignorance is passed from generation to generation. It's time to put a new link in the generational chain. If you teach your kids about sex, they will teach their kids, and their kids will teach theirs, and so on down the line.”

“A man is responsible to teach his children about sex. As a rule of thumb, fathers should teach their sons and mothers should teach their daughters. But the father, as head of the family, has a responsibility to make sure that each child is given the proper and correct instruction by the appropriate parent at the right time.”

“As you read sections in Proverbs about sex, notice that the father is clear, direct, and takes the initiative. He describes sexual situations that probably will come up in his son's life, then offers the wisdom needed to handle the situation correctly. Solomon practiced preventative medicine. He wanted his son to know what steps to take in the event a tempting circumstance arose.”

“Proverbs 5 shows us that a father is to talk straight with his son about the boundaries God has put around the gift of sex. Notice that the father doesn’t mince any words. He attempts to prepare his son for what might occur long before it happens. This is precisely what we are to do as leaders of our home.”

“If you are a one-woman kind of man, you should be equipping your sons to enter the marriage covenant with sexual purity and truly be one-woman kind of men from the first day they are married.”

“The policy is easy to remember: *Get to your kids before their peers do!*”

“Whatever you do, create an atmosphere where they feel comfortable in coming to you. If you don’t, they will go to someone else.”

“You never know when a teachable moment is going to show up. When one does, make sure you teach... Take full advantage of these times. They are gifts from God.”

“Let them know that they can ask you anything and get a straight answer. This is the cardinal doctrine of parental sex education. If you establish this, it doesn’t matter what they hear somewhere else, for they will come to you for clarification. At certain points you may have to swallow hard before you answer, but whatever you do, don’t skirt the issue. Deal with it head on. This kind of honest dialogue will be the greatest investment you will ever make. It will pay dividends in your relationship for the rest of your life.”

“The key word in all of this discussion about sex is not rules, it is relationship. Our children should know that there are rules, but they should learn about them only from the context of a relationship that is open, warm, and loving... ‘Rules without relationship equal rebellion - either active resistance or passive indifference.’”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What was Solomon's purpose in writing the book of Proverbs? Are we taking seriously enough our role of imparting wisdom to our sons and daughters?
2. Is it really that important that parents be the instructors for their kids' sex education? Does the Bible really teach dads to be in charge of that? Who else wants the job?
3. Why is the world's focus purely on health and biology in sex education so damaging to our kids future happiness as adults? What's lacking in the world's approach?
4. At what age do you think sex education is important to start imparting to our kids? What do you think of the author's age guideline of starting around seven?
5. How do you know what content to include in "The Talk?" Should it be scripted? What are some high points that we should consider including?

6. What role do you think that the father should have in the sexual education of his daughters? What role do you think the mother should have in the sexual education of her sons?

7. How do you think we are doing as God's people in passing down accurate information to our children regarding God's gift of sex? What can we do to improve?

8. The author gave eight suggestions to serve as guidelines to help us prepare for a discussion on sex with our children [(1) Small questions deserve small answers; (2) Big questions deserve big answers; (3) Frank questions deserve frank answers; (4) Be casual and natural; (5) Look for teachable moments; (6) Use the right terms without embarrassment; (7) Consider the age of the child; (8) Let them know that they can ask you anything and get a straight answer.] What were your thoughts on these? Would you want to add anything to this list?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

Re-read Proverbs 5 and the section of this chapter that deals with this passage. After reading again answer the following questions: Have you had "the talk" with your children? If not, why not? Are you following in the footsteps of how your parents dealt with sex with you? What do you wish they had done differently? What do you feel needs to be included in "the talk"? What age is best to have "the talk"?

After you have done this, spend some time talking about these questions and your answers with your wife.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Spend some time prayer over the thoughts that both of you & your wife have shared. Ask God to give you wisdom in developing a plan for your family about how to best approach this issue with your children and how to make sure they know that they can come to you as their parents.

EVALUATION:

SIT DOWN WITH YOUR WIFE AND HAVE "THE TALK" WITH YOUR CHILDREN ACCORDING TO THE PLAN THAT YOU WORKED OUT WITH YOUR WIFE. NOTE HOW YOUR CHILDREN REACT DURING THIS CONVERSATION. IF IT APPEARS THAT THEY WOULD BE UNCOMFORTABLE COMING TO YOU WITH QUESTIONS RE-EVALUATE HOW YOU APPROACH THIS SUBJECT IN YOUR FAMILY. WITH YOUR WIFE COME UP WITH A NEW PLAN TO ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILDREN FEEL COMFORTABLE COMING TO YOU.



DISCUSSION GUIDE – WEEK 11:

ROCK & ROLE MODEL

READ: CHAPTER 11 - ROCK & ROLE MODEL

SCRIPTURES:

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:24-26)

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1)

“And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:15)

CHALLENGING QUOTES:

“Gentlemen, if you are going to win the war for your family, you must do two things: (1) You must be a rock. (2) You must be a role model.”

“The point is this. An invisible chain links the generations. It is a rule of life that boys grow up to be like their fathers. And that can either be positive or negative.”

“It’s a Herculean task to lead a family, but with the power of God supporting you, it’s a tremendous privilege. If we are willing to become the point man in our families, we can count on God’s support and power. He’s looking for men who will follow Jesus Christ and burn their ships behind them. When He finds those men, He will take extraordinary measures to buttress, bolster, and carry them along in His limitless strength.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In Joshua 24:15, Joshua stands before Israel and confidently says "as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." Can our families count on us being on God's side of every situation, or do we find ourselves being a little lukewarm about our faith sometimes?
2. How would our wives describe our walk with God? How about our kids? Would they use the words "rock," "steadfast," and "firm," or maybe "hit and miss?"
3. As fathers, we're to model Christianity for our kids like Paul did for his students. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, he says, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." Are we modeling Christianity well enough that we can say to our wives and kids, "Follow me as I follow Christ?"
4. How are we affecting our children's adult lives if our example is not one of rock solid faith, but instead is one of passive, lukewarm Christianity?
5. Who are those that you would describe as your "rock" or who was your role-model in the faith? What did they do that made a difference in your life?
6. How can we come along side those who did have a role-model to help them lead their families the way God would want?

ASSIGNMENTS:

ASSESS THE SITUATION.

It is time to do some self evaluation: What changes have you made through this process? How do you feel about the way you have been leading your family? What areas have you found that you need to work on? Who have you picked out to help you on your journey? Write your thoughts below:

Now take some time and sit down with your wife and get her feedback on the changes that you have made and what areas need the primary focus.

Finally, take some time and sit down with your children and get her feedback on the changes that you have made and what areas need the primary focus.

DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY.

Spend some time prayer over the thoughts that you, your wife, & your children have shared. Ask God to give you wisdom in developing a plan for your family about how to best lead them. After spending a few days praying over this, pick 3 areas to begin working on. Develop a plan to begin making your changes & write it below:

EVALUATION:

NOW IT IS TIME TO IMPLEMENT YOUR PLAN. THE KEY IN ACHIEVING THIS GOAL IS ACCOUNTABILITY, SO SHARE YOUR PLAN WITH A BROTHER AND HAVE HIM HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT. BE SURE TO MAKE SOME TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER TO SIT DOWN AND TALK ABOUT YOUR HOW YOUR PLAN WENT. WERE YOU ABLE TO STICK WITH YOUR PLAN? WHAT WAS HARD ABOUT IT?