

# What Wives Wish Husbands Knew

## Session 1—Understanding The Objective

### “I Wish You Knew How To Be a Leader”

What word/concept comes to mind when the subject of leadership comes up? Responsibility? Privilege? Boss? Power?

It's unarguable from a biblical vantage point that men are the appointed leaders of their families (Ephesians 5:23), and the word that comes to mind that reflects the biblical concept of leadership is *servant*. That theme will be repeated weekly, not weakly, throughout these ten weeks—that we are servant-leaders in our homes, and are therefore, responsible to perform the tasks assigned to us by our Creator.

So, leader, what is your leadership objective as the chief servant to your wife and children? I think it's the first thing anyone has to know as an effective leader...

#### I. Your First Responsibility is To Understand Your Wife

##### 1 Peter 3:7a

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives *in an understanding way*... (Italics added)

- “In an understanding way” means...**according to knowledge**.
- Options...
  1. Locker-room bravado
    - “...I told her when we got married all she had to do to piss me off was start asking me a bunch of questions about where I've been or why I'm late...if I thought it was any of her business I woulda told her to begin with...” (BS, 3<sup>rd</sup> marriage...)
    - “I got married the first time for love, the second time for sex, the third time for money, and the fourth time out of habit...” (JB, 4<sup>th</sup> marriage)
  2. Feelings that are *man-based*
    - She doesn't think like you do.
    - Her sense of humor doesn't always take the same line as yours...  
**QUOTE**  
“Rude and crude ‘guy’ behavior is not a part of the image of God.” (RVC)
    - Her feelings about life, work, family, security, & etc. are not the same as your feelings.
    - Her entire being is different from yours...therefore...
  3. God-centered knowledge, biblically correct knowledge, spiritually insightful knowledge, life-giving knowledge.

## II. Your Second Responsibility is To Respect Her

### 1 Peter 3:7b

...and treat them with *respect*... (italics added)

#### **QUOTE**

- Her insights into relationships are deeper than a PhD's.
- Women are from earth and so are men, so get over it.
- Asking her opinion really does matter.
- The small things are large to her.
- Speaking her language is the only one she knows well.
- God is not on my side just because I studied Greek and Hebrew.
- My wife and kids are more than ministry.
- I am my mother, so you better stay close to God. (JC)

## III. Your Third Responsibility is To Honor Her & Her Position

### 1 Peter 3:7c

“...*granting them with honor* as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (italics added)

What is it that God expects of servant-leaders when he tells us that we are to *grant honor to our wives*? He expects us to behave toward them honorably—see a knight bowing to his queen—first as a woman, second as the weaker, but equal, partner, third, as a wife.

- Recognizing that she is different from you is honoring to her.

#### **QUOTE**

“Men prefer a relationship with our wives that is purely male oriented. We want to love them the way we want to be loved rather than the way they want to be loved. It never works...especially for the woman.” (EAS)

- Responding to her being different from you through earnest efforts to understand her and appreciate her is honoring to her.
- Placing value on her way of thinking and feeling is honoring to her.
- Refusing to be chauvinistic regarding womanhood is honoring to her.

#### **QUOTE**

“When with and around people ALWAYS treat her considerately, always be nice to me and always speak kindly to me and of me. Treat me like your queen no matter where we are or who we are with. Treat me as I am the most important thing in your life...because I want to be more than you'll ever know.” (RC)

- This is so much better than the “humorous” put-downs that we’ve all heard a thousand times.

- I know they're mostly just fun and a lot of it's okay.
- But if you want to bless your wife, try singing her praise in public.

### **ILLUSTRATION**

A while back several men, some I knew, some I didn't, were sitting around talking after a round of golf, and we got into one of these discussions that men have when we talk about our wives. A couple of days later one of the men felt it was necessary to call my wife... "You don't know me, but I want you to know what your husband said about you..." And he told her what I'd said about my marriage, and of my words of praise about her, every word true and understated if the truth were known... When she told me about that call, and repeated what I'd said about her to all these guys, it was as though new life was being poured into her soul.

#### FIRST DISCUSSION:

- Do these three responsibilities make sense to you as a servant-leader?
- Where, or from whom, did you learn how to relate to a woman?
- What grade would you give yourself as a servant-leader?
- What grade would your wife give you?
- What grade would your children give you?

#### IV. What's Holding Us Back?

##### A. We lack the necessary **Skills**.

- Most of us haven't been afforded, either through role models or mentors, the opportunity to learn how to be servant-leaders...
- You cannot do well or appropriately what you aren't prepared to do.

#### **FOUR STAGES OF LEARNING SKILLS**

1. **Unconscious Incompetence**—we don't know that we don't know.
2. **Conscious Incompetence**—awareness & acceptance that we don't know.
3. **Conscious Competence**—disciplined application of acquired skills.
4. **Unconscious Competence**—natural application of acquired skills of authentic manhood.

##### B. Inaccurate **Input**.

- It is very often the case that our thoughts about manhood and therefore our behavior as men are inaccurate, unmanly and not biblical.
- Bad intelligence will always make our mission impossible.
- Archie Bunker, controlling, stifling, rude, crude and obnoxious no doubt thought he was a good leader—but no one else thought so.
- Donald Trump would probably be of the opinion that he could write a book about effective leadership—I would disagree.
- There is a huge difference between *leading* as a *servant* and *driving* as a tyrant.

C. Our satisfaction with what's **good** and our willingness to do without what's **best**.

**BEWARE OF THE POWER OF STRANGE ATTRACTION, BECAUSE IT WILL DESTROY YOUR HOME.**

1. **Hobbies**
2. **Work**
3. **Internet**

D. We typically dislike being **vulnerable**.

- Being an authentic man requires us to be vulnerable to our mate, and that guarantees that we'll get hurt.
- We don't like pain.
- We don't like dealing with emotional issues.
- Therefore, we often retreat into **Man-Land**, passivity.

E. The **Peter Pan** Syndrome.<sup>1</sup>

- Peter Pan was the man that never grew up—I know some guys like that—don't you?
- They make horrible husbands and irresponsible fathers...
- Think through the following process that describes the stages that can, and should represent a man's life:
  - **Boyhood**—a time of innocence and fun with little responsibility.
  - **Adolescence**—a time of extreme self-centeredness, irresponsibility and rebellion.
  - **Manhood**—a time for assuming the responsibility of becoming and authentic representation of Jesus Christ, especially at home.
  - **Mentorship**—a time for passing along to others who know less than we know the wisdom and skills we were given by those who knew more than we did.
  - **Patriarch**—The man that boys, adolescents and men look up to and the kind of man that mentors use as examples as they teach.
- What does it mean when a man is more concerned with having fun than he is with providing authentic stewardship over the genuine needs of his family?
  - It means that, regardless of his age, he's still living in the boyhood stage—he's like Peter Pan.
  - He doesn't want to grow up.

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<sup>1</sup> I first heard this concept introduced in a lecture by Dr. Warren McWilliams, Professor of Theology & Pastoral Ministry at Oklahoma Baptist University, in 1977; these are not direct quotes, but my recollection of the substance of his lecture.

- What about the guy whose job takes him on the road and in the privacy of his motel room he tunes in the Playboy channel?
  - It means that, although you may have children or grandchildren of your own, that you are stuck in adolescence regarding your manhood.
  - You're going to do things you know you shouldn't do just because you think you can do it without getting caught.
  - Of course you don't need to go out of town anymore...if you're hooked up online, you're just a click away.
  - Peter Pan's okay for a kid's movie but he's not much of a man.

#### SECOND DISCUSSION:

- What "skill-level" described you when you were first married?
- What "skill-level" describes you today?
- What caused the change, if there has been a change?
- Which level of the Peter Pan Syndrome has been most challenging to leave?

#### IV. Conclusion

- For some of us there are things our wives really wished we knew because we've never developed the *skills* to be servant-leaders, and we may not even be aware of it.
- Maybe it's *bad intel* we got from friends or family members.
- Some of us have decided to *settle* instead of going for broke.
- Most of us dislike being *vulnerable*.
- Maybe we're stuck somewhere in *adolescence*...and have never really grown up, and that's why we struggle with the notion of being a servant-leader...

Regardless, it is our obligation, our duty, our orders...to figure out what it means to be a servant leader, and then become one to the very best of our ability.