

# 'Living Life Together'

## Planned Parenthood



Pastor Dave Spate

June 19, 2011

Video Memories of Dad: That brought back a lot of memories... isn't it amazing how words can put you on edge or care for your soul. Father's Day is one of those strange days in which a congregation like ours' will have many mixed emotions. For some of us have or had an amazing dad who made profound, caring, and eternity changing differences in our lives. While, others have memories of dad's, who because of things in their lives have had trouble delivering the care we needed from them. What makes it even more complicated is the fact that 2 kids in the same home can have different memories about the same dad on Father's Day. And then for others, who are from single parent homes, one of your parents played the role as your dad and mom. Last week I heard about a lady in one of the Extended Care homes, which during every Mother and Father's Days gets a gift from her 2 daughters because they want to say thanks for the way she was both a Mother and Father to them. Some of you as single parents have done an awesome job of raising your families. But I want to add, that I know that so many of the men in this room take very seriously your role as dads and work very hard at trying to be the dad your children need. But, I also know that Fathers Day, for many of us as father's, is also that time when we ask questions like, 'What could I or should I be doing different so I can be a better father for our kids?'

Maybe, because Kathy and I have hit a place where two of our kids are now married, Matt and his wife have just moved away to Leduc where he began as the Youth Pastor at a church, and our youngest has moved out for a while. The whole question about my role as a dad, as a husband, has been on my mind a lot lately. So this morning I want to take you on a journey in scripture that may surprise you a little, but I hope will challenge your soul concerning Planning how to Parent or Father your kids. So this morning I want to talk about Planned Parenthood.

Quite often when we talk about a man's role in the family we begin by using a simple term: we say 'The man is to be the spiritual leader' in the family. I often hear wives say 'I wish my husband was the spiritual leader in our home'. And then I have observed that as men hear that term and then try to wrestle with this idea, often what I see is fear creep into their eyes. First of all: They are afraid that it sounds 'Politically incorrect' to say that we as men are to be "The leaders" in our homes, and secondly: many men look at how many bible studies their wives attend, Christian books their wives have read, and the fact that their wife came from a home where church and the bible was a part of their lives and for many men that wasn't true, because of that, as men we aren't sure what to do. So let's go to scripture, (*Ephesians 5:22-24*). I read those words and you would swear that the word SUBMIT had a pulsating lights on it, wives sit up straight and turn to the front of the bulletin and start to look up my email address incase they need to send me a note next week and husbands slouch in their pews and begin to whisper "be careful Dave, as they begin to pray for me".

So before I go any farther, let's look at the context of this verse. Go back to (*Ephesians 5:15*) "be careful how you live, making the most of every opportunity". This morning we will be having a baby dedication and I want to give the parents of Kiera this verse because I am living through the fact that you only have your kids at home for a very short time. And while, they are at home, some days you think this time of helping them with homework, with living in your van as you travel to soccer games and band practices and messy rooms will never end. Let me say from experience that the time whizzes by so quickly, and you only have a very short time frame to place in your kids lives, love, faith, self confidence and life lessons. So we need to make the most of our opportunity of our 'home time' with our kids. Paul says this because it puts urgency on all that is to follow. Now go down to (*Ephesians 2:21*) the context of verse 22 is verse 21. Here God says 'Before we go any farther let's get one thing very clear, I made you as a couple in such a way that you both need each other, you both need to learn from each other and that because you are equal in the eye's of God you need to both first submit your heart and lives to me as your God. For marriage is best when both you and your spouse loves Jesus, follow him together and let him speak into your marriage. And you both need to submit to each other.' Kathy and I need to both be putting the other person ahead of our own needs, asking first what does my loved one want and need?

Often submitting our wants for what they need. This is one of those verses that until you get this right, you can't go on to the next verse. So men and women... 'Has your marriage become a wrestling match to get what you want, or is it a place where you both see each other as equals whom God has given you the privilege of doing life together with, hand in hand? Where as (1 *Corinthians 13*) says 'you are not self seeking but rather submitting your needs to the needs of the other person.' Last week I was visiting Eileen and Maurice Simmons who have been married 54 years (Eileen is shockingly near death right now) and as I walked away Maurice said, 'A few months ago as we were on holidays I turned to her and said, I have never loved you more than I love you today". That only happens if we keep submitting in love to the other person and putting them first.

Now turn to (Ephesians 5:22) if we are to be placing our spouses needs before our own why would God then ask wives to submit to their husband? Look at the next verse, 23. "For the husband is head of the wife (family)..." Now, I have spent time getting here this morning for a reason, it is because something is said here that will have a crucial impact on how we do marriage, and men how you are a father. I believe as I have studied and as I have checked with others that this is talking about Spiritual leadership in the home. This is very important men, because what this is saying is that while you and your wife share parenting your kids together, as equals in your home, God has made you responsible for your Family.

### **1. Yes... You are responsible for your Family**

Go back to the text, it doesn't say you may become the head, it says the husband is the head of the wife/home as Christ is the head of the church. By definition and by appointment of God you are responsible for what goes on in your home. That means that from God's vantage point when you said 'I do' you were appointed the head of your home. Whether you like it or not, if you have leadership skills or not, by appointment you are the one God asks to be responsible for your home. Just as when you as a congregation and God set me aside to be the Lead pastor of this church, He didn't do it because I was 'better' or 'more important' and certainly not because I was 'more talented' than the other staff members or others in the congregational. But God said 'David, I have appointed you to make the most of every opportunity and to give watchful care over this Church family so it can become all it can be.' And while, as I am called to submit to you as fellow staff members, Elders and as a congregation, I am still held responsible by God to give watchful care over this congregation. In a similar ways as a husband, God is saying 'While you and I are called to submit to you wife and kids in many ways, God still has said I am appointing you to give watchful care over your family. This is so important because so often we as men get so caught up in work and other things that we simply pass our responsibilities for watchful care of our family off onto our wives.

And we distance ourselves from the problems in our home and we don't think strategically about how things that happen in the lives of our kids will affect their futures. We simply get so caught up in 'Doing life one day at a time' that we never take a long view of how what happens today will affect the future of our family and our love with our wives. We are like Adam in the Garden of Eden, when his wife ate from the tree and caused sin to enter our world. Adam made a decision that he didn't want to be responsible for what happened, so he said 'God don't look at me, it was her fault, I wasn't part of what happened around here'. We abdicate our responsibility to give watchful care over our family. Then our kids get in a jam or walk away from faith and we say 'don't look at me I was busy making a living for my family. God says 'Woe, I asked you first to make sure you helped your family do life well'. To make his point Paul says in verse 23 'Men you are head of your homes like Jesus was head of the church.' If anyone had the ability to play the blame game it was Christ. He could have said "God have you seen how these people live, God don't blame me for this group'. Instead Jesus said 'I am the head of this group' and he made our problem His problem to solve, and went all the way to the cross to make sure our life and our future could be good.

God is saying here 'Men, you and I are responsible for our families' we need to think that way, act that way and live that way. Of course we will all mess up (every kids needs to be able to blame their parents for something in their lives). But the point here is so important, while we are called together with our wives care for our family; we need to start thinking biblically as men. We need to embrace the fact that no matter how old our kids are that God has asked us to realize that we are responsible for what

happens in our homes. That means we need to start thinking more strategically, to get more engaged or stay more engaged. To prayerfully keep asking God 'What do I need to do as a dad and what do we need to do as a couple to care well for our kids so we can give the watchful care of your family needs?' So, have you been running from your responsibility, have you allowed yourself to be too busy, have you left your wife holding the bag concerning your family? The bible says to you and I 'We are responsible for the watchful care of our family.' For as we take that job seriously, there will be eternal consequences and personal joy for us and for them.

## **2. Yes... You are called to passionately love your wife**

Now, here is where this gets really interesting, for if the man is responsible for what goes on in the home and called to be the spiritual leader in the home, then you would expect that what will happen next is that the scripture will tell the man how to boss his wife or rule over her and make sure she obeys him. Actually a lot of preachers and men have somehow jumped to that conclusion here. Instead the passage says 'This is how you are to be the spiritual leader with your wife, the very first thing, the #1 thing you need to do is love your wife. (*Ephesians 5:25-28*) The kind of love he is calling us to as men are to be similar to how Jesus loved the church. How did he love the church? He gave his life for it. When I hear that, it seems hard to get my head around it. What it means is this; the kind of love you give your wife is to be the kind where, as she evaluates her life now as a married person she will say that while her life was good before she got married her life now is so much better now that she is married. The quality of life she is living, the love she is experiencing, the experiences she has with you is such that she is so thankful to be in a love relationship with you. In other words, she is better with you than she was without you. With the Simmons for example, after 54 years of marriage you will be able to say 'I am more deeply in love with her/him today than ever before'. Because, as (*Ephesians 5:21*) says 'You are putting her needs before your needs, you think of her and how you will hold her, romance her, hold her up, dream about her future and her spiritual journey for you have taken seriously God's call to be responsible for her care and passionate with your love.' And that has caused you to think passionately and strategically about her care and her future. For spiritual leadership is about loving, without loving you will never lead your family. Then it adds a little tag line at the end of Verse 27 "He who loves his wife loves himself". For when you said I do and as you are intimate with your wife, the two of you became one, so because you are now one person in God's eyes, as you love her, you are caring for yourself (Happy wife, happy life).

(*Ephesians 5:29-31*) simply adds that just as you are in touch with the needs and feelings of your own body, you need to be in touch with the needs of your wife. I am very in tune with my own feelings, for I am sensitive when I am too hot or too cold, when I need love or when I need food. I am very sensitive to my own needs and because the 'two shall become one' because she and I are one in so many ways I need to realize that my #1 priority in my family is to care for and love my wife and then love my family. Spiritual leadership is synonymous with love.

Don't miss what this passage is saying to us as men, it is saying that leading your family is: Taking responsibility for the watchful care for your family, loving your wife unconditionally and in turn your kids. While it is important to grow deep in the Word of God, sometimes we as men have gravitated to working on learning deep things spiritually, involvement in church work or business successes and in the process have side stepped our real call which is to give ourselves unconditionally to loving our families.

## **3. Yes... You Can Mentor Your Kids**

Let me take our call to be responsible for our family's one step farther, and that is that we are called to Mentor our children. A while ago I was talking to Gayle Friesen and she made a statement that really caught my ear. She said that her husband Dale is systematically mentoring his son. Now, if as Spiritual leaders in our homes we are called to be responsible for our families, it only makes sense that part of that responsibility needs to be (no matter how old our kids are) to mentor them. Scripture says we are to 'Train up our children in the way they should go' and it says in (*Deuteronomy 6:6-9*) 'We are called in the midst of life to not only use teachable moments in our kids lives, but to think and plan how to mentor them. Since my discussion with Dale I have been weekly spending time on the phone mentoring Matt my son as he is beginning to minister as a new pastor. So I thought it would be useful to interview Dale in order to give us some insights in how we can practically mentor our kids.

**Questions:**

1. Tell me what you do for a living?
2. What got you thinking about systematically mentoring your son?
3. How have you gone about mentoring you son?
4. What can you suggest that would be helpful as we consider how to mentor our children?

**Conclusion:** I feel that we have often missed the emphasis of what Eph. 5 is trying to teach us. It is a call especially to us as men to realize that we are called to be spiritual leaders in our homes. That means...

1. Taking our God given responsibility for the Watch care of our family. It IS your and my calling in life. It is a job given to us by God and therefore with God's help we can do it.
2. It is loving our wives in a way that they feel cared for a deeply loved.
3. It means looking at ways to Mentor our children

Have you ever left a home where, while they may not know as many verses or deep biblical truths as some other families you have known, yet there is something special and extra warm about that home? It is a place where you know the father has taken seriously that he is called of God to care for his family, where you see love is present because it is obvious that he deeply loves his wife and there is a joyful seriousness in his eye that tells you he will do what it takes to help his kids grow in faith and do well in life. That is the kind of home were you know God is present. Men, the bible says 'If you are a deep Christian or just new at faith that you are called to be responsible for your family, to lead our love for your wife and children and to see yourself as a mentor for your kids. That is our call, that is our privilege and it is possible with God's help. So be encouraged to go and make a difference in your families life.