



Thrones
Leveraging Authority to Help Others Win
Part 2 – Leveraging Authority to Help Your Spouse Win
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We are continuing our *Thrones* series. This is week three and the Robbins family has already gotten excited about this series and we're beginning to use that language around our home. Today, the title of the message is *Leveraging Authority to Help Your Spouse Win*. In large part, this message is going to be directed towards husbands. As a church body, something we talk about often is that this church, as a body, honors marriage, according to Hebrews 13: 4. As a church, it is our responsibility to be background singers of the marriages around us. In other words, we help support, encourage, feed, protect the marriages around us. That is kind of the thought process that I want you to approach the message with today if you don't happen to be a husband.

I'm so excited for this opening story. I came across this story a couple of years ago, and I've been holding onto it, waiting for the right message and today is the day. Does anyone want to hear a story? It's a love story. Of course, we've got February 14th coming; it's just around the corner, fellas, if you didn't know: Valentine's Day.

A couple of years ago, my friend, Thomas McNutt, was falling in love with a young girl named Julie. Thomas lives in Corsicana, Texas and Julie lived in Shreveport, Louisiana. As Thomas tells this story, it was early in the work week. They had been talking on the phone and the relationship was just kind of starting to catch some steam. They hadn't defined the relationship yet and they'd had a tough phone conversation. Thomas was scared that Julie was going to slip through his fingers.

On a Tuesday night, he decides to jump in his truck after work and drive three hours to Shreveport to woo this girl. He goes to Shreveport and they have a romantic dinner together. He tells her that he wants to go steady, he wants July to be his girlfriend, and she says yes. After this romantic dinner, he is driving home for three hours and, as you can imagine, Thomas is on cloud nine. He is so excited and so caught up in love that he ends up getting pulled over for going 68 in a 45. He was cruising home. He gets pulled over and gets a ticket, which kind of puts a damper on his amazing night.

The following day, he gets online and he figures out his options of dealing with this ticket. At least in Texas, you have three options. One option is you pay the ticket and it's over and done with. Your second option is you go to the courthouse and go to court and fight over it there. The third option is that you write a letter to the judge. Thomas decides that he's going to write a letter to the judge to appeal his ticket. I would like to read that letter to you today.

Dear Judge Burton,

Sir, my name is Thomas. I'm a single 24-year-old who lives in Corsicana, Texas. A few weeks ago, I was speeding through your town late at night, going 68 in a 45. Your officer was very respectful, but could offer me little mercy at such a speed. Judge, I'm writing you to ask that you cut or dismiss my fine for this offense. My only plea is that you dismiss my fine... in the name of love. That's right, I said it, Judge Burton, LOVE.

That night, I was driving back from a date in Shreveport, Louisiana with a beautiful Christian woman. It could only be love that would possess me to fill up my gas tank and go all the way to Shreveport when I had work early the next morning. It was blind love that consumed my mind on that crisp October night. You've been in love, Judge Burton, haven't you? You know what it's like. As I sped from that romantic pizza shop in Louisiana, I was caught up in romantic thoughts and dreams.

You see, Judge Burton, to be quite honest, I don't have a lot going for me in regard to the ladies. I'm unattractive, awkward, overweight, not rich, drive my old truck from high school, and my personal hygiene is acceptable at best. More times than not, the words "Thomas, let's just be friends" is the line I'm fed. I'm in the friend zone with more girls than I care to admit or count. But, this girl is different. This girl, I have half a chance with because she has the two qualities I look for in a young Christian woman: poor vision and bad judgment. If a girl has these things, I have a chance.

Judge Burton, I am willing to take defensive driving and promise I have learned my lesson. If you help me with this expensive ticket, which is a major hit to my budget, I promise you when I marry this girl, you will get an invitation. Let me know your decision. I trust your judgment.

*In loving desperation,
Thomas McNutt*

He waits a month and he doesn't hear anything back from the judge. He decides he's going to call into the courthouse. He calls into the courthouse and he asks for Traffic Violations. They transfer him to Traffic Violations, which is a phone number that just keeps ringing and never picks up. He hangs up and phone and decides to go at it with a different strategy. He goes the "good ol' boy" route. He calls again and when the secretary answers, in his best southern accent, he says, "Is Billy there?"

She says, "Who's this?"

He says, "This is Thomas. Is Billy there?"

She yells, "Billy! Billy!"

Billy gets on the phone and says, "This is Judge Burton."

Thomas says, "Judge Burton, this is Thomas McNutt. I wrote you a letter." There is silence on the other end of the phone until he hears laughter. Thomas says, "Judge Burton, did you read my letter?"

Judge Burton laughs again and says, “We just stopped laughing yesterday.” The judge goes on to say, “Those Louisiana women... They’re crazy. I could tell you some stories.”

Thomas said, “Well, what did you decide, sir?”

The judge said, “Son, I ripped up your ticket. Have a good day.”

True to Thomas’ word, he went on to get engaged and marry that young lady. He sent Judge Burton an invitation to his wedding. Here’s a picture of Thomas and Judge Burton when he went by the courthouse to say hello. Isn’t that great? That was really fun. Can you see why I was so excited to share that? What a riot.

We’re talking about marriage today. We are going to dive in and look at a couple of different passages. The first place we’ll go is Ephesians 5. If you have your Bibles, you can turn your Bible there. Later, we’re going to jump over to 1 Peter 3. I’ve got four main points that we’ll cover that kind of detail an approach or plan of attack on how we can go about leveraging our authority as husbands to help our wives win.

Lead Her Like Jesus

Ephesians 5 - ***22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.***

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... So, Paul comes right out of the gate and the first thing he hits on is the wife’s role in the marriage. He says, “Wives, be subject or submissive to your husbands.” Now in broader culture today, the approach is something that Ted and I have been talking about. The phrase is *egalitarian*. And egalitarian view of marriage is kind of like co-ownership. It’s a teammate where there is equality across the board. You’re both equal leaders in the relationship and, in large part, that’s kind of the approach in secular culture.

In a biblical culture, according to God’s word, we have what’s called a *complementarian* view. The idea behind that is that the wife compliments the leadership of the husband. We look at how God set up that structure in the beginning. God created man in his image and he saw that it wasn’t good for man to be alone. he took one of Adam’s ribs and created the female and then the two were joined together and they became one flesh, a team. But, clearly, according to the Bible, the husband has what’s called headship over the home. He is the leader.

So, if you think through an egalitarian view, if you look at the leadership structure of different entities, you would rarely see two presidents of a country or two CEOs or two quarterbacks on the field or two point guards taking the ball up the court. There is generally a leader. As we are looking at this idea of leveraging authority, we started in 1 Peter 3 when Ted opened up this conversation and Adam touched on it last week, but there are different ways that this rolls out.

For example, we are citizens of a government and so we are subject... in order to please God, we are subject to our government. It's the same thing in your workplace. Whoever the boss is or the lead authority is, we come under them, we are subject to their authority. It's the same with the wife in the household.

I want to look at 1 Peter. When it opens up this conversation, it gives us kind of a hint of the purpose. So, wives, if you're asking yourself why you should step in underneath your husband's authority in the home, when he opens up this conversation about authority and subjection to authority...

In 1 Peter 2, Peter writes, ***13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake...*** So, who are we submitting on behalf of? On behalf of the Lord, right? ***...to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority...***

Then when he begins the conversation in 1 Peter 3, addressing the women in the marriage, he says, ***1 In the same way...*** So, in the very same way that you submit yourself for the Lord's sake to human institutional authority... In that same way, with that same heart for the Lord's sake, ***you wives, be submissive to your own husbands...*** We see God's structure in that.

There is this really poignant quote that Ted used two weeks ago. I bet you guys remember it. He read off this quote: "When men become boys, women become men." Do you remember that? For me, when he said that, it was like an arrow to the heart. It just struck me so profoundly. As I've been processing that over the last couple of weeks, I realize another statement is true. As men become boys, women become men. I also think it's true that the quickest way for a man to become a boy is by losing the respect of his wife. Ladies, when you think about subjection and coming under the authority of, I would hate for you to dismiss the power that you have in that relationship.

Paul goes on to say, "Husbands, love your wives and women, respect your husbands." A woman's role as part of that subjection is to cheer him on, to come behind him and be his number one cheerleader. You do that through respect.

I can tell you this. I'm a husband who has a lot of crazy ideas. My wife, Ashely, is so great at getting behind me and believing. Many times, she has believed in some of my wild ideas when the rest of the world didn't. I just can't tell you how much that means to me as a husband. It gives me energy, it gives me confidence, it gives me passion. When my wife believes in me, when I know that she respects me, I feel unstoppable. Men can climb mountains, run through walls, start businesses; they can change, they can lead well when they feel that respect. Respect is a massive power that wives have in their tool belt and you get to come behind your husband and cheer him on in that way. I guarantee you this. The more you respect your husband, the more he'll live with you in an understanding way, honoring you, cherishing you, setting you up to win.

Then it goes on in 1 Peter 3. It says, to continue respecting even when your husband fails or when he strays. I think it is important for us to understand that husbands, even in a church like this that holds up marriage and preaches marriage and there are accountable relationships, are still going to make mistakes. There are going to be times where they stray off the path. Our human nature is to take that

respect, when he messes up or when he fails, and punish him by removing it. I have to tell you that only takes his straying or his failures and it causes exponential damage. That's why Peter clearly instructs. He says even when your husband is a bonehead, you respect him in a way that he feels so loved and he experience so much grace and forgiveness that not only does he come back to you, but he comes back to the Lord. That's an awesome picture.

I'm going to give you a couple of sub points of this main point of **Lead Her Like Jesus**.

- **Humility:** That's the example that Jesus gave us. In James 1: 21, James writes, ***Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.*** I've been kind of mulling over this idea of "in humility" for the last couple of weeks as we studied James amongst my group of friends. In order to receive, in order to grow, a man has got to do it in humility.

I'm kind of a podcast junkie and one of the podcasts I've been listening to lately is called the Jocko Podcast. I know what you're thinking, ladies. Your thinking, *He's going to give us more marriage advice from the Jocko Podcast?* Yes I am. The Jocko Podcast is from this guy named Jocko Willink. Jocko is a highly touted, retired Navy Seal. This guy is revered in the military world and he's becoming revered in the corporate world because since he has retired from the military, he has taken those tried and true leadership strategies that he learned in combat and he's going into corporations. He's basically teaching them those same lessons and they are applying them to corporate leadership culture and he's had a lot of success doing it.

This is a guy who is a dangerous, bad man. If you just look at his face, he's got a cinderblock for a head and just a mean mug. You feel like this is not the kind of guy you mess with. They tell stories about him that he's a jujitsu practitioner – submission wrestling. When he was overseas, he would call in all of his underling Navy Seals and they say that he would wrestle 20 in a row, one after another. They would bring in one Navy Seal and he would tap them out, one after another for his workout. This guy is just unreal. So, if there's a guy who has reason to be prideful in the military, it's Jocko.

He releases this book and his number one leadership principle is to check your ego at the door. He explains that when you're out in a combat situation as a commander, you have the humility to learn and to ask for other people's perspective and to grow in your leadership, to come back when a mission is finished and detail the mistakes and the ways you can get better, the ways that you can sharpen up as a leader. In a military situation, if you don't have the humility to grow, you die. So, he learned the value of humility, which happens to be a character quality of Jesus. That's how Jesus led. In the midst of the most horrific situations, they are learning that humility is a force to be reckoned with.

As husbands, we have to take the same approach to be humble enough in our marriages to learn. Do you know who has the most instruction for us as husbands? It's our wives. You don't learn to be a husband in the locker room, fellas. Any advice you got on husbandry there is probably worth throwing away. Wives are your number one resource.

You can ask, “How could I have done this better?” “When I hurt your feelings, how could I have approached it differently?” “How can I change my tone?” “How can I set you up to win?” It requires great humility if you’ve got a heart to grow as a leader in your home.

Service: Beth Moore says, “*Our hang up with imitating Jesus is that it makes us have to act like servants instead of kings.*” Isn’t that something?

Growing up, I always had a heart to be a leader. In fact, I believe that my spiritual gifts are leadership and teaching, so I always really watched leaders like a hawk. I wanted what they had. I thought leadership was getting up at the front, leading the charge, giving the speeches, having the mic in my hand, being on the stage. That was my view of leadership.

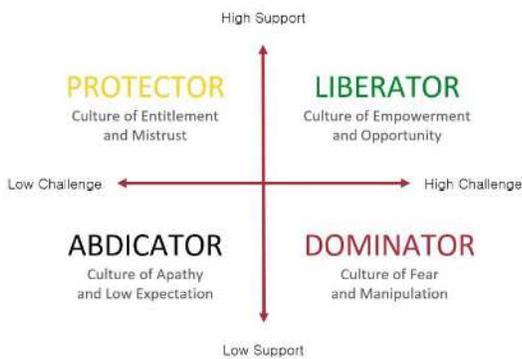
But, as I’ve gotten further into leadership and I’ve gained more responsibility over the years, I realize what I just described is just the smallest percentage of what true leadership is. Leadership is service. It’s putting those you lead in situations where they can flourish and be successful. Leadership is being willing to have hard conversations.

If we look at Jesus’ example... I think this is an encouragement to the women in their role in the home. Jesus, being the Son of God, standing at the right and of the Father, set his deity aside and he took a submissive role to God the Father. He took a submissive role to government and authority. So, if you have a hard time being submissive to your husband or men being submissive to your bosses at work, you have to know that you are following in the footsteps of a God who put humility and service on display.

Tenderness: Ephesians 5: 25 says, ***Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...*** I think this is so cool when we’re talking about the leadership of husbands. I doubt that there is any woman in this building who decided to marry their husband because of his leadership capacity. Nobody is out there saying “I’ve got to get in the wake of this titan of a leader in human flourishing.” That’s not why you fell in love. You fell in love because of his tenderness, his kindness, the sweetness about him, his doey eyes when he looked at you. That is what love is given birth out of. By the way, fellas, that’s the way we continue to grow in love, the same way we started which is through tenderness.

That word in Ephesians 5: 25 for love is not Eros, it’s not the word for romantic love, it’s not philia, it’s not the word for a brotherly or a friendship type love. The word love in that statement is agape love. It is unconditional love, no matter what. It doesn’t stop regardless of the circumstances. It is a faithful, unwavering love. It’s the kind of love that you’re willing to give your life up for the other’s life.

I really believe that love precedes leadership, especially in a marriage. I think for great leaders, leaders that follow in Jesus’ way, love is the number one quality of a leader.



I want you to think about this. I've shown you this before. I want to show it again just in the context of a marriage. This is called a Support Challenge Matrix.

The axis running up and down is the people bar. If you are high support, you love people, that's your focus. If you are low support, it's harder to be all about people. You tend to be by yourself or a loner.

On axis that is running across, you've got low challenge and high challenge. High challenge means your ultra task driven and low challenge the opposite of that. When you break up these categories, it comes up with four quadrants.

If you're super high support and you're all about people, but you're low challenge like getting things done isn't as important as loving people, you fall in this Protector category. If you're both low challenge and low support, you fall in this Abdicator category. It's often where we end up when we are low or depressed or down. If you're super high challenge, you're about getting things done, accomplishing things, but people are less of a priority in comparison, you can fall into the Dominator category.

The category that Jesus functioned in as a leader is the Liberator category. You notice it's green and it's green for a reason. When you lead people as a liberator, you're creating an environment where people can grow and flourish, where you're about people, but you're also about the job at hand. Jesus was right there. He was perfectly high support, perfectly about people, and he was perfectly about his task.

A lot of times, fellas, when we go off to work, we can get in the mindset of being about the bottom line, about accomplishing an objective, about growing numbers. It becomes a task-driven leadership. When you come home and you lead your home in that way, it doesn't work out very well does it, ladies? It makes for an uncomfortable environment. It makes it hard to submit to that style of leadership.

Again, I think, culturally, that is a false view of quality leadership. When you look at Jesus, his number one priority... Why did he come to Earth? He came to save people. That was his number one priority. He still had a task. When he was walking on earth, he was ministering to people all along the way, but his final destination was the cross on Calvary. Ultimately, he was task-driven. He knew exactly where he was going, but it was all about people.

When we look at leading in our home, if we prioritize our wife first with a loving heart, that leadership begins to fall in the Liberator category even when we need to accomplish things or get things done. That's just kind of a fun way that I hold a mirror up to my face as a leader and I ask myself, *Where am I falling right now in humility? Where am I erring? Am I leading my wife in a way to where she is truly growing and thriving?*

Nourish Her Like Jesus

This next passage is Ephesians 5: 26-30. ***26 ...so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself...***

Paul brings in this imagery of the way that you approach nourishing your wife is the same way you do in nourishing your own body. No man wakes up and if he is thirsty, fails to look for a drink. Very few of us, when our stomach is hungry or when we're needing fuel for our body, hesitate to grab those elemental necessities of life and put them in our body to fuel it. Paul is making an elemental analogy. Your responsibility to nourish your wife is bottom shelf; it's like breathing, it's like drinking water. That's the way your approach ought to be to nourish your wife. The way we do it is through the truth of God's word. Jesus said, "I come that you might have truth and that the truth will set you free." So, when we build a foundation of God's word – the truth – underneath our home, it will create a nourishing environment not only for our wife, but for our kiddos and anybody else who enters into it.

When Ashley and I were engaged, we were engaged out at camp and we had this journal that we wrote in and passed back and forth. We really didn't see each other that much because she was on the girl's side and I was on the guy's side, doing our thing. BUT, we'd pass this journal back and forth. I remember when I would get that journal, I would run and hide from those little animals. I would try to find this quiet moment and open up that journal. I would cherish every single word that she wrote. I was literally drinking it in because it meant so much to me. We would send that journal back and forth. I remember experiencing that nourishment I would receive from her and she would speak of the nourishment that she received from me.

I actually got that journal out this morning before I came to church and I started flipping through it. I realized that I had some work to do. I actually drew her a T-Rex I guess. It said, "Grrr, you're pretty." The next one was a giraffe that said, "because I like you." Isn't that special. So, fellas, if you need any Valentine's Day ideas, you could always get out the old Crayola box. The price is right on it.

But you can see it. I asked her for her prayer requests and she wrote her prayer request down. And I would pray for her. A lot of times, as husbands, especially if we struggle in this category or we struggle being emotional or maybe we're in a rough stretch, personally or spiritually... Maybe you're a new believer in your marriage and you don't even know where to start. There are a couple of simple things that you can do.

Number one, before you go to bed, you can open up your Bible to Proverbs and read your wife a proverb of the day. Just read one chapter of proverbs. You don't even have to think of the words; just read them. Read God's words to her. Another thing you can do is just ask how you can pray for her. If that question doesn't open up awesome conversation, I don't know what will. Nourish her by asking her that question. Then when she tells you, just take her hand and pray with her right there. Even if you've never done it, even if you feel awkward. Don't be afraid to take that step.

I think what you'll see is your wife... that respect in her will just blossom and she'll fall all over you. And you might get lucky that night. I try to pray every night. Is that inappropriate? It might have been. I have five children. Thank you, Electra. I don't even know where I'm at right now.

Know Her Like Jesus

This is so fun. In 1 Peter 3: 7, it says this. ***Z You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.***

Live with your wives in an understanding way. That's the Greek word for knowledge. To know her. And the challenge I want to put out on the men, the challenge I want to accept today is that we would become students of our wives. As we mentioned, you don't learn how to be a husband in the locker room. I realized, when I started dating Ashley and especially when we got married, that I knew very little about women. I actually lived with my mother, who has been a woman her whole life, and my sister. I must not have been paying attention. It was like we were starting from scratch. But that's what is so fun. God made men and women so different that it gives you the ability to dive in, to dig in and get to know them for a lifetime.

As your wife grows and matures and changes, you get to continue digging in. Part of our human DNA, just the fabric of being human is that we have a desire to know to be known. I don't have any science to back this up; I couldn't even point to a passage in the Bible, but I would say that a wife's desire to be known is exponentially greater than that of a husband. It just means so much for us to simply ask great questions of our wives.

Tommy Nelson says this. This is so good. He says, *"Our problem is not a heroic act of martyrdom. Our problem is listening when they're talking."* I would be willing to bet and I really believe that if the men in here walked out today and there was a situation where their wife was in danger or they were going to get hit by a car or something, I would bet that the husbands, the husbands in Woodland Hills Family Church would throw themselves in the way of that vehicle in order to save their wives. But, so many of us, myself included, struggle to just be great listeners. It means so much to a wife to be heard.

There are some tricks to be an active listener. The first thing is to look her in the eyes and ask a great question. Ask clarifying question along the way. Repeat back to her what you just heard so that she can correct or change it to make sure that you understand exactly what she is trying to communicate to you. What will happen is that relationship will grow as you become a student of your wife. And your knowledge of your wife will allow you to harness that God-given leadership authority to help her win, to help her succeed, to help her flourish in her life.

Honor Her Like Jesus

I'm going to read the last part of 1 Peter 3: &. ***...and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.***

There's this phrase just before that where it says ***live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker...*** A lot of time when you read that, at first glance, it can be hard to swallow. If you were to put this in front of some women, they would read that and it would give them disdain for God's word. But, I want to be very clear what that means. It's talking about the physical body, the vessel. You notice it doesn't say you're living with someone weak, it's says someone weaker, which implies that who else is weak. Men are. Men are fallen in nature. These broken bodies... As we get closer to the grave, they are breaking down. The only thing that's growing is your nose and your ears until you die. And sometimes your belly. The idea is that women are generally, in most cases, built with less bone density and less muscle mass and are physically smaller in stature. The point he is making is you have to take responsibility as a protector to honor and cherish and to scoop her up and be the man in her life.

There's a story I read about and you'll remember it. It was back in 2012 in Aurora, Colorado. At midnight, there was a showing of Batman, The Dark Night Rises. This maniac kicks down the door with an automatic weapon and he begins spraying bullets into the crowd. Do you guys remember that? Obviously, every individual sitting in there had a personal story, but one of those stories... There were three stories that were somewhat identical. Three young men walked in with their dates. When that man started spraying bullets, all three of those guys took their girlfriends, threw them to the ground, and then threw their bodies over the top of them and absorbed the bullets. Every single one of those three guys died and the girls were injured, but each one of them walked away because the bodies of their boyfriends absorbed those bullets. When you read that passage, when you talk about ***live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor...*** When you read it in that context, it makes your heart flutter. That's an amazing position to be in. It's not a position of disdain.

So, husbands, when you live with your wife in an understanding way, when you pursue her, when you set her up to win, when you treat her and exalt her highly valuable, her ability to thrive and to grow just skyrockets.

There's another story. A guy named Dennis DeHaan... You guys may know him from the Radio Bible Class. He was also the editor of Our Daily Bread devotional. He tells a story about how he would always hold open the door for his wife when they were going into the house or approaching the car or at a restaurant. He would hold open the door for his bride. One day, they were going to a restaurant and he opened the door for his wife. As he tells it, a liberated woman comes up and chides him for opening up the door and says, "I think she's perfectly capable to open the door for herself."

This was Dennis' response. He said, "I don't hold the door because she's incapable of doing it for herself; I hold the door because she is honored."

What I want to ask the husbands today is what door do we need to open up for our wives to walk through?

In the last couple of months, my wife has had a dream to open up a small business. She worked out a Kanakuk as a director. She is a phenomenal leader and for 16 years, she served out there and she thrived. A few years ago, she made the decision to walk away from that and focus on raising our kiddos.

You can imagine – many of the women in this room know what that’s like – how hard that was to walk away from the identity, the authority, the value associated with being a leader and being successful. There were some difficult challenges that came with that and we had to grow through it.

Just recently, she began to share with me this desire to start up a small business. I put on my Dave Ramsey hat because everything, budgeting wise, I run through Dave’s cranium. We began to wade through it. I took this really logical, pragmatic approach that week and she was patient with me as I did it.

But, we sat down and we watched a little testimonial video on this business. I’m sitting there watching the video and my wife’s eyes began to well up with tears. I reached out and held her hand and we began to cry together because I realized she really wants this, she really needs this. That massive, bottled up leader in her needs to be unleashed on something. We took the jump and I kicked open that door for her and she has run through it. I have to tell you that she is just absolutely thriving. I’m getting to see these new things in my wife, this new maturation that’s coming to life. As a husband, it’s just been such a fun adventure.

I’ve been going back to Proverbs 31. I’ve been reading over and over again, over the last couple of weeks, as I’ve had this in mind. I’m reading it and I’m seeing these new waves of maturation in my wife. I’m seeing in the scripture what God described as a godly woman. This is new and this is happening because she is flourishing in something new. I shudder to think, had I leveraged my authority and closed that door and said that’s not practical... Oh my gosh, what we would have missed out on.

Proverbs 31: 10 – 10 An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. 12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool and flax and works with her hands in delight. 14 She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar. 15 She rises also while it is still night and gives food to her household and portions to her maidens. 16 She considers a field and buys it; from her earnings she plants a vineyard. 17 She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong.

Does that sound like woman who is being held back? Verse 29 says "**Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all.**" Husbands, we have such an awesome opportunity to be a blessing to our wives by leveraging our authority to help her win. I have to tell you I want to do it more because I’m just having so much fun watching my wife flourish.

We want to help you. As you guys head out of here, we have a little date night package for you. For the ladies, we have some Kilwins Chocolates. For the men, we have this fun little card we want you bring on your next date night. It’s going to help lead you in some good conversations. There are some great questions to help you become a student of your wife. At the bottom, there is a website, fivevoices.com where you can go and take a personality test assessment. Ashley and I did it last night together and just had so much fun processing through it. We want to give that to you just as a push for our entire congregation, husbands and wives, to know each other more.

I'll close with this. For those of you who are background singers, I want to encourage you. Marriage is the foundational element in society. If you want to change our community, if you want to change our church, if you want to change the world, you start supporting marriages and creating healthy homes and healthy families. Everything else stems from there.

Father, we love you. Thank you for just the beauty of your word. It's so powerful and true and accurate and strong. It's piercing. I want to ask, God, that you would teach us to love each other well. I pray that the husbands would be great leaders and the wives would flourish under their leadership. We thank you for being a part of a community and a church that holds the institution of marriage so high.

It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.