

# Reconstructing Manhood

## Submit to God's Role in Your Family

Rough Transcript

Jim Davis

### Jim Davis:

Well, thank you for that warm welcome. It's good to be back with you. I think the last time that I was here was the first time that we were meeting in person after COVID, is that right? So it's been a little while, but it's good to see everybody coming back. Thank you, Keith, for that introduction. It is... I'm a pastor, that's my full-time vocational job and I have the privilege of pastoring a number of people who regularly come to this meeting. But another part of what we do that we really value are these Weekend to Remember marriage getaways put on by Family Life. And so we do between two and four of these getaways a year. And there's one phrase that I hear not at every single conference, but I would say most and it's, a man will come up to me, a husband will come up to me and he'll say some version of, "My marriage is hard, and the main reason it's hard is because my wife won't submit."

So we have some laughter in here. Okay. Because when I hear that I try to be nice and pastoral, but in my mind alarms are going off everywhere. And what I'm thinking is... and I don't say this, but so what I'm hearing now is, "You're actually the problem." There's a reason that your wife does not want to follow you, is what I'm thinking. Now I'm not saying there aren't unique cases where no matter what you do, it's just not... I get it. There's some uniquely hard situations, but generally speaking, I want to ask why is it that you make it so hard to follow you? And so in this series of manhood, I've really enjoyed listening to some of these, I listened to Brett. Was Brett last week or the week before? He did a good job. He covered a lot of the roles of being a man, a lot of the different ways we lead as men.

And one of the things he mentioned was our role as a husband. And I want to this morning, double click on that idea of roles as a husband and dive more deeply into it. So hopefully we can see, and I'll go ahead and give you the **Big Idea** that God has given us roles. I'm in charge of my own slides, that's right. So **God has given us roles in our family for our flourishing and our fruitfulness**. God has given us roles in our families for our flourishing and for our fruitfulness. And if we are going to experience that flourishing and that fruitfulness, then we ourselves are going to have to submit to God's role in our families. So we will have to submit to God's role in our families. So two simple points here this morning. I want us to *know our role* and *grow in our role*.

### KNOW YOUR ROLE

So we'll start. If we're going to submit to God's role in our family, we need to know our role. All right, God has given... He has given us marriage. He has given us male and female, I think in God's wisdom and providence, he has decided that he can communicate. He communicates more about who he is because there are two sexes. If he had just created male, he wouldn't communicate as much to the world as he does because there are male and female and in that there's roles, male and female, we are created equal. And when we come into the union of marriage, we are given unique roles and responsibilities, okay?

But I want to say in marriage, okay? I think there are roles. I'm going to talk about roles, but God has given these roles in marriage. I don't believe they extend out into the world in the same way, some of these principles do but the unique roles God has given us, he's given us in the safest space that we have

and that space is marriage. And so what are those roles? In Genesis 2:18 there's Adam, there's no Eve. And God says, this is not good. And he says, I will make a helper suitable for him. Genesis 2:18. Now this word helper flies all over a lot of people. And I wouldn't say that that's unreasonable because of the ways that we have misused and even abused our roles in marriage. But I'm not going to dive deeply into the woman's role as helper, but I do want to make the case that it's not a demeaning thing, because most of the other places that we see this word helper in scripture, do you know who helper is referring to?

Well, some form of the Godhead, usually the holy spirit, usually the holy spirit in the Old Testament especially, or in New Testament too. So if this word helper is used mostly speaking of the holy spirit, I think we can say it's not demeaning. It's not a demeaning term, certainly the holy spirit. And I would intend that it's certainly not a demeaning term when we talk about wives. If there's anybody that might want to get a little bit offended about this idea of a helper, it's the people who need a helper, the men. So what God's saying is we need a helper. A helper is good for us. So, that's the first role. We have the role of helpmate and then more pertinent to the scripture that we are going to dive into, and we're going to be looking Ephesians 5:23 and 25, 24 talks about the wife.

And I'm going to skip that for right now. But when we talk about the role of a husband, we see in Ephesians 5:23 for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself a savior. So what that is saying, is there is something about Jesus', the way Jesus relates to the church that we should relate to our wives and the word that Paul gives this is head, it's headship. So those are the roles, help mate head. But what I really want to dive into in terms of knowing our role is what headship is not and then what headship is, because this has just been very... not only misunderstood, it's been abused. Headship does not mean that your wife is inferior to you. It does mean that your wife has any loss of identity because she is a woman, because she is a wife.

I think in many cases, I got a glimpse of the 20th century. I lived in the last part of the 20th century. I have a lot of TV shows to reference and parents and grandparents and older friends. So, I feel like I know enough out the 20th century to say this idea of biblical headship was really abused in a lot of ways. We see men who lead their families under this idea of Christian headship in a way where their families exist to serve them, where their families exist to give them their preferences, their desires, their... whatever it is they want to do with their time. And ultimately what they're communicating is their understanding. I don't know if you've ever seen Madman. Madman is a... and I don't endorse everything that you're going to see in Madman, but it was a good picture of what headship is not.

It doesn't mean that you're in charge and you get what you want, because in our sinful nature that's what we want headship to mean, but that's not what headship means. My grandfather, he was a good grandfather and I loved him, but he... And he was a manly man, what the world would've said a manly man. He hunted everywhere in the world, African safaris, Alaskan safaris, he shot and caught every animal you can imagine catching. People like him are the reason that we have endangered species today. But he was a pioneer in the Everglades, Chuck Alusky. He was just looked at as man's man. He was urologist, so a surgeon. He was the first or second urologist in Orlando.

I can't remember if he was the first or second, let's go with second to be safe. But I do know he had the distinction of having performed the first ever vasectomy performed in Orlando, not the first ever but the first vasectomy performed in Orlando was performed by my grandfather on himself. I'm not done yet, as a clinic to any other doctors and nurses who wanted to watch.

So you have this man's man in all these categories, but he failed in this area of biblical headship because he was a man's man, but he was fundamentally selfish and his family existed in many ways to serve him. My mom has this memory of him coming home when she was a little girl and it's hard to get past the vasectomy. We got to move past that, stay focused. My mom has this memory as a little girl of my grandfather coming home and reading my grandmother the riot act on finances, "We need to save this

amount a month. No new clothes for the younger kids, it's just going to be hand-me-downs from here on out. None of this milk being delivered to our home. You go get the milk." And my grandmother was like, "Okay, well, that's serious. I trust you, we'll make these adjustments."

Next day he shows up with his new Boston Whaler fishing boat, there was a picture, that is not what headship is. But for many of us that is the category, the way that headship has been displayed to us. All right. So what headship is not, it also doesn't mean that your wife blindly obeys and submits to verbal, emotional, or physical mistreatment. It doesn't mean that your wife gives input that you make all the decisions.

Certainly it doesn't mean that your wife follows you into sin. So what is biblical headship? What does biblical headship mean? Biblical headship is, as we said, submitting yourself to God's role for you and your family. Submitting yourself to biblical leadership in your home. So let's go back to Ephesians 5:25, Paul's telling us two things. Husbands love your wives. So he is telling us we need to love our wives, but then he tells us how, as Christ loved the church, how is that? And gave himself up for her. So we need to love our wives, how? By dying, dying. So yes, our wives are called to support and follow and help us, but the greater call is on the husband to die, to die to our preferences, die to our desires, die to all these little things that say my grandfather was living for and demanding in his own home.

So submitting yourself means sacrificially serving your wife the way that Jesus served the church. Jesus gave everything. He gave everything. He left all the honor and privilege and comfort of heaven to come down here and enter into the pain and the suffering the trials of this earth so that he could redeem us. Now, we are not a redeemer of our wife, but if we love our wives in this way, we are going to develop the best possible form of our brides. And so some of you, you're married and this is where you are and this is... maybe it's a reminder, maybe it's helpful. Some of you've been married for a long time and we're never past growing in our marriage. Some of us have the privilege of walking with sons and grandchildren through what this... Grandsons, what this means.

Some of you aren't married and, but you desire to be. And so hopefully this will be something that will be beneficial and helpful in your preparation of one day maybe being married. How many of you have seen... Gosh it's probably 20 years old now, the old HBO series, Band of Brothers. That's all, really, okay. Band of Brothers. Okay. It's a little rough, but I do commend it to you. It follows the 101st airborne infantry. Airborne, yeah. Airborne infantry, I think is the term, from England all the way into Berlin. And excuse me, did I mess that up? 101st. Okay, I thought I was being corrected, which please correct me in military terms. I'm going to mistake some things, but it follows... The main figure in this series is a guy named Dick Winters.

And Dick Winters is an unbelievable display of biblical leadership. And the way that he leads these men is a picture of biblical headship in the home. And there's this one scene about halfway through the series where he's leading, maybe is with five or six other guys. They're in a ditch and there's a long field ahead of them and on the other side of the field, maybe 300 yards is what it looks like. There's a manmade levee. And they know on the other side of that levee, there are German troops. And they know that the Americans coming are going to be surprised if they just walk into this field, the problem is they don't know how many Germans there are. They don't know if it's handful. They don't know if it's platoon. They don't know if it's... I don't know what's bigger than a platoon, but a bunch of different groups of soldiers.

And so what Dick Winters does is he says, "All right, we're going to take that hill." And he has one of those little sticks that you strike and then smoke is sent out. And he says, "When you see smoke, I want you to run. Run as fast as you can to that hill." Which is a little odd, because you can say 1, 2, 3, go. Why is he talking about smoke? And then it hits everybody because he strikes it. And there's about a five second delay before the smoke comes out. And so what... And as soon as he struck it, he began to run. He had a five second head start, and these men were seeing this. He's charging by himself because he

knew if he got on top of that hill. And if it was a sure slaughter, he would have one second to turn around and tell everybody, go back.

And because they could see him sacrificing for them, see him maybe making the ultimate sacrifice so that everybody else could be safe. You know what the result was? These men wanted to run harder. These men wanted to follow more. And I don't care if you run faster, if you're even able to run. This isn't about running. This is a picture of leading in a way that makes other people want to follow. You show me a husband who sacrifices like this, who leads like this. I will show you a wife who at least wants to follow and wants to help. And maybe she needs her own help and grow in that area, but I will show you a wife who wants to do it.

Biblical headship means seeking unity with your wife on all decisions and direction. Let's see, we're back here. Seeking unity and decisions and directions, it's not about power. It's about responsibility. I'm going to say that one more time. Biblical headship is not about power. It's about responsibility. Headship means your head is on the line. That's what's going on. I heard a pastor once say, there's a reason you never saw General Eisenhower overseeing all of the allied forces, banging a table saying, "Guys, I'm chief of the allied force. I'm in charge. What's the problem? Why aren't you following me?" No, he led the way a leader leads and people naturally wanted to follow him.

So show me a husband who understands his role as the biblical head, and I will show you a wife who wants to follow and help. Show me a husband who willingly, when things get tight, when money's tight and time's tight, who willingly gives up his preferences, his hobbies, his time in the TV, his sleep. You show me that kind of husband. I will show you a wife who wants to follow, who wants to help.

### **GROW IN YOUR ROLE**

So it starts with us knowing our role then knowing is not enough, we need to grow in this role. So I've got just three little thoughts on how we can grow in this role. And the first is become a student of your wife, because remember we are not the center of this relationship. Because we are the head, actually it makes everybody else more important in our lives.

So we should want to be a student of our wives. So we should want to study our wives. We should want to know what makes our wives tick. My wife and I lived in Italy for five years. Four of the... I asked this last time, how many of you been to Italy? How many of you been to Florence? Okay. So, all right. So if you've been to Florence, that's the center of the Renaissance. We lived four years in Piza, down the road. We spent a lot of time in Florence. I enjoyed studying the history of the Mechie Family that really spurred on the entire Renaissance in many ways. And one of those ways was being benefactors to all the art that would develop in the Renaissance. There are many other aspects of the Renaissance, but the art was a big deal.

And so one of the parts of the Medici Family, they had this massive piece of marble that they had acquired from the mountains nearby. And they wanted to do something with marble. So they put an advertisement. However, you put an advertisement back in the 1500s out. They wanted an artist to do something with this marble. And so the first artist to respond, he walked up, he had his chisel in hand and he immediately just started going to town. And it made the Medici Family really nervous. He just started chopping and they fired him immediately. Then they finally found another artist and he came and they got a chair and he sat down and he just started to stare at this marble, just stare at it. It would rain and they'd cover him. But for weeks, he just stared at that marble.

And he said, "There are curves. I want to see there's a picture inside that I have to see before I begin to chisel." And then finally he saw it and he began sculpting what we now call The David, and that artist is of course, Michelangelo. And I think that's a great picture of what it looks like to be a student of your wife. What is the best form of her and how can I... Because I've been given the privilege of being in this marriage, of being the head of this marriage, how can I pull the best possible form of her out? And so

that's going to mean you know her, you know what she loves. You're going to know what bother her. We all have buttons. We want to know our wives well enough to know where are these buttons and how do I try not to push them, not try to push them, try not to push them. Where... So we want... I said, we want to know what our wives love.

We need to also know how our wives feel loved. How many of you have read the book, **Five Love Language**? It's been around for quite some time. That was a really influential book for me early in marriage, because what they're saying is we all feel love different ways. So at my core, I am a Labrador Retriever, pat me on the head and say, "Atta boy." And I'm good. And that's how I was loving my wife, but that's not how she feels love. She is love from acts of service. She feels love from sweet notes and flowers, and I needed to learn that there's a different... As I become a student of her, there's a different way that she wants to be loved. So how is it that she feels loved? What are her gifts and abilities? What does she desire to accomplish in this life?

Can you answer this questions? And it doesn't matter where you're newly married, have been married for five decades. You still need to grow as a student of your wife. And so in my stage, we're... As Keith said, a busy stage. We had a birthday yesterday, so we're no longer six to 13. We're seven to 13 and in one month we'll be seven to 14. And so we saw a few years back that we were entering into a season where all of our kids were going to be in school full time. And so it... And my wife has been really faithful to stay with the kids and help us in that capacity. But we began to talk about what do you really want to do? These kids are going. They're going to school.

There's more time. What is it? And how can I help you get there? And so she knew she had... Before kids, she was on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ, and she had a bunch of young women she was investing in. Even though she's been out of that role for quite some time, a lot of our conversations we could see slipping into that discipleship or mentoring or counseling space. And so we decided, we think it'd be good for you to grow in these tools and go back to school and get a counseling degree. So we are now in a season with four kids and a wife who is now a full-time student. We've been in it a little over a year. We have 18 months left and the next 18 months are daunting to look at, but we love what we see on the other side of it.

So what does it look like to... as you're a student to understand her gifts and her abilities, her desires, or dreams of what she accomplishes. And then lastly, just how... As you're a student, how does she resolve conflict best? And not how do you want to be right. And there's a whole 'nother conflict talk to give here that I won't. But how does your wife best resolve conflict and how do you lead her in that way? Not the way that you want to resolve conflict. So there's just some little things that the first point under growing your role is becoming a student of your wife.

The second is nurture and cherish your wife, be gentle to her and caring, nurturing, cherishing her, really believing that she is God's good gift to you. And so when I think about nurturing and cherishing my wife, the first thing that pops in my head is just being present.

We calendar the things that are important to us. And Keith alluded to this, you calendar 7:00 AM here on Friday, and you should be commended for that, that's something that... You're calendaring what is important to you, but whereas the old saying, goals that aren't calendared are wishes. And sometimes, especially in my stage of life, just being present with my wife requires calendaring. We could... When we had no kids and maybe a few kids are out of your house, you can go out to dinner whenever you want. For us, we can't afford to be going out and getting all the babysitting and everything. So for us it's lunches or breakfast, or maybe it's just scheduling, "When I get home we're going to just do one walk around the block," just being present and me not traveling as much as maybe I could. Being present with her is caring for her and nurturing her, loving her well. But for me it's not just being present physically.

I have to ask the question, am I present in my emotionally? So when I come home my phone's not on me right now, which is a little concerning, but I guess I left it in my car. But when I come home, I can be here physically but not emotionally and not mentally. As a pastor, that phone just going off all the time. And some of you are in businesses where your phone's going off all the time. So for me, and I'm not perfect at this but when I walk into the home, I'm trying to get better. There's a little bowl right next to the front door I'm just putting my phone there. And I might go back at glance at it, make sure there's no emergencies, but largely am I present in that way mentally, emotionally? A reality over the past 18 months is that a lot of people, I'm talking to men now.

So a lot of men are drinking a lot more than they used to, that's a reality. And there's tee totaling and there's out alcoholism, but there actually is a lot of gray space in between and we've seen people grow in that gray space. And what I've observed, I've observed a lot of things but as it pertains to being present is what happen is a lot of men they're not alcoholics, but when they come home and they grab that drink, that's their way of disengaging. They're present physically, but not present mentally and emotionally. And I've walked with a lot of friends to... And we've held each other accountable. What does it look like at the end of the day to really be engaged physically, mentally and emotionally? Again, under nurturing cherishing or know her needs.

My wife's needs are a lot different now that she's in school. Yesterday, before I took the kids to school and putting everything in a crockpot so that dinner will be ready at the end of the day, that's knowing my wife's needs. Now is going to mean that I'm cooking, actually I enjoy cooking I found, so it's not actually the burden and that I thought it would be, but knowing my wife has new needs in this unique season, how can I grow in understanding them and supporting her. Nurturing and cherishing means you're going to grow in trust, that's the old saying that trust runs out of town and comes back crawling. You lose it fast, it's slow to build but just taking along where are you in terms of trust with your wife? Or where do you want to be in terms of trust with your wife one day? And thinking again, calendaring, planning, how do you win that trust back?

And maybe it just starts by acknowledging, "I've lost your trust," and talking to her about that and saying, "I don't want to over promise and under deliver. I just want you to know that I am going to try and build this trust back." And maybe tell her a few ways you plan on doing it. And then lastly, leading her spiritually. Now, and this is the last under the category of nurturing and cherishing, leading spiritually. When I first got married, I thought leading spiritually meant I needed to know more Bible than her, which was difficult because she grew up in a great Christian home and while I grew up in a Christian home, I didn't become a Christian until about two and a half years before I got married. So she had this whole leg up on knowing Bible, but I soon realized it's not about knowing more Bible.

It's not about giving my wife some devotional or sermon at the end of the day, it's about creating an environment that's going to push our wives toward Jesus, that's what leading spiritually means. So, that means praying together. That means being in the word in some way together. I think it certainly means making sure weekly worship is a priority for your family. We're getting some interesting data now that tells us, and I want to say this in the most conservative way. I think you could say it stronger but in the most conservative way, our country is in the middle of one of the greatest religious shifts in the history of our country, and it's going away from Jesus. People are de-churching at a phenomenal rate that will affect every aspect of our society. But so I want to acknowledge a lot of people who may even still be Christian are no longer going to church, but if you're leading your family spiritually and you're making sure that worship is a priority every week, because God has designed that for your good and your flourishing and everybody in your care.

### **BUILD A GOD CENTERED FAMILY**

All right. And then, so we said, growing in a role means being a student, nurturing and cherishing, then lastly, partnering with her to build a God centered family. And so God centered family, it looks different

in different stages. Some of you are in my stage. Some of you are grandparents and your family spreads farther, but all of us need to be working to develop this God centered family. For me in the stage of life I am, I really don't want to give anybody a parenting talk because I feel like I'm failing daily. I see these kids making decisions as much as I love them that I wish they wouldn't make. But what I will say in my stage, if you're in a similar stage or mentoring somebody in a similar stage, I have left the stage where my priorities are keeping them alive and in line. And I've entered the stage where I'm thinking about launching them well.

And that actually is scarier and harder to me. And I need to be partnered with my wife, well, if we're going to do this. And I was thinking just the other day as we approached my six year old's seventh birthday, that I've really got 10 years left with kids in my home, 10 years, that's what I got. In 10 years my youngest will be 17 and if you've had kids you know at 16 they're gone. They're driving, they're gone. They may sleep there, but they're gone. And so I'm thinking, what does it look like to be faithful in this season, this 10 years that I might launch them well? And again, you may be in the stage. You may not but even if you're past it, you're influencing people who are in the stage. You're preparing people for this stage.

And so I think the main thing that's in my head is the old saying, how do children spell love? How do children spell love? And do you know the answer? T-I-M-E, so partnering with her to build a God centered family. There's a lot more we could say, but I want to finish where I started. We talked about these Weekend to Remember getaways, about three or four years ago we were speaking at one in Tampa, and this woman came up to me and said, "Jim, I think I've really messed up. And I've heard about everything you can imagine at these..." I was like, "You're not going to surprise me. What'd you do?" She said, "I tricked my husband into coming to this getaway." And I was like, "Wow, how do you do that? How do you trick a man into coming to a marriage getaway?" She said, "I told him we were going clubbing."

And right then I knew exactly who her husband was because he was dressed more for a club than he was for a marriage getaway. And he was sitting in the back and he was disengaged in exactly who he was and I said, "Well, how is he doing?" And she... I can't repeat exactly what she said but the gist was, he is not happy. I said, "Well, I'll pray for him." And the first... through Friday and Saturday, he was in the back, he looked not happy. And then on Sunday morning, I was going to give a talk actually on manhood and I looked down and there's about 500 men in the room, and I looked down and he's front and center. And he's sitting there vigorously taking notes with a smile on his face.

And it was distracting. I was trying to pay attention to what I was saying, because I know something amazing has happened with this guy down front. And so at the end of the meeting, the women had their women's time and I went and I found this woman, and I said, "What's happening with your husband?" And she lit up and she said, "I don't have time to tell everything, but he found Jesus." And so now that he found Jesus, he's vigorously taking notes about how to lead and love his wife even more. And the point here is that we're not looking to become perfect men. We are looking to follow the perfect man. We follow Jesus. We understand his sacrifice for us, his love for us, his leadership of us, and the way that he is our head.

And the more we know him and follow him, the more we are naturally going to understand how to do that for other people, and that can be a lot of different people but in this context, we're talking leading as a husband, the more we follow Jesus, the more we will love and lead our wives better, and I promise you the more they will want to follow and to help us.

This is something that I'm growing in. I have a long way to go, but I'm excited about it. I want to get better at it. I want to love my wife well. I want her to feel cherished and loved and known. And I know the only way that I can do that is by following Jesus who fully knows me, all my junk yet fully accepts me and is committed to making Jim into the best version of Jim I can be, which is ultimately in the image of

the son himself. He's committed to us, all of us who have put our faith in him and that commitment to him, and understanding his love for us is what is going to empower us to embrace this role fully in our own marriages.

Would you pray with me. God, we are so thankful that you know us and you love us and you pursue us and you accept us and you sacrifice for us. And we pray that your example for us in the second person of the trinity, Jesus Christ would be our example with our wives, that we might see that it's not about power but responsibility that you have given us this great privilege to make our wives into the best form of themselves as they can be. We thank you for the privilege. May we not misuse it, may we not abuse it, may we flourish and be fruitful. We love you. We ask this in the power of your holy spirit and in the name of your perfect son Jesus Christ. Amen.