

HUSBANDS, MAY WE LEAD
OUR WIVES BY EXAMPLE,
CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

Begin this date by going to the facebook event page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/866781526735530/> or <http://www.allinmarriage.com/putnam.html> to listen to the song Lead Me. Read the lyrics below as you listen to the song together.



Lead Me by Sanctus Real

I look around and see my wonderful life; Almost perfect from the outside;
In picture frames, I see my beautiful wife; Always smiling, but on the inside;

I can hear her saying; Lead me with strong hands; Stand up when I can't;
Don't leave me hungry for love; Chasing dreams, but what about us? Show me you're willing to fight; That I'm still the love of your life. I know we call this our home; But I still feel alone

I see their faces, look in their innocent eyes; They're just children from the outside; I'm working hard, I tell myself they'll be fine; They're independent, but on the inside;

I can hear them saying; Lead me with strong hands; Stand up when I can't;
Don't leave me hungry for love; Chasing dreams, but what about us? Show me you're willing to fight; That I'm still the love of your life. I know we call this our home; But I still feel alone

So Father, give me the strength; To be everything I'm called to be;
Oh Father, show me the way; To lead them; Won't You lead me?

In Behind the Song with Kevin Davis, Matt Hammitt, the lead singer for Sanctus Real shares that the lyrics of "Lead Me" cry out to the need for Christian men to step up to be the true servant leaders as described in Ephesians 5:22-6:4. Matt said the song is a personal confession and prayer and proved to be a source of hope as my wife Sarah and I walked through a difficult pregnancy. I wrote the song after she implored me to be a better spiritual leader in the family. Sara decided to challenge her husband to step up into what God wants him to be rather than brooding on the subject, allowing this area to become a root of bitterness, filing for divorce, or attempting to overthrow her husband.

I think the challenge for me in the song, and hopefully for other men as well, is every time I hear it, every time I sing it, I ask myself, "what kind of man am I?" Not yesterday, not tomorrow, but what kind of man am I today? Have I invested in my family emotionally, spiritually the way that God has called me to reach out to them and to lead them?

Implementing this shift in daily priorities, I'm now walking together with my wife, Sarah, through one the most difficult points yet in our marriage. We are parents to Emmy and Claire, and we are currently struggling to bring to term our first baby boy, Bowen Matthew Hammitt. Bowen, which means "small victorious one," is 29-weeks-old this week and has been diagnosed with a serious heart defect. Knowing Bowen is sick has brought me face to face with the sobering reality that none of us are promised tomorrow and has pulled that nagging ache, the one to make every moment count, straight to the surface of my daily life. For the Christian guys out there (including myself), let us hear the cry of these lyrics and strive in Christ to become Christian *men* who are healthy husbands and fathers.



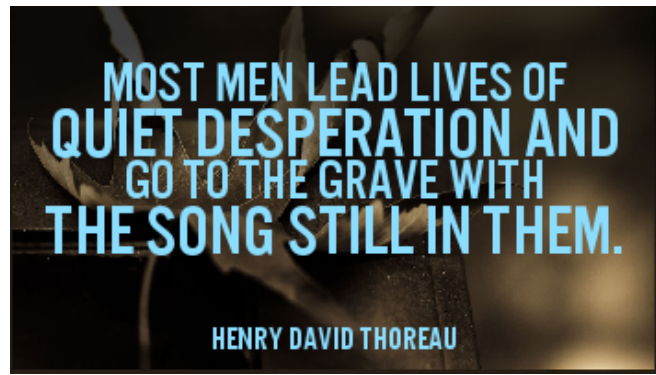
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the
great
Datexperience



- ✓ Be more concerned with your walk with the Lord, rather than your husband's. You are his wife, not his Holy Spirit.
- ✓ Continue to build him up rather than tear him down. You'll create a lot of peace in your home by doing this.
- ✓ Share your heart with him.
- ✓ Become best friends. Ask him about his day. Take up a hobby with him.
- ✓ Become even better lovers.
- ✓ Put more effort into your role as a wife, than your role as a mom. Remember, the marital relationship came before motherhood and will be there when your kids leave home.
- ✓ It's easy to nag, condemn and criticize. When you feel the tendency to speak like this, instead, do the opposite. Speak loving, encouraging, and uplifting words into his life. If you can't do this then just bite your tongue.
- ✓ Forgive him like Christ has forgiven you. Keep the right perspective. Remember that you're a sinner too!
- ✓ The two of you are one. So if he's broken, hurting, insecure, etc. guess what? You are too! Handle him with care.

Husbands, discuss with your wife which of these mean respect to you the most. Add others to the list so she can know how to fill the greatest need you have from her.



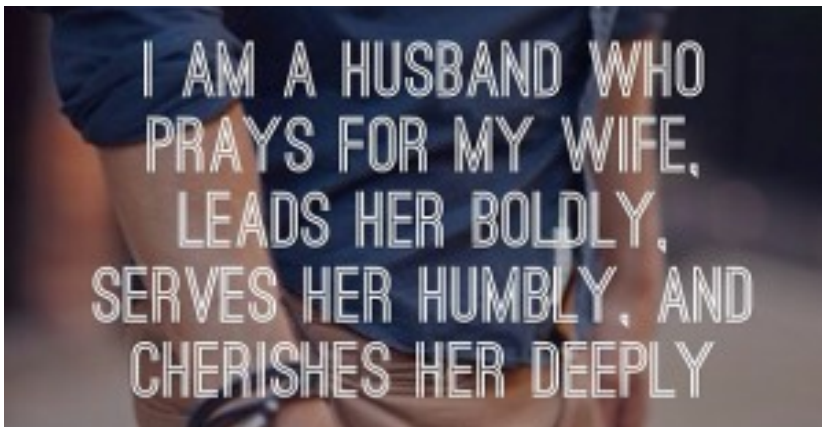
These sad words, penned by Thoreau, reveal how totally and desperately your man needs an encouraging supportive woman by his side. Do women really understand the immense power you have in the life of your husband? **Every Wife is a King Maker or Breaker!** She has the power to build him up or tear him down. How will you use your power today? From the man's perspective, if his woman doesn't believe in him, isn't fanatically committed to his potential, it doesn't much matter what others think. He's already living in Thoreau's muse, a diminished man.

Husbands need a wife's affirmation – they have to have it and, oh, how they thrive with it. Typically, men are quiet about these things but that doesn't mean they need and enjoy our wife's affirmation any less. And every man feels it: When his woman is behind him, he can slay dragons.

Here are a few words to fill your dragon-slayer with the vigor of life. Husbands fill in some specific words of encouragement you would love to hear from your wife below.

- Thanks for the date . . . I enjoyed being with you.
- I'll always stand by your side.
- Thank you for leading our family.
- You are the first place I turn.
- I love it when you barbeque!
- Thanks for helping around the house.
- What a great job – that looks fantastic!
- Our kids are fortunate you are their dad.
- I'm a better woman because you're my husband. I mean that.
- I'm thinking we should go to bed early tonight . . .
- _____
- _____

Wives, tell your husband the ways he is leading you and your family well. Also, respectfully discuss areas where growth is needed. Husbands, share the ways you feel respected by your wife.



How has God called a husband to Lead and Love his wife and family?

1. He is a practicing believer and Christ follower.

Issues and conflict are bound to rise in marriage, so it is crucial that there is a common foundation on which to hold the marriage accountable. The last thing you want to be fighting about is your faith, whether or not to pray and your viewpoints on religion.

2. God is the center of his life.

He seeks God's wisdom in all the decisions he makes.

3. He has integrity and does not put himself in tempting situations.

He guards against harm and protects the relationship.

4. He prays for his wife and family.

He constantly is praying for direction for himself, his wife and his children.

5. Seeks mentorship and counsel.

It is important that a husband is wise in realizing he can't carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. When he is surrounded by men who are older than him who can offer advice, prayer and mentorship, he can be a better man and husband. "The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice." Proverbs 12:15

6. He is slow to anger.

A wife has peace in knowing her man holds an even temperament even when he is provoked. A man who allows his feelings, emotions and anger to determine his actions typically has tarnished relationships and is not a healthy place for you or a family. "A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel." Proverbs 15:18

7. He holds strong conviction on the sacredness of fidelity.

A man is wise when he understand that infidelity and looking for pleasure outside of the marriage only brings strife. He sets the appropriate guardrails/boundaries to ensure he does not fall into the trap of infidelity in any way. God actually calls him to rejoice over his wife all of his days. "May your fountain be blessed and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth...May you be ever captivated by her love. Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress?" Proverbs 5:18-20.

8. He leads his wife and family in the ways of the Lord

A Christian man is to bring leadership to his home and family (Eph. 5:23). As Jesus Christ leads the Church, so men are to lead their families. Jesus' leadership was not self-centered. It involved great strength on His part, to sacrifice Himself in the service of those He deeply loved. God held Adam accountable for sin in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:9-19), even though it was Eve who first took the forbidden fruit. Leadership involves accepting responsibility for the whole family unit. For the Christian husband, leading his wife is not "lording over" but watching over. The husband helps his wife realize her full potential, discussing and thinking through decisions together and making suggestions regarding wise utilization of her time and efforts. It is important that husbands not be too controlling or critical, but instead be appreciative, patient, considerate, gentle, encouraging, and above most other things, a good listener.

9. He is honorable of his wife's heart and emotional well-being and learn her.

A wife should feel honored and safe knowing she can always trust her husband to cover and speak well of her. "Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers," Proverbs 5:17.

"Love each other deeply because love covers all wrongs." 1 Peter 4:8. A Christian husband will be always learning about his wife (1 Pet. 3:7). As Jesus Christ knows all about us, so a man should try to understand his wife (Song 4:1-15).

10. He is disciplined in living a life of integrity.

A Godly husband watches how he handles temptation or sticky situations that test his character. Do you choose to do what's right even when no one is watching? Your wife observe these things because it will indicate if she can trust your decision making. When you're married, almost all of your decisions impact her and your family. "He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly." Proverbs 5:23

11. Has solid work ethic.

"A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest- and poverty will come upon you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man." Proverbs 6:10-11. A Christian husband is to look after all the needs of his family (Eph. 5:29). As Jesus Christ seeks to supply the

material, emotional and spiritual needs of the Church, so a man should do all he can to provide for his family. God told Adam he should work hard (Gen. 3:19). It is not right to be lazy. We should protect our families from hardships we can avoid by earning what we can. We should try to provide with our own hands food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education for our family. Working is part of our worship of God (Rom. 12:1-2). If any sacrifice has to be made, we should make it ourselves before asking any other family member to join us. We may even have to sacrifice the job we really want, in order to actually do the job God offers us as His provision for our family. God took something away from the man, in order to bring him his wife. The sacrificed rib (Gen. 2:21-22) was used in the Creator's hand to make the best "thing" ever to come into Adam's life! In God's intended way of life for us, giving is regularly our best way to receive.

12. He pursues and loves his wife passionately. He really "lives with" his wife and family.

Husbands should create feelings of his wife being safe, accepted, desired, nurtured, protected and comforted. Jesus loves us deeply, he loves us so fiercely, that he willingly gave up his life to save us. Pursues: "So Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel. But his love for her was so strong that it seemed to him but a few days." Genesis 29:20. Loves: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." Ephesians 5:25. To love as Christ loved is to be the *initiator* as Christ is the initiator in His relationship with the church. We were estranged from God, but Jesus didn't wait for the church to approach Him. He didn't expect that the bride, as the "relational" one, would be more invested in the relationship and plead with Him to come back. Which means, men, that to be like Christ is to be the ones who chase after our wives. If things go bad, we think of ourselves as responsible for setting them right. We should be the ones having marriage study groups. We should be the ones saying to our wives, "We need to talk." We should be the ones who buy the books, sign up for the marriage conferences, initiate getting away from the kids for a while, or who reaches out to wise counsel when they are in need of it. As part of His love, Jesus wasn't just the lead initiator, He became the lead sufferer. He "took the bullet" so we didn't have to. Jesus loved us with the ultimate suffering, his life. He then called husbands to model that same suffering for their wives by daily choosing her desires and needs. If suffering must come, let it begin with me. If someone needs to get a second job, it's me. If someone needs to speak up to my parents or in-laws about undue meddling, it's me. If someone needs to have the painful conversation with a child about who they're dating, it's me. If someone needs to say "No" to more requests so that there's more time for marriage and family, it's me. This doesn't diminish our wives—as if they are incapable of any of the above—it's done in an attitude of service to our wives. Spend intentional time this week daily asking yourself, "What bullet can I take for my wife? What burden is she carrying that I should carry? What action has she been forced to take that I should be taking?" Let's do this in an attitude of *humility*. If we've been passive and suddenly come on too strong, our wives might think we're disappointed in how they're handling things. We need to be repentant, explain what's going on, thank them for stepping up when they did, but then offer to carry the burden from now on, as Christ would have us to. (Gary Thomas article, April 12, 2015, Christian Husbands Suffer First) He does not live to be served, but lives to serve his wife and children. He seeks to love as Jesus loved. The 'thanks' or rewards come back in countless other ways. Quality time and efforts invested are never wasted. Service is not slavery, with a negative connotation; rather it is giving or sowing, with the knowledge that an abundant harvest is forthcoming. He does not live to be served, but lives to serve his wife and children. His motivation is love -- loving God first, then loving those entrusted to his care before seeking to fulfill his own needs. Since his wife is his chosen life partner, investing sincere attention and love into her means that a husband considers his wife his most treasured "asset." He spends time really living with his wife and family (1 Pet. 3:7). As Jesus Christ promised to be with us always, so a man should invest a lot of quality time with his family. Make time to listen to your wife daily, taking an interest in her heart and practical needs, and being available to do things regularly with her. He also devotes time to his children, listening to them, investing in them, guiding them in the ways the Lord has for them, modeling God for them with your life and your choices. All children learn by copying. Dads have to present to their kids a life worth copying. Children are confused if they hear one thing yet see another (Prov. 22:6).

13. He romances his wife.

God desires for a woman's heart is to be romanced, just as He longs to romance us. He designed a woman's heart to emotionally connect with her husband then culminate into a beautiful physical relationship full of pleasure for both the husband and the wife. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth...more delightful than wine." Song of Solomon 1:2

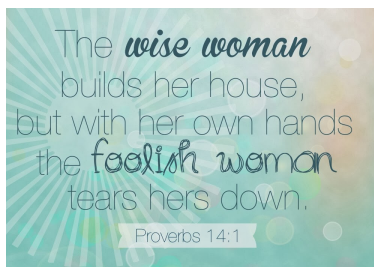
"Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame." Song of Solomon 8:6.

14. He persists in joy and gratitude.

A Christian husband and father establishes the culture of his home more than anyone else. The moody teenager, fussy toddler, or even sullen wife are not the determining factor. The husband is. Pursue joy in the Lord and persist in thanksgiving to God for all His good gifts (James 1:17). This is a great starting place for shaping your home.

15. He is humble and can admit when he is wrong.

Taking responsibility for his actions and apologizing for his mistakes is the sign of a Godly man. "Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18 No person will be perfect and grace is a beautiful thing that makes relationships flourish. That being said, a husband should constantly desire and pray for growth.



Are You Foolish or Wise?

Ways Women Trash Their Marriage and Better Ways to Build Your House Instead

Please, if you find yourself doing these things, ask for God's help in being **constructive instead of destructive**. Help to **build your marriage, not trash it**. You don't **have** to trash your marriage. You can treasure it instead.

SELFISH DEMANDS Make demands instead of requests. Wives, when you let your husband know that he *will* do things your way, or you'll make his life miserable. Another thing is always getting the last word when you're arguing. Dr. Phil McGraw has said that the most accurate predictor of divorce is when people don't allow their partners to retreat with dignity. So make your spouse feel whipped and defeated at the end of a fight. As long as you win, that's what matters. **Instead build your marriage, fight selfishness by developing a servant's heart. Commit yourself to acting in your spouse's best interests. Do at least one unselfish deed for your husband or wife every day.**

CRITICISM Be critical of the smallest thing the other one says and does. Don't let your spouse get away with anything! Stay vigilant for every little offense. Be sure to address these small details with an air of superiority . . . unless it works better for you to act like a martyr, as if you deserve the Nobel Prize for putting up with someone who doesn't squeeze the toothpaste from the end. **Instead of picking at each other, choose to let things go. Be grace-givers. Remember that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). When there is something that does need to be addressed, don't be critical or angry. Instead express it wisely and constructively. Use words like "I'm angry about this" instead of yelling or hurtful silence. If you're too mad to speak with self-control, wait till you cool down. And don't go to bed without dealing with the situation (Eph. 4:26).**

PUT KIDS (AND ANYTHING ELSE) FIRST

Another step to trashing your marriage is to *let the kids become more important than your spouse*. Moms, make your husband feel left out of the intimate, secret relationship between you and your baby. As the baby grows, continue to draw the line where it's you and your child on one side, your husband on the other. Keep your Mommy hat on all day and all night. Your kids don't care if your hair is brushed and if you put on perfume and a little makeup before Daddy comes home, so why should he? Let the kids and your other priorities crowd out your "alone together" time. Date nights are for unmarried people! In order to be fulfilled as a person, it is essential to invest all your energies in parenting, career, housework, church commitments and hobbies, so don't worry if there isn't enough time left over for the two of you. It's no big deal. There's always tomorrow. Or next year. **Instead be intentional in keeping your marriage at the center of your family. Have times each day to discuss your hearts with each other, invest in regular date nights, and schedule times away to invest in the intimacy of your relationship. Your marriage needs to be strong to raise your children and when those children leave.**

SHOW DISRESPECT

Show disrespect for your spouse, especially in public. Complain about your spouse to your friends. It's even more powerful if you do it in front of your spouse. Then, if he objects, punch him in the arm and say, "I'm just kidding! You take everything so *seriously!*" There are a number of ways to show disrespect with nonverbal communication. Roll your eyes, cluck your tongue, narrow your eyes in contempt. The heavy sigh is a real winner, too. Straighten out your husband when he makes a mistake, especially in front of others. Lecture him. Ridicule him: his feelings, his behavior, his dreams, his thoughts. Do everything you can to emasculate your husband. **Instead commit to actively be respectful to your spouse by never saying anything negative to other people. Be kind in your words and actions. Be mindful of your non-verbal actions which can speak louder than your hurtful words.**

BE HIS MOTHER

Wives, *be a mother* to your husband. When people ask how many children you have, say things like, "Two—three, if you count my husband." Tell him to wear a coat when it's cold and take an umbrella when it's raining, because he can't figure it out on his own. Be sure to say "I told you so" as often as possible. If he is passive or irresponsible, jump in and rescue him so he won't have to deal with the consequences of his own choices. Make sure he feels three years old. Tell him how to live his life, down to the smallest detail. **Resign as your husband's mother. You married an adult; treat him with the respect an adult deserves.**

5 Ways to Help Your Husband Step Up to Manhood

By Barbara Rainey

A wife plays a pivotal role in her husband's transition from boyhood into manhood.

You've probably heard the saying, "Behind every successful man is a strong woman." Though the statement has been ridiculed as anti-woman, it is, in fact, very true. When you married your husband, he was unsure of himself as a man and was unskilled as a husband. It's true of all boys who have grown up and gotten married. What males need—what your husband needs—is a wife who believes in him, encourages him, and helps him step up to become the man God created him to be.



Here are five ways you can influence your husband's successful transition to manhood:

1. Choose maturity. Sometimes in your marriage, one or both of you can act selfishly. If you've been married longer than two weeks you know this is true. Sadly most of us enter marriage still clinging to some childishness in our behavior patterns. Your husband may act like an adolescent at times, but the problem cannot be solved by manipulation, intimidation, or criticism. One of you needs to choose maturity first to get out of the cycle. Set aside the emotions as much as you can and speak with kindness. Communicating with maturity is a choice. Proverbs 15:1 says, "A soft answer turns away wrath." A woman who wants to help her husband grow into a strong, godly man can help by becoming mature herself.

2. Speak the truth in love. In our marriage, I've come to Dennis many times to speak the truth about what's going on in our family or what I feel is missing in our relationship. There have been seasons when he was traveling too much. At other times I sensed that one of our children needed a father's focus. One of my favorite Bible stories is the one about Esther. Even though she was married to a man who was not a believer in the God of her people, she still treated him with great respect as her husband and her leader. When she discovered the plot to exterminate all the Jews—her people—she didn't go running into his office crying hysterically and yelling at him for making such a foolish mistake. Instead she prayed before going to inform him that he had signed her death warrant. What Esther shows all of us wives is the importance of approaching our husbands with difficult information in a way that is easy for them to hear. Esther made a great dinner and talked to her husband after he had eaten. Sometimes the information or the truth must be told immediately without the kind of preparation Esther made. But many times we wives can wait until the kids are in bed or after he's had dinner or we can even wait a day or two to make sure we speak wisely. Wives would benefit from praying before we speak the truth to our husbands. And so would our husbands. Proverbs 16:21 says, "The wise of heart is called discerning and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness." What a great verse for wives! But don't sugarcoat the truth either. He needs to know the whole truth in any situation, but it can be said with grace and wisdom and kindness. At the same time remind him that God is in control and that you are trusting God and him. You are a team in marriage. Be on his team and help him win!

3. Praise your husband when he steps up to manhood. When he leads family devotions, when he prays with you, or when he makes decisions that are especially responsible, thank him. Just as you want to cheer your kids when they do something right, you need to cheer your husband. Your words to your husband are powerful. Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear." Encouraging him and praising him when he does what's right is one way you can help him be the man that God wants him to be.

4. Believe that your husband can grow to become a more godly man. If you believe in your husband ... if you accept him as who he is ... if you trust God and then allow God to work in his life ... God might just surprise you. One of my favorite verses, Luke 1:37, says, "For nothing will be impossible with God." Perhaps you've been married for more than 20 years, and you really think your husband can't and won't change. Remember that nothing is impossible with God. The King of Heaven is not finished with your husband, and you need to believe both in God and in your husband. Don't underestimate what God can do!

5. Pursue godliness and pray for him! You will encourage your husband to become a godly husband if you choose first to become a godly wife. As Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." If you're seeking to become righteous, then you will be more in tune with what God is doing all around you, including allowing God to work on your husband. Focus on your attitude and your own pursuit toward godliness. Galatians 6:9 says, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Stepping up to manhood is a process for your husband, but so is your helping him. As with all processes, sometimes there are setbacks. Your husband might be doing well, making good decisions, and acting responsibly, but something happens that causes him to step back into adolescence from manhood. When he does something that's childish or foolish, your responsibility is not to berate and belittle him. Instead, be the kind of wife who can call him up to manhood.