

God's Design for Marriage - Session Three

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Welcome to Session Three in our marriage series, God's Design for Marriage. Today, the topic is the role of the husband. And I think that some of the things that you will talk about in this session are very intuitive for the men, but they're not easy. Tell me a little about it.

Yeah, I totally agree. And some of them are not intuitive for men. And so we're going to be, I think, taking men a little bit outside of their comfort zone as we're talking about their role in marriage, in taking care of the family, providing, and protecting. But I think this is a very important session, particularly for the men and for the women to know and understand what God has said in His Word related to her husband's role in the family. So let's get on with session number three tonight.

We're getting into part three of our marriage series, God's Design for Marriage and we're going to be talking about the role of the husband. We're going to be dealing specifically, the men, as it relates to the role. Ladies, don't think you're off the hook, next week, it's all about you.

But I always appreciate the fact that the women are present when I'm talking about the role of the man, the husband. And I always appreciate the fact that the men are present, when I'm talking about the role of their wife because it is important for you to know what the scripture has to say about your spouse, and their calling, and so forth.

We talked last week about the ministry that you have one to another, ministering to the greatest need as it is shown to us in the Scripture. Today we're going to be talking about specifically the husband's role as the protector and the provider, or provider and protector.

However, it doesn't matter what order you put them in, but this is what God has called men functionally to be and to do in the home. And there are essentially four areas that we're going to cover tonight, where I believe that the Scripture speaks to this issue of the husband functioning in this role of the provider and

protector. And they are on the screen as follows, in the area protecting and providing,

Husbands are called to Protect and Provide

- Physically
- Spiritually
- Emotionally
- Morally

Physically. Protecting and providing, **Spiritually.** Protecting and providing, **Emotionally.** And then protecting and providing, **Morally.**

Now, if you were to come up or walk up to any husband and ask them the simple question, do you provide for your family and do you protect your family? I think most guys would say, well, yeah, sure, of course I do.

But, as men, when we think about this idea of providing for our families, providing for our wives, and so forth, and protecting them, we think almost instinctively on a more physical level because men are more physical. We think usually in physical terms.

If I were to say to a man, what do you do to protect your wife? He would immediately think about the things that he does physically to protect her. He might say, something like, well, I make sure that her car is, well maintained. She's got good tires so if she's ever out on the road, she's got a safe vehicle to drive in. I make sure that the doors are locked every night when we go to bed and the house is secure. And that's just, it's part of what it is to provide and protect.

And, I really think that this is hardwired into men. In fact, it's not only hardwired in the sense that we have a desire to do it, but it's just, it feeds us somehow.

And I even saw this, when I was raising my own kids. When Aaron, good grief, he's 36 now, but when he was a little boy, about 5 years old, I remember a time when I had to leave to come to the church and do something. And Sue had to go out and get some groceries and he didn't want to go with her. And he wanted to come with me. And I had things going on and I just couldn't bring a 5 year old with me at the time.

So I said, dude, you need to go with your mom to the store. And he was like, oh man, I don't want to go to the store, and I... He thought that was boring or something. And so I thought, I'm going to appeal to this kid and to how he's hardwired.

And I said, dude, who's going to protect your mom from the bad guys? And, he threw his shoulders back and he thought for a minute. I could see he's processing. He's like, you're right. And he turned around and he ran into his room and he came back a couple of seconds later with a couple of tinker toys and a rubber band, or whatever.

And he had fashioned a weapon, and he started telling me how he was going to use this to protect his mom from the bad guys. And now he was all about going with his mom, to the grocery store because somebody's got to protect that woman and I guess it's me. It's funny, now he has his own son who's five and Benjamin is the same way.

He fashions swords out of anything or, I mean, a banana becomes a weapon, and except, he doesn't call sword swords. He made up his own name. He calls them shangers, and he goes around shanging people, and shanging the bad guys. And we have no idea what that really means, but we all use it. He'll be running around with a sword and I'll say, hey dude, that's a great shanger. And it's just, it's there.

And yet I raised two girls of my own, and in our own home. And I've got several girl, granddaughters. None of them ever came up with a shanger. None of them ever fashioned a sword out of sticks, and not one of them picked up a banana and turned it into a gun. Not once. But the boys it's just in them so this is something that we desire to do.

As we go to this first section that we're going to be looking at here about providing and protecting physically. The husband as the physical provider and protector.

This is one of those things I find when I'm doing pre marriage counseling or counseling a couple, I don't have to spend a lot of time on for the very reasons I've already explained. It's hardwired in a guy.

And so I say, how are you physically, providing and protecting? And of course, well, a man is going to say, well, I work hard. I bring home a paycheck. And I make sure that there's food on the table and that's the way I physically provide.

And then we talk about the ways they physically protect and it's all fairly easy for them to come up with. But it is something that is considered to be vital. And I want to show you a passage here from 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 8 that says,

1 Timothy 5:8 (ESV)

...if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

...if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse (Paul writes to Timothy) than an unbeliever.

And the reason he says that is because even unbelievers... No one understand that this is just innate in a man to provide and protect on a physical level. And so whether we're talking about providing food, whether we're talking about providing clothing, or whether we're talking about providing safety to the family, again, this is not something I have to talk a lot to men about because it's just in them. They want to do this. It makes them feel good to do it and it is a great desire.

But here's where we come to a little bit of a stymie point. Moving past physical providing and protecting, this is where men start to get tripped up a little bit because we're so geared to the physical, we struggle sometimes to move beyond that.

And so as we get to the second element of providing and protecting, which is the Spiritual Provider and Protector. Now we start getting into some areas where men feel less likely to step out and do what they are in fact called to do. And the reason, one of the reasons for this is something that we mentioned in an earlier session, and that is that men are occupational.

And when we say that men are occupational, we again say that they derive a great sense of self-worth from what they do from their job. And that's again, why men get together, and they, one of the first things they ask is, what do you do for a living? That's just part of how we think.

So when we talk to a man and I start discussing to a man about his role as the spiritual provider for his family, the spiritual protector of his family, I get a little bit of a deer in the headlights sort of a look sometimes because guys occupationally don't naturally fall into this sort of an area.

And here's the interesting thing about men, not all men, there are some men who are very adventurous, but I would say the majority of men, when they are facing a task for which they feel ill equipped, they will often back away from it. Because occupationally, we feel good about the things that we do. If I can't feel good about something, if I look at a job and I think to myself, I don't think I can do that, I'm probably not even going to try.

Now, again, there are some guys I consider them mutants, but they just, they'll just run into any situation or any circumstance and they'll just go, I'll give that a try. They don't seem to care about failing or something like that. That's a rarity, but most of us don't like to look at things that we're not good at.

I remember this really hit me hard when we were, Sue and I were living up in the Seattle area. I'd been on staff at a church there for a few years and we felt the Lord leading us to, I was an associate pastor there, one of four associate pastors. And I felt the leading of the Lord to resign my position and just wait on the Lord for the next assignment, which I thought was going to, be right around the corner.

It ended up taking about a year and the Lord had a purpose in that year, but I needed to find some work because all I had ever done before the ministry, I'd been in radio and that was really all I could do. And the radio station that I'd been working at, which was a Christian station in Seattle, didn't have any full time openings. They were giving me work on the weekends and maybe filling in for somebody on vacation, but obviously that wasn't enough to take care of the family.

Sue was working full time, but bless her heart, she decided she wanted to help me find a job. So she got out the Seattle times, and laid it on the table and proceeded to circle all the jobs she thought I'd be good at. I tell you, I just about went into a clinical depression, just reading all of the different things that she's circled.

One after one, I'm reading this and go, I can't do that. I can't, I don't even know what that is. I don't even know how to pronounce that. And I just went down the line thinking, this is dumb. I can't do any of these things. I felt like a failure, for my family, because here I am geared as I am as a man to provide and protect. I just, I couldn't seem to do it.

Well, boy, I tell you when you talk to a man about being the spiritual provider and protector, you can get a similar reaction from some guys because they feel like their wife is more attuned to this area of the spiritual.

She, many times wives are, have been a believer for a greater number of years. Not always, but in a lot of cases. Sometimes they know the Word even better than their husbands. And yet this man is in this position of this spiritual oversight.

Now we've already looked at that passage that talked about the fact that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. (Ephesians 5:23) This is a spiritual role that he has in the marriage and in the family. And yet, if you ask the guy, husbands, what exactly does this role entail? Well, a lot of guys are going to scratch their heads.

But I believe that one of the things that we men overlook the most when it comes to spiritually providing for our wife and family, and spiritually protecting our wife and our family, is prayer. Is just simple prayer.

And, there's this incredible passage which I'll show you in a moment, but it has to do. It's from the old Testament. It has to do with the situation that the son of Abraham, Isaac was facing with his wife. You'll remember that like his mother, Isaac married a woman who was unable to conceive. And Rebecca could not have children and she was greatly distressed as women always would be back in those days, particularly not being able to conceive. Because it was considered that a woman was cursed by God if she did not, or was not able to have children, so it was a huge deal. And she came to Isaac and expressed her great concern.

And I've always been so impressed by the simplicity of Isaac's response. Let me put this on the screen for you. From Genesis chapter 25, it simply says this,

Genesis 25:21 (ESV)

And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, (isn't that simple? And it tells us) because she was barren. And the LORD granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

Now here's what's interesting about this particular situation, Isaac understood that there was only so much he could do about this situation or his wife's inability to conceive. Because as a man, he's obviously, he's going to be thinking naturally on a physical level, there's only so much a man could do physically as it relates to helping his wife conceive.

And yet he knew that this was beyond his ability. This was outside the realm of what he was going to be able to do to help her to have a child. And Isaac understood that this was out of his hands. And the reason that impresses me so much is that by and large, we men don't like to think about things that are out of our hands because we're doers for the most part.

And because we are occupational, and because we do, when we face a situation for which there's nothing we can do, we often throw up our hands and say, well, what can I do about it?

In fact, what's interesting about this story of Isaac and Rebecca is we know, as we saw in the passage, Rebecca did conceive and not only did she conceive, but she conceived twins, and she gave birth to Esau and Jacob.

And then Jacob fell in love with a young girl named Rachel and she couldn't conceive and she came to him. She came to Jacob the same way Jacob's mother had gone to his father, Isaac, and express this need. And Rachel did the same thing. She said, I want to have a baby.

And rather than praying for her, Jacob got angry. And he said, am I in the place of God that I can do anything about this? He didn't pray for her. He didn't do the simple act of bringing this need to the Lord. He just got angry.

Unfortunately, this is often the response that we men have when we face a situation which we are helpless to change in and of ourselves. We often just get angry. In fact, I've always, anger is kind of a man's go to emotional response.

Women are more purists in their emotional responses. When women are sad, they get weepy. When men are sad, they get angry. When women are afraid, they show fear. When men are afraid, they get angry. And it just goes along those lines and we see in the Scripture that Jacob responded to his wife in that same way. He knew this was beyond his ability so he got angry and he basically bit at her.

So we take this very simple lesson from the life of Isaac. And here's the statement that I want to make to you, husbands. You're going to face, I know you already have. You will continue to face situations in your marriage for which you can do nothing you and of yourself physically, I mean.

It's something you can't fix. You can't get out a hammer. You can't get out your tools. You can't get out the things that you use to take care of things and fix it so what are you going to do? You need to understand that on a spiritual level, you

have power and authority through the name of Jesus to deal with these issues in prayer for your wife and for your family. And we men need to understand that God is looking to us to provide in this area. To provide spiritually.

Now, this idea of spiritual protection and provision goes beyond just praying for our wife or for our family. It goes into areas like, protection, guarding against doctrinal errors and problems like that.

It means being the leader in the home saying, honey, let's get the kids going, let's get to church. We need to get to church. It's time to, we need to get there. We need to be devoted to sitting under the teaching of the Word, and worshiping, and serving, and caring about the body of Christ.

This is the role of the man to provide and to protect. If there's something going on at church that isn't right, it's that man's role to step up and say, wait a minute, we got a problem here, and we're going to have to deal with this situation.

It's making sure that the family is safe on a spiritual level, praying for the family. Lord, keep us safe. Keep us in a place where we're going to get fed, be encouraged, providing and protecting on a spiritual level.

Once again, not something that's going to come naturally to a guy. Most guys, myself included, but something that we need to think about, something we need to understand, something we need to know that God is looking to us to take care of.

Now let's get to the next one, and this is another one that may or may not fall very naturally to a man. And that is the area of The Emotional Provider and Protector.

There is a role that we have in the home to make sure that we are not the cause of emotional turmoil. And why? Because we are called by God to protect and provide in the area of the emotional.

And if we ourselves, guys, if we're the cause of emotional upheaval in the home, who's going to protect your wife? It's like when the police become corrupt. They're the ones who've been given the charge to uphold the law and keep the peace. Well, what happens when the police department in a city becomes so corrupt that they're actually the ones committing crimes? Well, who's going to protect the people now?

Those who've been given the role to protect are no longer, not only are they not protecting, they're causing trouble. Well, that's what happens when a man fails in this area of providing and protecting on an emotional level. And he is actually part of the problem. I want to show you a couple of scriptures. First of all, from Colossians chapter 3, beginning at verse 19, it says,

Colossians 3:19, 21 (ESV)

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

I want you to stop there. We'll come back to this verse and look at the next verse that's on there in just a moment. But I want to talk just a minute about this command that we are given in the Word guys, not to be harsh.

This is something, as men, and I trust that's not going on in this room. But as men, we are usually bigger and stronger than our wives. And as such, we can be intimidating. And sometimes there are men who choose to lead by intimidation. And yet the Bible says we are to love our wives and not be harsh.

Well, the opposite of harsh is gentle. So we are called by God to treat our wives and obviously our families as well, in a gentle way. Again, this doesn't always come naturally to us men when, particularly when our default emotional response to life can be anger.

And we can strike out in anger against our families, and say things that we don't mean, and can really do some hurt. I've done it myself. I've gotten frustrated, and angry, and bit at people in my family, and then had to go and apologize later on. But it is our job and God is looking to us as men to protect the emotional stability of our wives. To protect the emotional stability.

I believe this even gets into the area of what's going on in her life outside of the home. If, just as an example, if a woman is working outside the home and she comes home emotionally wrecked from work every day, because there's somebody there at work, that's harassing her or making life difficult. It's not out of bounds for a husband to step in and say, honey, I think we need to do this.

I've been called by God to provide and protect in the area of your emotional stability and you are not emotionally stable right now. This job is doing more damage to you emotionally than the paycheck is worth. Let's talk about this. Let's think about this. Let's decide what we need to do about this because it's my

responsibility as your husband to step in and say, enough is enough. And a woman needs to be willing to let her husband function in that role of care and concern for her emotional stability, even if it makes, temporarily makes life a little difficult.

I've heard of husbands who have gone to their wife's workplace and had to talk with the boss and said, listen, there's somebody in this office that's making life miserable for my wife and I'm not going to put up with it anymore. So you deal with it or she's gone. Yeah it's not outside his purview. I think it's part and parcel of his responsibility because he's called to respond to her, and take care of her, and to protect her emotionally. Obviously, he is also called to provide, again, that emotional stability in the home as well.

Now, I know that we're talking primarily about marriage, but I, there's also a verse in this passage from Colossians that speaks to the husband's role toward the children. And I want to add this, even though it goes beyond our idea of marriage. But it goes on in verse 21 of Colossians 3 to say,

Colossians 3:19, 21 (ESV)

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

And again, this is really the same word to husbands now to, as fathers, to protect and provide for the emotional stability of their children. And specifically, Paul says, don't provoke them.

And I got to thinking about that. I thought, what would cause a child to feel provoked? What would a husband and a father do that might cause a child to feel provoked and to become discouraged? I think one other Bible translation says that they might become embittered. And that's an interesting word. Don't let your kids become embittered.

And that can happen when a father is not taking care of the emotional stability of the children. I believe that one of the most important things a father can do. Well, and I'll say a husband too.

One of the most important things that we as husbands can do to support our wife's emotional health and our children's emotional health, is to be free with these two words: I'm sorry.

I have talked with some women who have never once heard those words pass their husband's lips. And I know that it's not because he hasn't messed up. It's because he's just simply not willing to say it. And it communicates so much to a family that lends toward their emotional stability, when a man simply is willing to admit his fault and say, I'm sorry.

I remember when, again, when Aaron was a little boy about, he was probably about 3 years old at this point. He and his sister were our only kids that we had at the time and we put them to bed. And we had another couple over from the church, and we were sitting in the living room talking, and I can get carried away when I'm talking with people sometimes. And I started telling some family stories and I think I started telling some kind of a story that had to do with something that happened in the bathroom with Aaron here when he was little.

And it was one of those embarrassing things, but he was, he's like 3 or 4 years old and I didn't really care. So I was kind of telling this story and we're all laughing. And then as we settled down, I hear this whimpering and crying from the bedroom. So I excused myself and I went in and I remember he was on a bunk bed. He was on the top bunk. And so I leaned up against his bunk bed and I said, hey bud what's wrong? And he just simply said to me, and through his tears, you shouldn't have told them that.

And I remember at the time that I had a choice. There was a choice in front of me about how I was going to respond to my son in terms of protecting his emotional, his feelings, his emotional response.

And I could have said to him now, listen, I'm the dad and I can say whatever I want in my home and you need to stop being so sensitive. And I want you to turn over and just go to sleep. All right. I could have said that.

Thank God I didn't because it's in me to say something like that, but for some reason or another, God was gracious to me that night and I got my face down to his and I said, you're absolutely right, bud. I shouldn't have said that. And I'm sorry.

Now, when I, and I remember that something happened at that point between, in my relationship with him as my son. It opened a door. I think had I said to him, just turn over and go to sleep, and stop being such a baby, I would have shut a door between he and I in such a way as to communicate to him, dad really doesn't care about your feelings. Okay.

So I probably would have kept him from that point on, from opening up and telling me about his feelings after that. But the fact that by God's grace, I responded to his feelings, and acknowledge them, and then even apologize for what I had said. I then communicated to him, it's okay for you to talk to me about what's going on in your heart. It's okay. I'll listen and I won't put you down. And he needed to hear that.

He needed to hear that in order to grow up and be the good dad that he is with his own kids today. And that's, I think that's what the apostle Paul is talking about when he says, "*Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*" Or embittered.

I think dads who are overly critical are the kind who shut their kids down emotionally. Who look at a report card only and ignore all of the A's, only to rail on the one B-. Or who walked past the bedroom and never have a nice word to say, even when that room is in good condition, as rare as that may be. But it's a matter of caring about other people's feelings. That's so important, so important.

And again, we talked in one of our previous sessions about a husband responding to his wife's emotions. When she comes to you and she expresses something and does even in an emotional way. Again, as guys, we tend to be a little less feely. And so when she's talking to me about her feelings and her emotions, it's not tremendously comfortable.

And my tendency is to want to shut it down or fix it or say, well, honey, what do I need to do? And what I really need to do is acknowledge her feelings and just listen. And that's a difficult thing to do, frankly, for a guy, I'll just be honest with you. But it's something that we have to do in order to keep the door open and make sure our wives and our kids know that it's okay. It's okay to talk to us about what's going on inside your heart and I'm not going to shut you down.

The final section that we're looking at here in terms of providing and protecting has to do with Moral Provision And Protecting. Men, you are also the moral provider and protector.

I want to show you a passage here from Ephesians chapter 5, once again, it's one that we've looked at before, but we're going to look at it as it relates to this particular calling. It says,

Ephesians 5:25-27 (ESV)

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (I want you to see this next phrase) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Paul goes on in that passage to say in like manner, husbands love your wives. So here, Paul, the apostle takes this beautiful picture of Jesus in the church, reminding us as husbands, that His love for His bride was expressed in His own sacrificial actions of love toward her. But he tells us the purpose of those sacrificial actions. It was to cleanse and purify, to keep her pure.

Now, obviously as husbands, we're not going to die for our wives in the way that Christ died for the church, but we can sacrifice to bring about a greater moral purity in the family and in the home. And that's what we're talking about.

We're talking about providing and protecting as it relates to the moral environment of your home to... This is an act of love guys. That's why Paul started off by saying, "*Husbands, love your wives,*" and in so doing bring purification, and holiness, and purity.

So it is an act of love on our part to care about the things that are going on in our home. And when I talk about what was going on in our home, I'm talking about the TV that we watch, the movies that are going on in our home. The music that we listen to, the books that our family is reading and magazines. Even friends, even friends. Friends can, they're lovely to have, but sometimes they can be a bad influence morally, and we have to be looking out for that, watching out for that.

We have to learn to model for our families, the kind of morality that the Lord wants us to show or to have within the home. We need to model it and not just insist, hey kids, don't watch that movie. We don't watch that, you guys can only watch. We need to model those very things that we're asking of our kids and encouraging godly means of entertainment, godly means of fun.

Because there's nothing wrong with entertainment and having fun. There's nothing wrong with that. And your family should be a fun family. And if it's just you and your wife, great, enjoy yourselves, have fun. If you have children, bring that into the home, that fun and entertainment as well. But make sure that there's a protecting element going on also. That is the husband's job.

And that's not to say that the wife isn't involved, but she comes alongside, and he leads. And he makes sure that what's coming into the home is morally okay for the kids.

This even includes what your kids are learning from school. If you have, if some of you have kids in school, you can't just check out and just say, well, the teachers know best. No, they don't. And that's coming from someone who was raised in an educational family. My father for his entire career was in education. A principal, a teacher first, a principal, and then a superintendent.

I have two siblings who spent their entire career in the public school system teaching and they did a great job, and I'm proud of them for the job that they did, but we got to be careful. Things have changed and they're constantly devolving from a moral standpoint and parents have to be aware of that.

And you as the husband, I'm talking to you guys, have to be particularly aware of the fact that God has called you into that role of the moral provider. And that means providing morally for the family and the moral protector. That means protecting from those outside influences that come to hinder, and hamper, and erode proper relationships in the Lord.

So as we go back and we look at these things, we see that the husband has a calling upon his life.

His role in the home is to provide and protect on a physical level, on a spiritual level, on an emotional level, and on a moral level.