LEADERSHIP

We are praying for our husband's leadership! I'm talking about leadership in all areas of his life; the workplace, around his peers, the church, and in the family unit.

We saw some examples last week of the people of the Bible, who felt they did not have the necessary requirements to do the job that God was calling them to do. Let's look at a couple more and I want to see if you can figure out the common thread.

> **Exodus 3:10–11** – *Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"*

> **Judges 6:14–15** – *And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."*

Do you see it? In both of these examples the people are arguing their qualifications with God. But what does God say? *"I will send you"*. Do you remember Isaiah 6:8 from last week? It was Isaiah answering God's question of *"whom shall I send and who will go for us?"* And Isaiah said "me! Send me!" Isaiah 6:8 shows a man with a different kind of eagerness for the Lord's purposes. Isaiah shows that some people are eager to jump out of their comfort zones and do big things, while others are more reserved, like those in Exodus and Judges, and perhaps they look at their outward man and begin to list reasons why they are unqualified to do such a task. In both of these old Testament examples, God is telling them, "I am sending you and because I am sending you, I will equip you."

> **Exodus 4:12** – *Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."*

God is telling Moses to *"go."* Don't think about it, don't try to justify it, understand it, or reason with it; just go. And the promise is that God will be with him, not just as a warm body, but as an active companion who will guide him and teach him along the way.

If you've ever watched *The Chosen*, I want you to notice something. When Jesus calls the disciples, he does not give them an assessment test to check their current knowledge. I'm thinking of those MAP assessment tests they give kids at the beginning of the school year to see where they are educationally and then compare it to the test at the end of the year to see what kind of progress they've made. This is not how Jesus does things. What do you see throughout the episodes? You see Matthew following, listening, and asking questions along the way. He writes it all down in his notebook. He is getting on the job training. And the same thing is true for every single one of us, especially our husbands. We may feel unqualified to "go" but God is asking us to trust Him and to rely on Him, and with Him, we can do greater things than we could have done on our own.

Look at **1 Kings 3:7.** God's call for Solomon to be king results in Solomon's rebuttal that he is a little child that does not know how to *"go out or come in."*

Now look at **Psalm 32:8**. This is the Lord speaking to David's heart, and he tells him that he will instruct him, teach him, and counsel him. During our 10 Week Teen Challenge, we talked about a ton of scriptures regarding God's promises to guide us. If you have *Scripture Book Vol. 3*, it's on page 62. It is 13 pages of scriptures all about seeking guidance from the Lord.

Let's go to **Deuteronomy 4:5**. Moses is telling the people that he has already taught them what they need to know to walk into an unknown place and take possession of it. I imagine my husband walking into a new job or a new season of life and feeling insecure or nervous about his role. And God whispers to him, "We've been training for this. I've already given you the education and the tools to succeed. Remember all that I've taught you." Maybe this is the conversation that He gives your husband after the birth of your first child, because I think we can all agree that that new job is quite scary and leaves most of us feeling radically insecure of our ability to succeed.

Psalm 71:17 is the psalmist remembering that God has been teaching him from his childhood. This touches on God's faithful presence in our lives throughout our whole lives. If the Lord has been teaching

us from the time that we were kids, there's likely a lot of God-directed decisions that we naturally make because we have been receiving His teachings for decades.

Taking into consideration all of these verses we've covered so far, some of the ways I want to approach my husband's prayers would be to encourage him that regardless of his insecurity, when God sends him, He will guide him through it. If your husband has been walking with the Lord for a while, you might use Psalm 71:17 to encourage him that he does know the way of the Lord because it is has been written on his heart for a long time.

Psalm 25:9 says He leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble His way. It doesn't say that He stands back to watch us figure it out on our own, or that He chooses the people who are already walking down the right path. It says He leads and He teaches. In order to be led and taught, we have to have a teachable spirit, so that's one way you can pray this verse for your husband: to pray for his teachable spirit. But this verse also tells us that we don't have to know where we're going. In the same way that He led Abraham to an unknown land, He is faithful to lead us and teach us after He has called us.

I might use this verse to encourage my husband to stay humble and soft in heart so he can better discern the teachings and guidance of the Lord.

In **Isaiah 28**, there is a farming parable. Every plant, plot of land, season, and climate are different and it's God who gives the farmer wisdom for how to approach preparing, tending, and harvesting each crop in its season. In verse 26, God teaches the farmer through the doing and obedience of walking out what God called him to.

We are fortunate to live in the days after Pentecost so we have a Helper inside every one of us. We can't see Him, but we can look at the Old Testament for physical manifestations of what the Holy Spirit is doing inside us. We may not see with our earthly eyes a cloud of smoke or a pillar of fire, but through the discernment of the Holy Spirit, we can distinguish between choosing to go left or right, right and wrong, peace and bitterness, and resting and striving.

Luke 12:12 says the Holy Spirit will teach you at the exact time we need the information.

If you've ever read *The Hiding Place*, Corrie Ten Boom tells a story of her father explaining God's provision of knowledge:

> *"When you and I go to Amsterdam – when do I give you your ticket?"… "Why, just before we get on the train." "Exactly. And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. Don't run out ahead of Him, corrie. When the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need – just in time."*

God and the Holy Spirit are faithful to provide exactly what we need exactly when we need it.

> **Mark 13:11** – *And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.*

Imagine yourself in this situation. You have been arrested and you are brought to trial for them to hand you over to your sentencing. How could you not be anxious? But Jesus says to lean into the Holy Spirit because it will be Him who speaks, not you. You don't have to be anxious about what you will say because God is going to give you the words exactly when you need them.

I think this is a great verse to pray, even proactively, for your husband in regards to any kind of current or future work related stress. Remind him that he has a Helper inside him that will speak up at exactly the right time so he doesn't need to over analyze or ruminate on the what ifs of any situation.

John 14:26 continues to speak about the Holy Spirit's role in teaching us, but it also ties in Psalm 71:17 and Deuteronomy 4:5 when it says the Holy Spirit will bring to our minds all that God has taught us in the past.

This makes me wonder if what it's explaining is that God has taught us all of the rules to follow and the Holy Spirit is going to teach us when and where to apply those rules in real time.

John 16:13 says the Holy Spirit will *"guide us into all the truth."* We've already learned about being diligent

to abide with an honest and humble heart. Exercising this posture will allow us to hear the Holy Spirit's guidance more clearly.

For a man who has a lot of important decisions to make, and carries the weight of the family on his shoulders, he may experience times of feeling overwhelmed and insecure. These scriptures about the Holy Spirit living in us are great opportunities to feed our husband words of life and a sweet reminder that it is not him that's expected to do all this perfectly, but it's his surrender to God who will not just make it happen, but do it way better than he could've done it on his own.

Another bit of encouragement comes from Jeremiah.

> **Jeremiah 3:15** – *"And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

I can read this verse two different ways:

> **1)** God promising a person who is called to leadership that He will supply him with elders, community, and people to learn from to help him walk out his leadership calling, and
> **2)** God promising the blessing of good and godly spiritual leadership. I can read this as a charge for my husband: God's description of who He is calling him to be. This could be in the workplace, at church, among peers, and especially at home.

In writing a prayer for this verse, I would write a prayer of comfort for my husband that the Lord will provide good leaders to lead him but I might also write a prayer that is worded to be an exhortation and encouragement for my husband to rise up and embrace the calling God has on his life (whether he feels equipped or not.)

All throughout talking about these verses regarding God leading and teaching the people who feel completely unqualified, the song in our email this week *Confidence* by Sanctus Real keeps invading my thoughts specifically the line where it says, "I feel unqualified for what you're calling me to" so here's my

prayer for our husbands: But Lord with Your strength, we've got no excuse because broken people is exactly who you use.

Over these past 10 weeks, I have included a worship song in every email and this is another way where we can find new ways to word our prayers for our husbands, and you may have heard this before but "to sing is to pray twice." *wink

Let's look at more of God's promises to set shepherds over the flock.

> **Jeremiah 23:4** - *I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the Lord.*

I appreciate this verse because it also says that when a shepherd is caring for the flock, the flock will fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor will any go missing. This tells me the importance of allowing shepherds in our lives (i.e. being shepherded) and it also speaks about the shepherd's role to feed us and bring us security and prosperity.

A commentary I read opened my eyes to the context of this verse. It said this verse is a promise to bring things to a better place than they were before exile, when Israel was in the land but suffered under ungodly leaders. J. A. Thompson said it this way:

> *"The promise of restoration to the same state of affairs that obtained before the exile was hardly adequate."*

When we say that God is the God of restoration, yes, He can redeem us to our previous state prior to our wilderness. But that's not His heart. His heart is to give us a Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey, a restoration that is completely new and abundantly fruitful. If you find yourself in a hard marriage season, keep abiding in the vine and walking out the Christian walk in the way that Paul and Jesus tell us to, staying faithful in all things and taking all things to the cross. God wants to restore your marriage to state that maybe you haven't even experienced yet. Do you believe he is capable of doing that? Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, holding fast to his ways, and becoming weak in flesh so that

He can be strong in supernatural power.

Ezekiel 34:23 is another verse that says God will set a shepherd over his flock to feed them. In terms of praying this verse for my husband, I imagine God using this verse to encourage our household that my husband is that *"one shepherd."* This is a provision from God. It doesn't say you will pick a shepherd to feed you and it doesn't say a shepherd will accidentally find you. It says that God himself will set up over you one shepherd that He has chosen. And if you feel as though your husband has not yet answered the call to be your family shepherd, use this verse to pray in faith.

Now that we've looked at some ways to combat any insecurities that our husband has in regards to his qualifications to be a leader, let's focus our prayers on the fruit that God requires of leaders.

Psalm 78:72 is speaking about David. It says with an *"upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hands."* Last week, we talked about where our skills come from, and we mentioned lots of examples where the Spirit of the Lord supernaturally descended to impart skills and gifts into people to aid them in their role for accomplishing God's will. This verse also specifically calls David's heart "upright." In week 2, we talked about Integrity and how God honors those who walk out this virtue. David was an active shepherd in the peoples lives. It says he gave them what they needed to survive and be satisfied and also guided them using the gifts God had given him.

Speaking of active involvement, let's look at **Ezekiel 33:6.** This verse speaks about what happens when a shepherd is not active with the flock. The parable is that if the watchmen sees the sword coming and does not warn everybody and they perish, the blood is on his hands. This is similar to a passage we touched on in week 7 about a father and husband's role in the life of a wife and daughter. It is Numbers 30 and it explains that a husband and father have power to break the vows a wife and daughter flippantly make. But if he chooses to sit in passivity and not speak up, the vow stands and the women are held accountable for the *"utterances of their lips."*

We can trace passivity all the way back to **Genesis 3**. Adam knew the rules, yet instead of standing up to Eve and reminding her of the rules, he took a backseat role and ate the fruit.

To pray, for our husband's leadership is to pray against any spirit of passivity. As a wife of a husband who

tends to be more passive than controlling, I want to use these verses to call into existence the thing that does not exist and to breathe life into that which is dead. (**Romans 4:17**) Essentially, to fan into flame the call of leadership in his heart.

If you are praying for a husband who tends to be more controlling than passive, I would use these verses to ask the Lord to direct my husband's fierce energy in the proper direction. God has given him a gift of leadership, but apart from the vine, that gift can grow to be used incorrectly. His bold confidence should also maintain the virtues of Jesus.

> **2 Timothy 2:24–25** – *And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,*

Note the words, *patient* and *gentle* in this verse. To lead with confidence is a great characteristic, but if it's done without patience or gentleness, it leans towards domineering which we discussed in week 5 through verse **1 Peter 5:3.** We emphasized in week 6 in our discussion about Compassion that everything we do should be done from a heart posture of love; not love of self, but love towards others.

> **1 Timothy 3:2**– *Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,*

This verse talks about an overseer. If you look back at **Acts 20:28**, you will see that an overseer is someone in leadership who watches over others. For a man who desires to marry and create a family, he has aspired to be a leader. Regardless of the presence of children, a man is to lead his household, and that may simply be his wife and dog. But he is an overseer of this family, nonetheless. He must conduct himself above reproach, with a sober mind and self-control. He should be respectable, hospitable, and able to teach. We might think of teaching in the context of teaching children, but as the spiritual head of household, he is also instructed to lead his wife in the knowledge of the Lord as well.

James 3:1 says that *"not many of you should become teachers for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness."* This is calling those who teach to take their responsibility seriously even if it's simply

teaching the household. I realize that this verse is specifically talking about those who are teaching in the church, but the importance of teaching, even if it's to a singular person in the household, remains the same.

Let's go back to **Acts 20:28**. It begins with *"pay careful attention to yourselves."* This talks about a leaders responsibility to be his own accountability partner. We talked a bit about accountability in week 6 when we talked about Friendship. Good leaders ensure they are maintaining a strong example of what they expect their flock to imitate.

Ezekiel 44:23 is a verse that explains that the leader is supposed to teach the people as well as show them how to distinguish between the holy and the common, the unclean and the clean, and the worldly way and the righteous way. They are to walk the walk as much as they talk to talk, showing the flock as much as they are teaching the flock.

Galatians 6:1 speaks about the leader, holding others accountable and helping them stay on the straight and narrow, but it is another reminder for them to *"keep watch on themselves."* We've already talked about the determination of the enemy in our conversation about Temptation in week 4 and the urgency to watch ourselves.

We've covered a lot of verses here, so let's pause a moment and think about how we can pray these verses specifically for our husband.

In regards to 2 Timothy 2:24–25, I pray that my husband is patient, gentle, and kind to everyone, correcting his opponents in the way that Jesus would correct, never missing an opportunity to lovingly lead someone in the knowledge of the truth.

1 Peter 5:3 leads me to pray for my husband to always walk the walk and never be a person with the mindset of "do as I say, not as I do."

As in Acts 20:28 I pray that my husband pays careful attention to his own conduct so that by his actions, his flock can imitate him, that perhaps they would be won over without a word when they see the respectful and pure conduct of my husband. (Did you see what I did there? I added in a splash of 1 Peter 3:2 to that prayer as well, even though 1 Peter talking about wives being subject to their husbands. God desires all of

us to be pure in conduct and respectful towards others because we can do more through our actions than we can with our words.

For Ezekiel 44:23 I pray that my husband abides in the vine so that the Holy Spirit can teach him to teach the people and that he would maintain the conviction to practice what he preaches in order to show the people how to distinguish between good and evil.

And Galatians 6:1 is a verse I can use to encourage my husband to not shy away from confrontation, but to walk it out with a spirit of gentleness in order to restore his flock back to alignment with God. I also pray that his eyes are enlightened to see when he has potential to or is beginning to travel off the narrow path himself and that he would be quick to correct his own steps so that he might not fall into temptation as well.

I hope writing prayers for verses in this way is becoming much easier than it was when we first started in week 1. It's a muscle that needs to be exercised and it can feel very uncoordinated when we begin but through constant practice, it will become much more second nature, I promise! I've seen it happen in my life!

Let's look at **Micah 5:4**. This is referencing Jesus himself, but there's something in this first line I want to use to encourage my husband. It says that Jesus will stand and shepherd his flock **"in the strength of the Lord."** He was fully human here on earth, but He was able to lead and teach not in His human strength, but because He was reliant on the Lord strength. When my husband feels totally incompetent, ill-equipped, and unqualified, I want him to remember that it is not through his own strength, but God's strength, that he is successful, prosperous, an overcomer, and a victor.

Matthew 28:20 is the charge from Jesus to the disciples to teach the people to observe everything Jesus has taught them and He reminds them, *"I am with you always, to the end of the age."* Parallel to what we spoke about at the beginning of this conversation, God is with us as we walk in the path that He has for us. He is leading us, teaching us, instructing us, guiding us, and counseling us with His eye upon us. His Holy Spirit will tell us what we should say at just the right time.

Dare I say, we may never feel fully equipped, because if we do feel completely qualified for what we're

doing, we may be tempted to do it out of our own head knowledge and in our own strength. So if your husband is feeling unqualified, I pray it's from a humble heart and not rejection. God has given him a flock to shepherd. **1 Peter 5:2** is the command for a leader to shepherd the flock of God that is among him. He has already been put in a position to be a shepherd for a flock. We've talked about it definitely being for his household, but it could also be in a peer group, church, or the work. He may not be confident to pick up his rod and his staff and step into that role yet, but that's where our prayers can help fan into flame this calling God has on his life and to silence any insecurity or doubts that your husband might have of himself.

I pray that our husbands exercise this shepherd role willingly and eagerly, that they would delight in feeding and tending to the sheep, protecting, guiding, nurturing, and caring for them as God would have him do.

God's promise of the Holy Spirit living inside of us is a fact that we often forget is truth. We can get into a habit of walking around with a victim mindset, forgetting that we have been given divine authority to rebuke the lies that make us believe we are too broken, too lost, unqualified, deficient, too weak, young, or too handicapped to possibly be a leader to others.

Our husbands may not feel like a warrior; they may be too afraid to lose. They may feel unqualified for what God is calling them to. But Lord, with your strength, our husbands have no excuse because broken people is exactly who you use.

I pray our husbands are given the faith of Daniel in the lion's den, the hope of Moses in the wilderness, and a heart like David. Lord, be his defense, so he can face his giants with confidence.

By this point, our prayer Bible should be looking very close to finished. I would be so humbled if you shared your pictures with me. I would love nothing more than to be encouraged by your faithfulness of walking out this 10 weeks with me. I can often feel like there are only five of you listening and I know that's not the case, but I did have to remind myself throughout this series, that I am to work as though I am working for the Lord. That because of the integrity, He has gifted me, I should work just as hard for those five people watching as I would if I were putting this series together to present to God on his throne.

I pray that you all enjoy this last week of writing prayers in your Bibles for your husband. I'm so glad that we ended on this topic because it feels like the crescendo after all the other topics that have been leading

up to praying for our husbands to ultimately walking out his God-given role as spiritual head of household and a leader to those around him.

Seven more days left. Keep fighting the good fight and stay enduring, writing 2 to 3 prayers a day. This time next week I will see you again to wrap up our 10 week husband challenge series.

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CLEAN YOUR HEART

Use this on days that feel hard or create a daily rhythm of surrender and begin every prayer session with it.

This is not a moment to perform, produce, or prove anything. Quiet yourself before God and intentionally lay down pride, distraction, control, and any known sin. Confess what Holy Spirit brings to mind. Release your own agendas, assumptions, and expectations. Choose humility. Choose obedience. Ask God to empty you of self so He can fill you with His Spirit. Do not move forward until your heart is surrendered and your spirit is yielded.

Lord, thank your calling me to draw near to You in this way.[1] Your Word says the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working[2] and You hear the prayer of the righteous.[3] I know my sins have made a separation between You and I.[4] If I cherish sin in my heart, You, Lord, will not listen.[5] Therefore, let me test and examine my ways.[6] Lord, weigh my spirit,[7] for even a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.[8] Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting![9] Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.[10]

[Selah - pause, listen, repent, forgive, receive grace]

Thank you for cleansing me from what is dishonorable, that I am a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to You, and ready for every good work.[11]

[1] James 4:8; [2] James 5:16; [3] Proverbs 15:29; [4] Isaiah 59:2; [5] Psalm 66:18; [6] Lamentations 3:40; [7] Proverbs 16:2; [8] 1 Corinthians 5:6; [9] Psalm 139:23-24; [10] Psalm 51:10; [11] 2 Timothy 2:21

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