

Hell's Greatest Threat

Ephesians 5:21-33

ANNOUNCE: Jan. 18 Men/Women Feb 5 Israel Meeting.

INTRODUCTION: Many of us remember the news from 4 years ago when an accidental warning system was triggered in Hawaii. Cell phones received this emergency alert that inbound ballistic missiles had been launched against the big island with a warning that this is NOT a drill.

People hurried to bunkers than hadn't been opened in decades. Parents called their children and said their goodbyes. It seemed like the WW3 had begun.

Thankfully, it was simply operator error. Someone leaned on the wrong button. That gentleman no longer works for the US Pacific Command.

But that debacle gave us some indication of what it would be like if our Nation fell under attack. Regularly scheduled broadcasts on radio and television were interrupted, alerts went out, alarms were sounded.

I thought to myself - what would have to happen for the inbound missile alarms to go off in Hell? What would cause every demon to get an alert? What would cause Hell to interrupt its regularly scheduled broadcast?

I want to talk to you today about Hell's Greatest Threat. According to scripture there are two Kingdom's. **The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of Hell.**

In **Matthew 12:22-26 (ESV)** Jesus casts a demon out of a man, and the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of demons"
 " ²⁵ Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"

So Satan has a Kingdom, it has a structure. It has territories. It has Demonic princes over various territories. We read in **Daniel 10** of the Prince of Persia that battled against Michael when he was dispatched from Heaven with an answer to Daniel's prayer. Satan is called the, "**Prince of this World**" by Jesus.



So understand there are two distinct Kingdoms warring for control over this world. The battlefield is not some far distant plain, but rather the hearts and minds of people.

All of the physical world wars and rumors of wars we are concerned with are simply the fruit of the spiritual wars that take place day after day.

That's why the spiritual armor discussed later in Ephesians is so important. You are engaged in this war whether you know it or not.

As with any King at war, there are certain fears that dominate the Central Command of Hell. Weapons he hopes we do not wield, weakness that he hopes we do not exploit. You can discern what he believes to be his greatest earthly threat by observing his strategy.

What do we observe in Satan's strategy? I would submit that his NUMBER one strategy is to **NEUTRALIZE MEN FROM LEADING**. It is not even subtle.

ILLUSTRATION: Dr. Al Mohler reports on his podcast, "The Briefing" of a 4 year old boy named Michael who gets to school and wishes to change his identity to female and be called Michelle. The Parents object to this behavior and are seeking to counsel Michael away from this behavior. The teacher, Anna, has to make the decision as to whether to honor the Parents wishes and dissuade Michael from pretending to be a girl, or to defy the parents and help 4 year old Michael to transition into Michelle.

The answer comes from "The Code of Ethical Conduct" of a group known as The National Association for the Education of Young Children They publish a very popular journal known as, *Young Children*. They have 60,000 members and is identified in the media as the largest and most influential group of teachers with a focus on preschoolers.

An article under the auspices of the National Association for the Education of Young Children argues that the teacher, ANNA should defy the parents and encourage the child to pursue his chosen gender expression.

It would be bad enough if the child was 14, but this little boy is 4. He can't even tie his shoes yet and teachers are defying parents concerning his gender identity.

Satan doesn't want Michael to grown into a man. Satan doesn't want Michael to become a leader, and Satan certainly doesn't want Michael to be a Spiritual leader with sons and daughters of his own.

I want to submit to you that Hell's Great Threat, earthly speaking, is a MAN who decides to be a spiritual leader. When a man bows a knee to Jesus and recognizes his rightful place in the Home, Hell's early warning system is engaged.

ILLUSTRATION: Several years ago the book Point Man, by Steve Farrar had a great impact on me. Listen to this excerpt -

It's 1966. You are only 18. You are in the absolute prime of youth. You've got a driver's license, a girlfriend, and plenty of dreams. Your entire life is ahead of you. But through a strange set of circumstances that you don't fully understand, suddenly your driver's license is useless, your girlfriend's picture is in your wallet, your dreams are on hold, and you are in a country thousands of miles away from home.

Welcome to Vietnam.

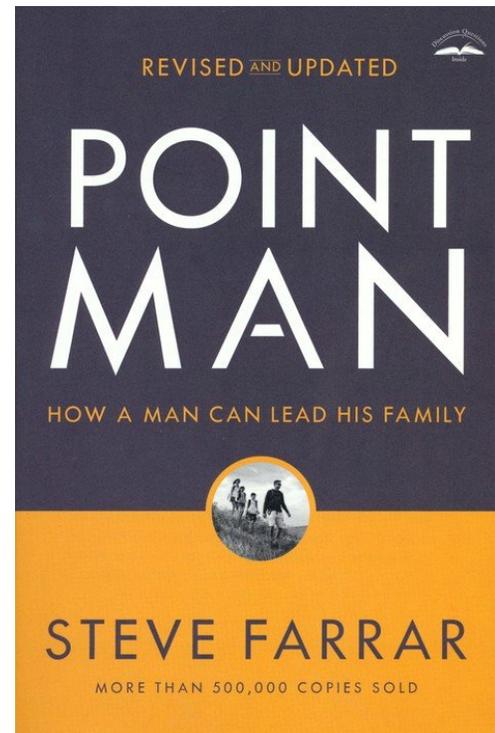
On this particular day you would give anything not to be here. For you are going out on patrol. You've been on patrol before, but today is different, and that's why there's a knot in your gut and an icy fear in your heart.

Today is different because the patrol leader has appointed you to be, "Point Man". In essence you are the leader. Everyone else will fall behind you. And as you move out to encounter the enemy, you realize that the survival of those seven men stepping cautiously behind you will depend upon just one thing – your ability to lead. Your judgment may determine whether they live or die. The responsibility hangs over your head like the suffocating humidity that hangs heavy in the air.

Your senses have never been so alive, your adrenalin so surging. You can almost hear it rushing through your veins. You know the enemy is near, maybe just hundreds of yards away. Intelligence reported heavy enemy activity in this area late last night. Your job is to confirm or deny that activity. For all you know they are watching you right now. Perhaps they can see you but you don't have a clue where they are.

As you make your way through the rain forest, you've got one eye out for concealed wires in your path and another scanning the trees for snipers. Entire patrols have been lost because the point man failed to anticipate an ambush. Men have been killed or horribly maimed all because a point man lacked skill and wisdom.

You never saw it coming. *The violent shock and utter surprise of gunfire momentarily paralyzes you, despite your instant reaction training. Before you can respond a bullet tears through your flesh and explodes the bone in your leg. A thousand thoughts instantly flood your mind: Am I going to die? Where are those shots coming from? Is there more than one? Will I lose my leg? Where's the patrol leader?*



*One glance to the left tells you that the family of the patrol leader is now fatherless. In the chaos of the attack, and in spite of your wounds, the radio man makes his way to you. He knows and you know that you are the most experienced man. In panic situations like the book goes out the window. Like it or not **YOU ARE THE LEADER.***

As a medic evaluates your wound, you're trying to determine what to do next. Just what is the situation? What are we up against? Where are they? Some good news in the midst of the confusion brings a ray of hope – the bullet went through cleanly and the bleeding has stopped. You're luckier than most guys on point. Usually, they're dead before they hit the ground. You're still alive and in control of your thinking.

Two other men beside the patrol leader were hit. One is dead, the other bleeding profusely. You get on the radio and report your situation and position. You request a chopper for the hemorrhaging private. But before you can finish your request, the hidden enemy unleashes all of his firepower on your position. You're surrounded.

In your gut you know the odds are against you. You're outnumbered, outgunned, and not in the greatest position to wage a counterattack. You've got two men dead, one dying, and four wondering if they'll make it to lunch. The worst case scenario has happened... and it's worse than you ever imagined.

Now is the time your leadership will make the difference. What you say and do will determine whether your men live or die. As automatic weapons blaze around you, you must accurately assess the situation, determine the critical next steps, and formulate a flawless plan. It's leadership, pure and simple. If your plan works, you may get out alive with half your men. If it doesn't they'll be lucky to find your dog tags.

Now, Let's make a critical change in the scenario. *You're still in Vietnam, on patrol in the same steamy rain forest. But something about this patrol is different. You're still the point man, but this time you are not leading a group of men. **You're leading your family.***

You look over your shoulder to see your wife and your children following behind. Your little girl is trying to choke back the tears and your little boy is trying to be brave. Your wife is holding the baby trying to keep him quiet. On this patrol, you don't want to engage the enemy, you want to avoid him.

What would you be feeling under these conditions? The survival of each member of your family – and it's survival as a whole – would completely depend upon your ability to lead through the maze of possible ambushes, unseen booby traps, invisible snipers, and all the extraordinary hazards of combat.

Gentlemen this is not imaginary situation – if you are a husband and a father you are in the war. War has been declared upon your family and their survival depends upon you.

TEXT: Ephesians 5:22–23 (ESV)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

What does it mean to be the HEAD OF YOUR HOME? Well it's a term that is a figurative term used frequently in scripture to speak of Authority or Leadership.

So the husband is to be the LEADER of the wife just as Jesus is the LEADER of the Church.

- He didn't say, "The Husband is **SUPPOSED** to be the leader"
- "The Husband **OUGHT** to be the leader"
- But rather, "The Husband **IS** the leader"

Now there are expectation on the wife of following and helping the husband as he leads, but we will talk about that next week. Today, let's focus on the HUSBAND as the LEADER.

What does it mean to be the Spiritual Leader of your Home? Well to understand it best, Paul calls us to look to Jesus as the example.

Headship/Leadership does not mean Superiority -

We saw this in 1 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)

3 But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

The Son is Equal to the Father in every way, but it is ordered equality.

John 5 is that great chapter on the Authority of Jesus, the Son. But in that chapter Jesus makes it clear that all of his authority comes from being rightly submitted to the Father.

Well if the Father and Son are equal in person, why is there leadership and submission? Because that is the ultimate right reality.

It is not like the Godhead came together and said, "Let's have a structure of Authority so that humans will understand how it works" NO! There simply was equality and ordered authority in the Godhead.

The Father sends forth the Son, the Son sends forth the Spirit. The Son conquers and reigns as King on Earth, then hand that Kingdom over to the Father.

There is community, there is unity, there is diversity, there is order. Joyfully cooperating in an eternal expression of headship and fellowship.

- **Headship does not mean that you are somehow better than your wife.** She is described as a weaker vessel... that has reference to her physical body, not what is

in the vessel. Her heart, soul, and mind may be much stronger than yours. I will tell anybody, Julie has always had a more sincere, consistent walk with the Lord than I have. I can beat her at arm wrestling, but she can probably out pray me.

- **Headship doesn't mean that you lead autocratically**, or independently of your wife - I chose her as my wife, she is what the Bible calls my Bride Elect. I chose her as a warrior chooses his weapon or an artist chooses his medium. I would be a fool to operate and lead independently of her counsel.
- Headship does not equal infallibility - You are not some sort of Protestant Pope in the home. You do not speak ex cathedra. You will get it wrong many times.

But headship does mean...

1. Leadership Means Responsibility

Remember in Genesis 3, God warned man and woman not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They both ate, as a matter of fact Eve ate first and shared it with Adam. But when God came to call them to account what did he say?

Genesis 3:8–9 (ESV)

⁸ And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"

IN the OT law of God **Deuteronomy 22**, when a young lady was found to be sexually promiscuous, playing the harlot, The penalty was death. But she wasn't stoned outside the Gate of the City as other criminals were. She was stoned at the doorway to the FATHERS house. Why? Be bore some responsibility for her moral direction.

There will come a day when we will each given an account for our lives at the Judgement Seat of Christ. But leaders will be Judged a second time.

- In Hebrews 13:17 are told that Pastor's will give an account for their congregations.
- There will come a day when you Fathers will stand before Jesus Christ and give an account for how you raised your sons and daughters.

The responsibility for the Spiritual upbringing of Sons and Daughters is not placed on the mothers in scripture, but rather the Fathers. It's your responsibility and Satan will do everything in his power to encourage you to shirk that responsibility.

2. Leadership Means Sacrifice

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and **gave himself up for her,**

The essence of biblical leadership is self sacrifice for the good of those you lead.

- Exodus 32, God is so angry with Israel that he decides to kill them all. Moses intercedes and begs God to take him and let the people live.
- 2 Sam. 24 - The Death Angel is moving over Israel striking the people, David sees what is happening and he volunteers to die so that the people might live.
- Romans 9 - Paul said that he would be willing to die and go to Hell so that his fellow Jews might be saved.

Moses didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

David didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

Paul didn't die for the people, but he was willing.

But there was another that stood before God and said, "take me and give them life"

Brother, in the same way you are called to sacrifice for your wife and children.

That means,

- You may have to wait a few years on that new boat.
- You may have to get up early to drop them off at school.
- You may have to have to say NO to what you want in order to provide what they need.

You say, "Pastor I do sacrifice, but they don't even acknowledge it... they don't say thank you and frankly, I'm not sure they deserve it"

Romans 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Deserve had nothing to do with it.

3. Leadership Means Setting the Direction

Jesus had risen from the dead, he was about to ascend into Heaven. But before he did he set the direction for his bride the Church.

In Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) we see the only passage that can be found in all four Gospels and the book of Acts.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

In other words, I'm the head, I'm the leader...

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

So the church wasn't told to get together and come up with some clever idea that they could put on coffee mugs and bumper stickers.... The leader set the direction. The leader set the vision. We know what we are supposed to be doing.

Question - does your wife and kids know what they are supposed to be doing? Have you set the direction for them? Have you given clear vision?

In 20 years will your family arrive somewhere intentionally? Or may your family be better described as drifting?

If so, get with Jesus and learn how to lead well.

4. Leadership Means Being Under Authority

ILLUSTRATION: The Key to having Authority for a man, woman, boy or girl is to be submitted to the proper authority.

Matthew 8:5–10 (ESV)

⁵ When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶ “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” ⁷ And he said to him, **“I will come and heal him.”** ⁸ But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I too **am a man under authority,**

(who's authority was the Centurion under? Caesar's. As long as he was under the authority of Caesar, he could command as if he was caesar. To disobey a centurion was tantamount to disobeying Caesar)

⁹ For I too **am a man under authority,** with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

(Now, the Centurion understood how authority works, it comes from being under authority. The Centurion recognized that Jesus was under the authority of God the Father. So if Jesus ordered a healing, it would be done... you see).

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, **“Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.**

One of the most frightening things in all the world for a woman, is to be asked to submit to a man who is un-submissive to God or anybody else.

A rouge husband is terrifying to a wife. But a man who subjects his whole heart to the authority of God and God's Word is terrifying to Hell.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

ILLUSTRATION: My dad was not perfect by any means. He dropped out of high school in the 10th grade. When was born, he took me home to a single wide trailer. But you know something.

- I never recall a discussion about whether or not we were going to church on Sunday. Dad called it. He got up, got dressed and led us.
- Every Sunday morning I would see a check folded and laying on the coffee table. That was the family's tithe check. Every. Single. Week.
- Dad and Mom set the example for me in professing their faith through baptism.
- Dad invested in study helps, bible dictionaries, a bible atlas, to show me that theology mattered.
- My Dad was elected a Deacon of his church.

What am I saying? I'm saying that while I am far from perfect. It is no accident that I did finish high school, I did finish college, I did receive my Master's degree, I am receiving my Doctorate. My family doesn't debate on whether or not it is going to be in church on Sunday. My giving is automated so I can turn my focus on going above and beyond.

What am I saying? I'm saying that in 1984 Billy Carl Terry bowed a knee to Jesus Christ and he meant it. And HELL'S Emergency alert system was activated.

- Every demon got a text message saying, "this is not a drill.... A man has decided to lead, take cover immediately"
- An announcer came over DBN, the Devil's Broadcasting Network saying, "We interrupt your regularly scheduled programming to announce we are under attack, I repeat we are under attack"

Why? Because one man decided that life isn't about getting more than all your friends. Life is about becoming the MAN God has called you to be. And when you start that path, you my friend, become Hell's Greatest Threat.