

#14 – THE POLICY MAKERS

*By Dr. Stephen Phinney*

You have heard it said, “Lead, follow, or get out of the way.” There is only one being who has the prerogative to say this—God, the Father! Although, He would probably say it this way, “Allow Me to lead, follow Me, or get out of the way of My Leadership.” God has clearly defined goals for His patriarchs. He lives His leadership out through His assigned leaders by providing leadership, provision, protection, and purpose for His people.

Modern day patriarchs are called to provide God’s direction and initiative to those who are designated to follow him. Since men are “wired” to be task-oriented, this calling should be relatively easy.

We live in a “directionless” society, each person leading himself in the ways of his own desires. If it “feels good,” do it. God’s children are in need of someone to “point the way” to a Christ-centered and Godly way of living. Needless to say, most men today use their God-given “task-orientation” to build their own economic welfare. Patriarchs need to establish goals and policies to assist their followers in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the Living God. Some of these goals include:

1. Developing family members who follow Christ
2. Having followers who know the Word
3. Having a family who supports and serves the local church--the body of Christ
4. Having family members who are focused on evangelizing the world
5. Being prepared to embrace the responsibilities of being the next generation of patriarchs; and as daughters, supporting the patriarchs of their day
6. Teaching their daughters the ways of women and training their sons in being a masculine patriarch

None of these goals will be established in their followers without five elements coming into play:

1. The patriarch taking the initiative to live by example.
2. Setting a 13 year projected patriarchal plan for his children (13 being the Hebrew age of adulthood).
3. Establishing clear and reachable goals for the followers by making use of “bite-sized” objectives.
4. Establishing policies and rules that will be used as “cattle rails” to direct followers in meeting the patriarchal goals.
5. Developing a system of discipline/consequences, which will bring the “straying” follower back in line.

These fabulous five cannot become reality for a patriarch unless he is willing to accept the daily risk of decision making. Most leaders hesitate to make decisions due to their “fear of failure.” Men are not quick to display their failures. A Godly man must not fear looking like a failure--he is one! He just needs to accept the fact that without Christ living His life through him, he is certain to fail. We are born failures; this is why we need our leader, Christ, to come dwell within us. Once we accept Christ into our lives, He will lead through us as men. Some of the tougher decisions a man tends to avoid making are:

* Dating vs. courtship
* Immoral media within the home
* Types of friends for his children and spouse
* Attendance of a local church
* Family finances
* Leadership within the home i.e. defaulting to his wife

I struggled for many years with my own passivity by defaulting to the strength of my wife. I used the competence of my wife to decide on education, morality, and parenting. Even though this mistake of “defaulting” produced great kids, it doesn’t negate the fact that I failed in this commission. The result was an exhausted wife and mother of my offspring. A responsible patriarch will cultivate his wife’s gifts and talents without using her strengths as an excuse to be passive.

By allowing my wife to be the “policy maker,” I found myself obligated to submit to her leadership. By doing this, I found myself in a “role reversal” problem. The fact is-- the one who makes policy, becomes the leader. True masculine leadership makes use of all gifts, talents, and abilities to mobilize the strengths of a family to carry out the patriarch’s mandates or policies.

God made it easy for men to make policies for his home--get to know His. The Father spent thousands of years establishing His, so why would I “drum up” my own. The commands and polices of a father should match those of the heavenly Father--line for line.

Our policies light the path we as leaders have established for our family/followers. Our words should not become like the Word of God, they should *be* the Word.

One of the most interesting facts about establishing policies is it “forces” relationship. When we are required to return to the leader for ongoing direction, we are placed in a position of having relationship with that leader. Many Christ-followers view the Bible, or mandates of God, as non-relational and simply a bunch of rules. Well, they are! Rules create dependency and dependency promotes intimacy. The difference for us is this: Christ fulfilled the Law / rules of the heavenly Father for us. Now as believers, we can allow Christ to live out these guidelines through us, by experiencing an intimate relationship with Him.

Now the parallel of the patriarch: if a leader fulfills the policies he establishes for his household by being a living example, the followers will adopt the policies as a way of living. The burden of obedience becomes light.

Patriarchs, who lead their followers with diligence and have children in submission to his policies, will be a perfect candidate in leading the church and community. By mastering the art of policy making and empowering others to follow him, a patriarch readies himself for community leadership.

**NEXT:** *The Protector*

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