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I thought about making a deal, that I'll cut the sermon short if you take a 5 minute nap before the message.

No one handed you a sympathy card when you were ordained, fortunately. We need to work on how we behave ourselves as pastors. 1 Timothy 3:4. How—hand raise—how many of you grew up in homes where the father was an ordained minister. Thank you. There's a good number that have, and I think you would have a lot of interesting input. There's a lot of us who haven't, so we're learning the hard way, things to do and not to do. Also in 1 Timothy 4:12-14, talking to us younger men [excerpt:] "Let no man despise thy youth..." And then we have Ephesians 5:25. "Husbands, love your wives." 1 Peter 2:18, "Servants, be subject to your master..." We're dealing with a lot of commands from the word of God. We chose our work, whether out of necessity or desire. We made a choice to get married and have a family, and then you were chosen by God through the church to be a servant leader. Does God really know what he's doing?

Does he really know all that we have to do? If the answer is yes, then we know we can accomplish his will. This is the exciting part, that God saw every one of you capable to handle this position. You were the one needed for the time and place to get the work accomplished that He would have you to do. He wants to you to be personal faithful, and true, a good employee or business owner, a good father and husband, and a good servant in the local body. If God knew that didn't work, he would have had a different plan. He's not scratching his head, wondering if this is how it's going to work.

The thing that brings the most fulfillment in life is the thing we give the greatest effort to. [Repeat]. In thinking that through, I didn't say the thing that brings the most joy of greatest peace, but the thing that is the most fulfilling. We need to check our hearts and thinking, why is it bringing fulfillment? Is it status, a heart to reach out to the people, our families, our business? We can have a wrong motive in everything we do. We need to determine, why that fulfillment in our lives?

Can we afford to fail in any responsibility God has given us? If we fail in our work, we could become a burden. If we fail in our work, that would be an added burden to those around us. If in

church, it would hinder our beloved. If at home, it will be a hindrance in our ability; we lose souls we're to care for directly.

Yet, God will not give us more than we are able to bear, to handle. We get accomplished what we need.

What about yourself? God made you as a person, and he has a will for you. As we heard this morning, we have our limits. We were not given new bodies or new levels of energy when we were given the charge. We still need nourishment, exercise. We need rest, spiritual nourishment. We needed that before and today, and in this, we become a bigger target for Satan. We need to take greater care on how we behave ourselves. I'd encourage you: we struggle differently in different ways, but if there are areas in life we're struggling with as a layperson, deal with it; we need to get a rid of our vices. We'll have a hard time relating with those around us if there is sin in our life. With David, when Nathan came to confront him about Bathsheba, he reacted. We may become hard with others or avoid subjects in our messages

Transparency is needed. We need to take care of our sins, we don't become open and honest with sharing all the dirty laundry. Our people know we're human, and they don't like it when we don't admit it. For myself, I need several hours a week by myself outside of the daily Bible reading to spend time alone. That makes a large difference for me in clear thinking.

Then, not only yourself, but your wife: you're still required as an ordained leader to love and cherish her. Now that you're ordained, you can't say, "I'll spend less time over here." She is still your helper. Before ordained, she was to be chaste, obedient to you. When we neglect something in life in general, it tends to wear out more quickly. That's the same way for husbands in loving our wives. The less we give attention to her, the more quickly she will wear out. If you give her proper attention, you will reap many benefits.

Your children: your wife is a permanent fixture with you, but children are there for only a season. There is the time in life where they need more attention. We have a small opportunity to train them rightly in the way they should go. We have an extra responsibility at a certain time in life that diminishes with the child training. We're half way through it. Our children are old enough that they are potty trained, they don't crawl into bed in the middle of the night anymore. But, the demands of those cares change. We don't have immediate demands daily, but they are different today.

How do you add this responsibility to your already busy life? We can't forget that God knows our abilities and he knows our limits. He expects us to be a good steward of our time and all that is entrusted to you. If we don't take control of our time, others will.

There are three areas I think we need to look at, that we need to probably more than anything rethink rather than cut out or neglect.

One of the things: I had once talked to a fellow I was facing. He said, "Some things need to be delegated, but not everything can be delegated." There are other things as a business leader, someone else can write out the checks or do other things. In the home, we can't delegate being

the husband. That is something we have to do, be the husband of the wife. We can't delegate being a father; it's the calling God has given us. There's a lot of other things we CAN delegate: the chores around the house. Delegating frees up time.

As bishops, ministers, and deacons, we can't delegate everything, but we can equip. The body is put together, and certain members are in place for teaching, exhorting, edifying. We try to do it all ourselves sometimes, rather than equip our people to help out. An example is, when you help a young man in your church with a sin issue, and you step him through it and he's accountable to you, he gets a grasp of it and gets victory. When another person comes, you can delegate him to that first person, and then follow-up to make sure it's happening. It's a beautiful picture. It's part of our responsibility as leaders, that we edify, that we equip our people that they can help each other. Figure out what you can delegate and what you can't.

Follow-through and delegate what you can. We accomplish what we think of as important, and check your motive: why do you think it's important?

There was a non-member who called and wanted to see the deacon, and wondered if I could go, too. It didn't really suit, would have taken me away from the family. I called the deacon and encouraged him to follow through with it. I had confidence he could take care of the situation. I wasn't sure if that was the proper thing to do, and so I called Jason, and he said, "Yeah, you made a good sermon illustration." There can be the follow-up to make sure it took place, but we don't need to be at every situation and jump at the drop of a hat. If we don't control our time, others will.

To have a home that is pleasing to God is not just a requirement from your ordination; it was something that took place before. That's one of the requirements in 1 Timothy. These are commands we have in Scripture that we can't get around. These commands stay in place whether you're ordained or not. Command #1: Husbands, honor your wife. Many times our home suffers the most. We're to adjust our time. We tend to adjust and make those suffer the most who are the closest to us. Rethinking can make a big difference. There's ideals and then there's less than ideals. We need to discover what can work for both, in the church and in the home as well as work. Men, when you were courting your wife, one of the goals you had was to please her, to make her happy. Sometimes, we are accomplishment-oriented, but we forget our wives' desires change, and their needs to be changes. Our duty is to continue knowing her and what pleases her and what makes her life enjoyable. At the ordination, she receives more work and responsibility as far as being available at the drop of the hat to bring someone in the home for a meal and to fill in when a husband needs to go to a meeting. Scripture tells us that we need to know our wives so that our prayers are not hindered. Have you ever tried preaching on the home when things are not in order there? It's difficult; it's work to be done.

In the same way that the Scriptures ask us to equip our people, I would encourage us to be understanding in equipping our wives with the extra work they may have. They may need a dishwasher. Maybe they need a clothes washer. What are things we can help them with that makes their work easier as well. This is the necessary ingredient. For the next part, for the wives: first, my hat is off to these mothers that needed to stay at home this week to take care of children while the husband could come enjoy the meetings here. Many times, that is for a season. The

children were being young; they were in a work-out. I think it would be a good idea to have babysitters so wives and mothers could be here as well. The wife is a key part in making the ministry work. We've all seen those where the wife hindered the work of the ministry. That's the sad situation. But to you wives, the husband's calling is a call from God, through the church to help lead the church. God knew all this before you ever knew it. He knew that your husband is who you needed to get the work accomplished for this time and place. He also knew that you would be the helper best suited for him through this work. That was long before you ever knew each other. You as a wife were the one who was going to be the best suited to help him get this work accomplished to his glory.

Look, wives, at this responsibility as an opportunity from the Lord. Mary surrendered herself to the work God had for her. God has called you to be the wife, the helper in this situation. Now, it's in your hands, either be that helper, or hinder. Did God design you to hinder the situation, or to help? How can you help? Things that are encouraging for ministers especially is that you pray for him, and that you know you're praying for him, especially when he's preparing for messages, especially in an assignment or in addressing an erring brother. Keep your wife on page, and wives, pray for him.

When I was studying, it was one of the younger children who came running in and wanted to sit on my lap. I was never comfortable telling the child he needs to move on, or closing the door and locking it. A mother can help by coming along and taking the children and saying 'Come do this.' Later, fathers can give the special attention he needs. As a mother, there needs to be an accomplishment here. Don't go 'Stay out of there! Dad needs to study.' That sends a message to the child that nothing is more important than studying.

Don't criticize his messages or the way of delivery. Every person is born with a different way of preaching, teaching. One of the things I've told myself is that God gets his will accomplished through his word, and it doesn't matter who the person is, as he can even use a donkey in the process. Who are you wives to criticize? I would encourage you to give encouragement rather than criticize.

Never complain to your children or in front of your children that dad's leaving *again*, but rather bless him. Make sure the young ones, if he's leaving for a meeting in the evening and he might be back late, make sure they give him a kiss and hug before he leaves. It lets the children know that you're working with him and not against him. Another thing, when you do that, it's going to want to make dad get home much sooner because there's a loving family at home.

I believe that part of criticizing—making negative comments—can have a huge bearing on a child's thinking pattern on the church and God himself. Mothers, you have a strong hold on them because you have a close connection. Never discuss church issues in front of your children.

Wives, you're a helper is what your calling has been. You're a manager, in business terms, of your home. You can sense the heart beat of your children better than the fathers sometimes. My wife sometimes says, "Look, I think it's time for the boys to have a day of fishing" or something. Their responses at home, she sees; I can be extra busy here and there. Give us those clues! It's our responsibility to do something with it. It's not that we're neglecting, but we don't always

know what the different needs are. We can learn from that way and put it into practice. It's our duty to stay as a family, even after ordination. Let's not forget that there are people in our church who aren't ordained that don't have good homes. It's not that we're ordained necessarily; those outside of the ministry also struggle as well.

Include your children in your church or business work where feasible. If you as parents and especially as fathers have to be gone for a weekend trip, make it an effort, make it a point you give your family special attention. Get away with whatever you find enjoyable as a family.

At the family altar, pray for the family audibly. Thank God for your wife. Name her by name, and the privilege for bringing you together and sending you the children and having the privilege to take care of them. Name the children by name. When you're gone, that will continue. Pray that they will grow up serving God. Ask to pray for their safety, so when others are gone, they know they will be prayed for. Thanking God for them, it does wonders for them and the spouse. Pray that God will bless your spouse, and it's easier done when you bless her. If you're struggling in a marriage, continue to pray that God will bless her.

Another encouragement: don't make your children behave a certain way just because...—that doesn't mean they can live loosely. We have a Scripture that we need to keep house, and having a godly home is first essential, and if the children want to do something, to say "Well, because I'm the preacher, you can't go." They get a bad taste in their mouth for the work as well as the church and Christianity itself.

Secondly, be consistent; practice what you preach. I'd encourage, do an inventory on your messages. Are there things you're avoiding because of things in your personal life? Is it okay you're avoiding it? Take care of it, and then preach it. If you are living a double standard, you will lose your children. Dad is one way at home, but he deals with his church or preaches differently. When you preach a message, and a child knows a parent is living in sin in that area, I've often wondered what that does to the child, and even more if the preacher knows the preacher is living in sin. Don't go the double standard. The goal is to accomplish God's will: for our personal life, for our home, for our church, without neglecting anything. My encouragement is, God saw you fit to handle the work. It's a matter of handling some things to get it accomplished, but the things he already commanded you to do, stay in place. Love your wives, teach your children, take care of business, pray for wisdom how to get all those things accomplished.

What would happen if our ministry would be removed? Where would our extra energies go? Would we spend more time in business, on family, in leisure? Where would we go? That probably is, again, determined by what we think is important in life. We get accomplished what we deem important.

God bless you, for staying awake.