

How to Take Your Marriage Beyond Ordinary

Recently, author Justin Davis shared with Family First about how to take your marriage beyond ordinary. I'm taking notes.

When Trisha and I separated in 2005 due to my affair, one of the first things I realized was how easy it was for me to lead a growing church and how intimidating it was for me to lead my family. Because being a spiritual leader at home was so intimidating, I just didn't do it.

At this point of my life, I had no church to lead and no people to pastor, but by God's grace I received a second chance with my wife and kids. I was desperate to get it right and be the leader that God called me to be. But what did that look like?

What I've come to realize is that a lot of great leaders struggle with this. Most guys, if we're honest, aren't leading our wives, our families or ourselves well spiritually. Here are some reasons why I think we struggle:

1. We are unsure of ourselves. Most of us are intimidated by the term "spiritual leader." We are afraid of messing up. We are afraid of getting it wrong. We are afraid of not meeting expectations. We aren't even sure what expectations of a spiritual leader are. Because of our insecurity, we become paralyzed and choose not leading over leading imperfectly.

2. We equate providing with leading. As guys, we think that because we provide for our family, we are leading our family. We say things like, "I am providing you with this house, your minivan, vacations in the summer—what more do you want from me?" Providing resources isn't the same as leading spiritually.

3. We manipulate instead of lead. Out of our own misconception of leadership and our own insecurity in our ability to lead, we default to manipulating our family instead of authentically leading our family.

4. We've never seen it modeled or taught. Most of our dads were subpar spiritual leaders. There weren't classes on spiritual leadership in college. If there were, they wouldn't have taken them. So we've rarely had someone to look to or to ask advice from in this area.

Here are some things I'm learning about leading spiritually:

1. Leading my family is my primary calling. If you are a Christ-follower and you are a husband and/or dad, being a spiritual leader isn't something you are asked to do; it is something that God has called you to do. This truth isn't meant to bring guilt but freedom. God has gifted you and equipped you to fulfill this role! He longs to partner with you in that process.

2. I have to be intentional. There is a huge difference between good intentions and being intentional. For me, this has to do with time. I set aside time to be with my boys. We go to breakfast. I read books with them and discuss the books. My wife and I go on date nights. Nothing good usually happens by accident. We have to choose it.

3. I need to lead relationally. We know this to be true but don't apply it at home. The greatest leaders have an ability to lead through relationships. You follow them not because they make you follow but because you have such a deep respect for them, you want to follow. As I invest in my relationships with my wife and kids, they follow naturally, not just because I quote some verse of the Bible that says I'm the leader.

4. It's okay to be vulnerable. Admit when you don't know the answer. Allow your kids to see you struggle to make a decision. Tell your wife that you don't know which decision

you should make but that your greatest desire is to do what is right, not what is easy. Being vulnerable makes you a better leader because it reveals your ultimate dependence on God.

5. I lead best by serving. Nothing earns more credibility for me as a leader with my wife and my boys than serving. It is sad to admit how many opportunities I've missed to lead my family because I was unwilling to serve them.

I'm still learning every day what spiritual leadership looks like. Please share how you lead your family spiritually.

*You can follow **Justin Davis** and **Trisha Davis** on Twitter and can purchase their book, *Beyond Ordinary*, from any major retailer.*

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