

“Teaching the Next Generation of Godly Men to Provide for Women and Children”

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Introduction: A Pew Research study from July 10, 2013 concluded that a majority of Americans believe the ideal marriage arrangement is both spouses working outside the home and sharing household duties and caring for children. This is especially true of the younger generation, 18-29 (72%), and less true among older Americans (56+, 56%).

It’s striking to note the majority of Americans believe a **two-income arrangement is the ideal** marriage, as opposed to something that sometimes happens as a result of circumstances beyond our control, and is not ideal. The thought that this pulls the mother out of the home does not seem to be considered as an important part of the equation. It’s also striking how each generation seems to believe this more and more.

See article:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/07/10/for-young-adults-the-ideal-marriage-meets-reality/>

Questions to Consider:

- Have we absorbed the “two-income household is the ideal” myth?
- How much of it has rubbed off on the next generation in the Church?
- Does the Bible teach differently?
- Is there any hope for young Christian men to be able to support a wife and family?

SPS: The following presentation will encourage our men to:

- Debunk the “two-income is ideal” myth by examining what the Bible says about the providing role of a man, and;
- See opportunities instead of obstacles, in regard to the “man as provider” ideal, especially in regard to the next generation of young men in the Church.

Where did the trend come from?

The “two-income is ideal” trend is not new. Author Aubrey Andelin wrote about it in 1974: *“There is a certain disregard in modern times for the sacred and traditional role of the man as the provider for the family... Modern trends also follow this pattern of thinking. Many feel that the man’s role is unfair, that it overtaxes the man and may be injurious to his health... Modern trends and laws do not establish correct principles. We must return to God for proof that the man is the divinely appointed provider for the family”* (pp. 73-74)

<https://www.amazon.com/Man-Steel-Velvet-Aubrey-Andelin/dp/0911094032>

Is this a good trend? Or is it, like so many other negative trends in society, “the course of this world,” under the influence of Satan the devil? The overall direction of society is not going in a positive direction. This trend (effectively pulling mothers out of the home) is not good either.

What are we not saying?

What are we not saying? We are not saying that the ideal situation is just for a man to bring home a check, slap it on the table, and totally disengage from his family. On the contrary! His duties of being a provider far extend just financial support. They involve emotional support of wife and children, character training of children, being involved and engaged in the family, etc. The word “provide” means so much more than just financial support. It involves having vision, foresight, looking ahead and preparing for the future, which is what a man should be doing for his wife and children (<https://www.etymonline.com/word/provide>).

Do exceptions make the rule?

It is also understood that sometimes our men get in less-than-ideal situations. For example, a man may have an accident or may suffer a debilitating health trial, and so may be unable to provide for his family. Or perhaps, he is unemployed or underemployed, due to circumstances in the economy beyond his control. Or, as a result of unwise decisions early in life or lack of training, he is trapped in a cycle of being unable to fully support a family.

These are situations that we sometimes face and we do what we can to mitigate them. Sometimes our options are limited, especially later in life. This a fact of life, and what happens “in the real world”. However, these situations do not mean that a two-income household is the ideal. They are exceptions and should be seen as such. The rule--the goal, the ideal, the standard--should remain that the man should strive to be the provider for the family.

What does the Bible say about the “ideal,” when it comes to men as providers?

Genesis 3:17

Comment: Adam’s curse related to the ground not producing as well--inferring one of his main functions was to provide for the sustenance of his family

Proverbs 31:10-31

Comment: Some use the Proverbs 31 chapter to support women working. The context doesn’t appear to support that. The picture is not of a woman going out to work under the direction of another man. Rather, it is of a woman whose function is to take care of what’s happening in and around the home--the home economy. She might be even buying and selling--as many trusted homemakers do--but it is under the headship of her husband, who is in a responsible position in the community (verse 23).

Ephesians 5:22-29

Comment: A man is commissioned to sacrifice for and take care of his wife, as Christ laid down his life for the church. He also is to be the head of the wife, providing oversight of the family. In America, 38% of wives make more than their husbands. Isn't it logical that women who make more than their husbands would want to have the final say on how it's spent, since they are providing it? A man not providing for his family flips the "headship" model of the Bible upside down.

(<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/can-american-men-ever-be-happy-if-their-wives-earn-more-than-they-do-2019-04-29>)

1 Timothy 5:8

Comment: The context of "if anyone does not provide for his own, he is worse than an unbeliever" clearly is referring to men. In contrast, later in the chapter, Paul expresses the desire that young widows should remarry, "bear children and manage the house, etc." Paul is expecting men to be the providers.

Titus 2:4

Comment: Paul admonishes older women to encourage younger women to be homemakers.

[NOTE: The term "homemaker" seems to be much more positive than "stay-at-home mom." Homemaker implies that a wife and mother is building something. She is creating a warm, welcoming and peaceful environment. She is researching nutrition and working to provide healthy meals for her family, thereby investing in their health for years to come. She has the time to shop for deals and bargains, and make the family finances stretch. She is anchoring the home while the father is gone, so that children don't come home to an empty house or are forced to be in daycare. The role of the wife/mother as homemaker is crucial. "Stay-at-home mom" seems to just be a negation of being out in the workforce-- "homemaker" implies she is building something noble and of great value.]

What are real-life obstacles that can make it difficult for a man to provide for his family?

Economic downturn

Loss of employment

Health problems/accident

Lack of training/education

Societal issues that favor hiring women over men

Attitude that it's impossible for the man to be the provider

These are real obstacles, and real challenges. They are especially for difficult for middle-aged or older men, for example, who may find it difficult to make course corrections (re-training, going back to school, changing jobs) later in life.

The Key is the Next Generation: The biggest concern, however, is the next generation. For them, “Attitude” -- believing they simply can’t support a family by themselves, it’s a hopeless cause -- may be a huge obstacle. If our young men think it will be hopeless to try to support a wife and family, they certainly won’t have the drive or encouragement to make the attempt. Society is even telling young men “it’s unhealthy” for them to strive to be the sole provider psychologically, as opposed to encouraging men to rise to the challenge, stretch themselves, and do it with all their might. (See article: <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/aug/19/men-breadwinners-health-effects-wellbeing>)

Is there hope for young Christian men to be providers of their families? Yes!

- ❑ **Good examples can differentiate themselves from the average millennial.** Millennials today have a bad reputation (as selfish, undependable, lazy, feeling entitled, “snowflakes”, etc.). Young Christian men who are faithful to God’s word (punctual, honest, hardworking, willing to learn, teachable, reliable, diligent, faithful, etc.) can greatly differentiate themselves from the crowd in the minds of employers, in today’s market. To back this up, an NPR interview about 7-8 years ago was done by a commentator who said that millennials who are careful and don’t make stupid mistakes on social media (that will follow them a long time) have tremendous opportunities, even in today’s market.
- ❑ **Employers are looking for good, skilled, trained employees.** Mr. Michael Grovak (LCG Elder in Indianapolis) studied the hiring trends in Southern Indiana, interviewing 18 CEOs from major companies in the region. Their analysis was that they are in dire needs of new hires over the next 5, 10, 20 years. See Mr. Grovak’s memo here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P9k1-2DR7qD7boZEeL2R_Yekkr3CygBnrDQR9K_hkSuY/edit?usp=sharing

Conclusion:

“A generation ago, a man might brag: ‘I would never let my wife work.’ But today, it seems, due in part to the New Father idea, a much more typical boast might be: ‘I would never let my wife not work.’... Paternal attachment to breadwinning is neither arbitrary nor anachronistic. Historically and currently, the breadwinner role matches quite well with core aspects of masculine identity... We can, through the New Father model, continue to assault male breadwinning in a root-and-branch attempt to reinvent men and deconstruct traditional masculinity. Or we can endeavor, however imperfectly, to incorporate men as they are into family life, in part by giving them distinctive, gendered roles that reflect, rather than reject, inherited masculine norms--such

as, for example, the breadwinner role. The New Father model does not merely unburden men of breadwinning as a special obligation. Ultimately, it unburdens them of fatherhood itself.” (pp. 116-117) (Source:

<https://www.amazon.com/Fatherless-America-Confronting-Urgent-Problem/dp/006092683X>)

A sad and destructive myth today is that “the ideal situation” is for both men and women to work outside of the home. This myth destroys the concept that men were made--wired, built, and designed--to provide for women and children. This short presentation has shown that the “two-income is ideal” is not supported by the Bible. It is also understood that sometimes our men get in situations where they don’t have the ideal situation. These situations do not establish the “two-income is ideal” standard, however. They are exceptions and should be seen as such. And we should encourage our young men -- who have the opportunity ahead of them to pursue their education and training -- to take those opportunities and prepare for the marketplace, apply themselves and take the challenge. And with God’s help, they can strive for the noble goal of being the provider of their family, as God ordained.