

How to Build an Ark for Your Family

- Hey, if you're new, you're surrounded with the best guys. Here's the way it works. We tend to go through books of the Bible on the weekend, and then I'll take a section of that scripture and just do a leadership talk for men. And you are men. That means you are leaders. And one of the great things that we're learning is we're in the book of Genesis. It's a lot of stories about men and their sons and their grandsons. And we're looking at generations of legacies that are determined by decisions that men make. And the point is this. Much of your life is affected by decisions that were made by men who preceded you. And the decisions that you make will affect men who come after you, heads of household, families, and generations. And what we've looked at, in Genesis, it started with Adam and Eve and then their sons Cain and Abel, and Seth, that's the first four chapters. It's literally one dad and three sons, and one of those sons gets murdered. Chapter 5 of Genesis, it's a whole bunch of men, it's 1,656 years of men. And it's just this guy had this son, and then this guy had this son, and it's 1,656 years of all the men who were born. And then chapter 6 of Genesis, we meet a guy named Noah. And if you're watching a film, when the camera slows down and the angle of shot zooms in, you know, this is very important. That's what happens with the life of Noah. The first few chapters cover all men in human history. Chapter 6 through 9 cover just the life of Noah. Who is this guy? What decisions did he make? And he serves as an example for us. And so the scene shifts to Noah. And what we learned is God told him that a storm was coming and he needed to prepare for it. So here's the big idea for you and for I. Genesis isn't just about what happened, but about what always happens. How many of you the last year or two, it felt like a storm came? Anybody experience that? In your business, in your personal life, in our global citizenship. Well, here's what we read, "A storm is coming, your family needs you to build an ark." Here's what we learn about Noah in Hebrews 11, "By faith Noah, being warned by God." So God told him, okay, storm is coming, "concerning events as yet unseen in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his" what, "his household." Here's the big idea I want you and I to get as men from the story of Noah. Storm comes, you need to build your ark. And the storm can be any kind of storm. For him, literally, it was a storm, it was a flood. For you and I, what are the various kinds of storms? Just shout it out and be honest. What kind of storms are you men going through right now? You're in it

- [Man] divorce.

- You're in the middle of a divorce. Storm, true or false? Cataclysmic storm. Other storms you men her going through?

- [Man] Finances.

- Finances right now. I mean, if you're running a company, good luck getting people or items. Other than that, business is easy. If no one will show up to work and you don't know when you're gonna get your product, and it is very complicated right now financially, to make any sense of where the future is going. What else have you been dealing with, storms right now?

- [Man] Health.

- Health. I'll tell you if you are a man who's over 20, you have health issues. And if you're over 50, you've got a lot of health issues. And if you're over 70, you shouldn't stay up too late, this might be the end for you. I mean, it just, I'll just tell you, the older you get, the worse it gets. I can't read anything. I can't pick anything up. Like right now, my whole left side is asleep. You're like, why? 'Cause I slept on it, that's why. You're like, put a mattress, it's soft, apparently, so am I. So, as you get older, it just gets worse. Other storms you men are dealing with right now?

- [Man] Death.

- You got a death in your family? Somebody you know or love? The point is this, life brings storms and sometimes God saves you from it, sometimes God saves you through it. We looked in Genesis, before the flood came, God took a guy named Enoch and he saved him out of it. So he didn't have to go through the flood. Noah, he's gotta go through it. Most of the storms that come into our life, you can't get around it, you gotta go through it. And the key is, you've gotta figure out what the ark is that God has you to build. And what I love in Hebrews, it says, "For the saving of his household" If you don't build an ark, your family is going to perish. If he didn't build an ark, his family was going to perish. So I was thinking about it. It says in Genesis 6, I think verse 3, that for 120 years, Noah was preparing the ark and he was preaching good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ. And what I was thinking about, it was, for 120 years, Noah had to do what God determined his priorities were. So I wanna share with you that Noah's five priorities, they have to be our five priorities. And any priorities we want to add, in addition to these, they need to come down the list. So for 120 years, Noah kept his priorities. If he didn't keep his priorities, human history would've been altered, and his family would've been lost and perished. And the point is this, Noah is not a perfect man, but he is an exemplary man, 'cause he's the only man whose family made it through the storm. And what I'm telling you right now, this is a time of great uncertainty. Here we are today. We have got global supply chain issues. We've got surging inflation and we're looking potentially at a recession or a depression. We've got the brink of a global conflict. We've got a war with an invasion. We've got lots of uncertainty, in addition to all the personal stuff that you're going through. When you look out, it doesn't look like smooth sailing, clear seas and just bright, shiny sky. The world we live in, it looks pretty dark and ominous. It looks like the clouds have rolled in and it looks like it is about to get very, very stormy on the high seas. And the point is this, the only way that you and I can make it through it and lead our families through whatever is coming is to learn how to build our ark. And that begins by keeping these five God-given priorities. The first priority is, he's a believer. Today, we'd say that's a Christian. Genesis 6: 8-9, "Noah found favor in the eyes of God." That's the first occasion of the Hebrew word for grace. How do you have a relationship with God? By grace. It's not about what we do, it's about what Jesus does. It's not about how we clean ourselves up. It's about how Jesus forgives us of the things that we have done. It's grace. "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" and then Noah what? "walked with God." So your relationship with God is, He saves you by grace and then you gotta walk with him. This is practical day by day. When my sons were little and we would go somewhere, especially when they were very little,

I've got three boys. I'd always hold their hands. And I'd just say, just stay with Dad. And there were times that we would travel. I brought the kids on a lot of trips and we jump on planes and we go to other countries and I'd always tell 'em, don't worry about anything, just pay attention to one thing. Stay close to dad. As long as you stay close to dad, dad's got the details figured out. You gotta stay close to dad. If you wander away from dad, it's not gonna be good. Dad will worry about everything. You worry about one thing, sticking close to dad. And that's what your walk with God is. It doesn't matter how old you are. You're still a son, He's still a father. And the key to walking with God is to know, I'm the son. I'm not the father. Now with my sons, I'm the father. But in that relationship, I'm the son. He leads, I follow. He speaks, I obey. He instructs and I agree. So first and foremost, this means, in your schedule, in your budget, in your heart, in your life and your day, first priority is, relationship with God. So let's run the tape on Noah. What if he didn't walk with God? What would've happened? No ark. No human beings survive the flood. You and I are not here today. Human history is over. Sometimes you and I don't understand that our walk with God might be a much bigger deal than we're anticipating or seeing, that generations could be impacted and affected by the decisions that we make. You and I are still here today. There's still human life on planet earth because Noah walked with God. And if he didn't walk with God, he wouldn't have heard from God. God told him, "Hey, flood is coming." He wouldn't have heard that. God told him, "Build an ark. And here's exactly and precisely how you build it." And now it's time to get on the ark. And had Noah not been consistently walking with God through the totality of his life, He wouldn't have heard God's instructions and/or he would not have obeyed them. And what would've changed? Everything in human history. You men need to know that some of you are very, very bright. Some of you are great forecasters. Some of you are great budgeters and sequencers and architects, and all of that is great. But the most important thing, you better hear from God. You better hear from God because the truth is, you and I, we make a lot of our planning and decision making on what we see, and the truth is, only God really sees what's coming. Only God really knows what tomorrow holds. And I'm just begging you, make your relationship with God your highest priority. Church, Bible, prayer, walk with the Lord, listen to the Lord, first priority. After that priority is established, what would you guess is the second priority for Noah? His wife. And so we read this about his marriage. Genesis 7:7, "Noah and his wife...went into the ark." How many of you, your wife would not follow you in the boat? How many of you, if you took 120 years to build a boat in the middle of the desert, before it ever rained, at some point, your girl would tap out? See, the honest men laugh and the liars are like, "Not my girl!" So the point is, how difficult do you think it was to get his wife to follow his leadership? Had to be tough, right? At this point, it's never rained. They're in the desert. And he tells her "Honey, God told me, build a huge boat, for 120 years." How much of their family finances are being invested in the ark project? Probably everything. He is telling everyone it's going to flood and rain. What does everyone think of him? He's nuttier than a Snickers bar. That's what they think about him. At some point, do you think his wife looked at him and said, "Are you sure? I like, is there any alternate explanation for what you've been told to do? Any? At some point he had to have some difficult days with his wife. How many of you, just being married 120 years, you just got a nervous eye twitch? Like I can't, that's just, that's a lot. He led his wife and somehow she followed him. Their relationship was such that when he said, "God said," she said, "I trust you." She had to have an incredibly high trust with her

husband, to allow him to literally ruin his reputation, build a boat and preach to a bunch of people who don't convert and don't care. Yet, she is with him, she's with him through it all. And when it comes the time to go on the ark, she goes with him, they're together. And then after the flood, Noah went out of the ark and his... wife...she's still there. First priority is what? Walk with God. Second priority. Walk with God with your girl. What if Noah didn't have a good marriage? What if him and his wife didn't work out whatever they had to work out. And I'll just tell you this. If you're gonna be married for 120 years, you're gonna have some rough spots. Okay, I mean, they worked through, what if he didn't work through his stuff with his wife? She wouldn't have got on the boat and his wife is gone. There's only eight people who live. Here's what's really curious. It's Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives, eight people live. And that was his family. And let me say this, you and I can get so caught up in global national geopolitical economic conflicts that we're looking over our families. The way our news media works, they're going to create a different crisis and they will telecast, they will simulcast, they will promote and platform the crisis until it no longer generates the market share that they want, and then they'll create or focus on another crisis. And the point is, there's always gonna be a crisis. If it's not the election, it's COVID, if it's not COVID, it's Ukraine. And if it's not Ukraine, it's the economy. And if it's not the economy it'll be something else. And you and I can spend all of our time and all of our energy, looking over our family. And the truth is I love the fact that at least Noah got his family. Nobody else converted. Nobody else followed. Nobody else believed. Nobody else got on the ark, but who was the first person to get on with him? His wife. Let me tell you this, men. Even if you don't change the whole world, if you love your family, then you are an incredible man.

- [Man] Amen.

- That's the big idea, because we can't save people. We can tell them about Jesus, but we can't save 'em. Noah spends 120 years telling everybody about God and nobody cares, and that's not his responsibility or fault. What he is responsible for is his family, his wife, and his kids. And what's awesome, they all, they all follow him. So number one, Walk with God. Number two, Relationship with wife. Number three, priority number three. What do think it is men? Take a guess. Your kids, father. Okay, and this is the order that you're supposed to have. You're a Christian. And then you get married. And then with your wife, you have kids. If you're single, write this down, nobody's doing it, but this is the best sequence. Otherwise it's like fire, ready, aim. It's like, be a Christian, marry a girl and then have kids. The order of priorities is really the way that our life is to be. For you single guys, your relationship with God right now is crucial. Then you're gonna add a wife and then you're gonna add kids. But here's what we learn about his kids. As a father, Genesis 7:13, "Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth... and the three wives of his sons...entered the ark." His sons followed his leadership and their wives followed with him. And what this means is his boys were believers and they married, believing women. And they all believed what God said, and they're obeying God's commands. Now, again, you can't save your kids and your in-laws. But at the end of the day, I love the fact that Noah was trying to reach the world. He was trying to build the ark, but somehow he didn't miss his kids. He didn't miss his own children in front of him. He focused on them and his boys

helped him build a boat. And then ultimately when it came time to enter, they followed him with their daughters, with their wives, rather, his daughter-in-laws. First priority, God. How's your relationship with God? Second, wife. How's it going with your wife? Third, kids. Have you overlooked any of your kids? Have you lost any of your kids? Don't just pray for them, pursue them. Get time with them, get into their world. One of the things I do, I like to schedule time with my kids. When can you have lunch, When can you have dinner? I wanna sit down, I wanna look at you. I wanna visit, I wanna check in. I care about you. I want you to know that you are a priority and I wanna look into your face and I wanna hear your eyes speak and your heart speak through your mouth. And I want to know who you are and what you're dealing with, so I can pray for you and I can love you and I can help you because it doesn't matter how old you are, I still wanna be a good dad. So don't miss your kids. And then it goes on to say, "Noah went out," So that's before the flood, they go in, after they exit the ark, "Noah went out and his sons and his sons' wives." Imagine this moment, who died in the flood? Everyone. You walk out of the ark. Who's holding your hand? Your wife, and there are your kids, and you're like, "Well God, thanks. We lost everybody but I still got my family." And I'm telling you this, guys, there's gonna be times in life where it seems like you kinda lost everybody. And I hope and pray you still have your family. And to me, this is profoundly personal. Some years ago, we had the hardest season of our life. It was our version of the flood. And God spoke to us and told us what to do. And my wife and I stuck together. We moved to the desert. We didn't know anyone. We tried to do what God told us to do. We ended up with this awesome church and these incredible people. So this is my version of an ark. It was already built when I got here, but we have done some upgrades. And at the end of the day, through the hardest storm and season of our life, I didn't lose my wife and I didn't lose my kids. I'll tell you, I wake up every day and I just take a deep breath and I thank God. My wife loves the Lord, my kids love the Lord. They're marrying people that love the Lord. Praise the Lord. At the end of the day, I don't know what's gonna happen to the rest of the planet. But at the end of the day, I need to make sure that I don't overlook my own children and that they and their marriages are a priority. And then I'll show you the last thing with Noah's family. I love this. Genesis 9:1, God blessed who? "Noah and his sons and said to them," get 'em some grandkids. That's what it means in the Hebrew. Get 'em some grandkids. How many of you, God has blessed your life? Any of you, could you say that God has blessed your life?

- [Men] Amen.

- Now the world has a curse, and so that's not gonna bless you. And Satan is your enemy, he's not gonna bless you. So literally the world is gonna be against you and Satan is gonna attack you, but God is gonna bless you. I would submit to you that yeah, the world has cursed me and Satan has attacked me, but 100%, God has blessed me. I feel tremendously blessed. Literally I was thinking about it this week. If I had to put one word over my life, Blessed That's how I feel, my relationship with God. And what I love here is He doesn't just bless Noah, He blesses his sons. For those of us men who are a little older and we have kids, let me ask you a question for the young men over here. Is it more wonderful to be blessed or to see your kids be blessed? It's more wonderful to see your kids be blessed. See, that's a father's heart. A father's heart is I'm really glad that I'm blessed. But if my kids are blessed, watching them be blessed is actually

more exciting than me being blessed. And blessings here, just so you know, there are three categories of blessing. There's internal, clear conscience. Sin is forgiven, God loves me. This is as close to hell as I will ever be. God listens to my prayers, God cares about me. Internal, external. Sometimes it's physical possessions. It's health, it's provision, it's a job. It's stuff in the world, that we enjoy. And then it's eternal. I'm storing up my treasures in heaven. You know, when my dad passes away, I love my dad, but he loves the Lord, my mom loves the Lord. So you know what? Oh, there's an eternal reward. There'll be a day that they go home and there'll be a day that I go home and there'll be a day that my kids go home. And someday my grandkids, Lord willing, go home and we're not gonna be here forever. But the eternal reward is family's still gonna be together, thanks to Jesus. So the blessing is internal, it's external and it's eternal. And I love that God doesn't just bless Noah, He blesses his sons and then he's gonna give him the blessing of grandkids. The point is this. If you keep your priorities in order, you're increasing the propensity proclivity opportunity of God to bless. God can't bless your plan, He can only bless his plan. God can't bless your priorities, He'll only bless his priorities. So what you wanna do, you wanna align yourself with God's priorities and say, "Okay, God, I wanna do what you tell me to do in the order you're telling me to do it. And I'm asking you to bless it because that's what you told me to do." I want you to be blessed. I want your kids to be blessed. I want your grandkids to be blessed, 100%. Now what would've had happened if Noah walked with God, had a good marriage, but didn't lead his kids. What would've happened? He would've seen his kids perish. I can't think of anything more devastating than losing your own child, let alone all of them. He could have lost all three sons. Instead He has the Lord, his wife, his sons, and his sons marry believing girls, and they're all walking with the Lord. Now the world is a total disaster, but at least his family's intact and loves the Lord. Fourth priority. Number one, Christian, number two, husband, number three, father, number four. What's your fourth? Job. It's your job, going to work. And so here we see about his job. Genesis 7:5, Noah did what? "All that the Lord commanded him." God told him you're gonna build a boat out of this wood, this size, this architecting, three stories high, here's how it's to be built. It says that Noah did everything the Lord commanded him. This is his job, God gave him a job to do. Son, you're going to work. Here's your job description. Build a big boat. And by the way, build it right, 'cause you're gonna be on it. Now, what if Noah didn't do his job? Row, row, everybody dies. The point is this, friends, you are the boat builder for your family. You are the ark builder for your family, your wife, your kids can help you, but you are the builder. And what I'm talking about here is if an economic storm is coming, you better build a financial plan. If a physical storm is coming, you better build a medical plan. If a relational storm is coming, you better build a counseling plan. Whatever happens, you're going to need to figure out what the ark is that you and your family climb into to get through the storm. Some years ago, something comes to mind, there was a book on leadership and it had this interesting analogy, I think I've used it before, but there were two guys standing before a large cruise ship. One guy asked the other guy, in regards to that boat, who's the most important person? Answer? Most of the time, we'd say the captain. The truth is, the boat builder, because you can have an incredible captain, and if the boat don't float, it don't matter. And this is where a lot of you, your life is taking on water and it feels like you and your family are sinking. And it may not be that you are a bad captain. It may mean that you didn't build a good boat. You need to think about your company. If you're a business owner, how

do we build this ark? How do we build this boat? If we're having kids, how do we build our budget? How do we build our schedule? How do we build our life? And as men, this is our responsibility. For Noah, this was his responsibility. And if he didn't build the boat and/or he started building it and he stopped it, or he tried to cut some corners and not build it exactly as God told him, what happens? His whole family is destroyed. Let me say this. Our women and our children are in our boat. How many of you feel that as a man? This is why a lot of men today want to reject their responsibility. They're like, I don't want that much responsibility. Well, somebody's gotta take it. And God says, it's us. And if you don't know how to build your ark, you don't know how to build your, "I don't know what to do with finances." "I don't know what to do with real estate." "I don't know what to do with kids." "I don't know what to do with hell." Here's the good news. There's a bunch of boat builders in this room. There's guys who have built companies and built families. They're medical doctors, there's investment bankers. There are company owners, there are CEOs. There are entrepreneurs. There are all kinds of great, great, great ark builders in this room. And if you're a guy, you're like, "I don't know how to build that ark." Then find the guy who knows how to build that ark. And then spend time with the Lord and get your design plan. But once you get it, you gotta go to work. How long did Noah work on his ark? 120 years. How many of you are so glad that they have shortened lifespan? Like I'm so glad I don't need to go to work for 500 years. 120 years though, he did the same job every day, build a boat, build a boat, build a boat, build a boat. But ultimately it saved his family. And then number five, his fifth priority being a minister tells us about this. In 2 Peter 2:5, Noah was a "herald of righteousness." So he was a preacher. So his volunteer work was preaching. How many people got saved? Just his family. Can you imagine that? Imagine 120 years, you're trying to be Billy Graham, "Please come forward now, if you'd like," yeah, nobody's coming, We don't need ushers. We don't need aisles. 120 years. How many of you guys you feel like I've been talking to people about the Lord, been praying for my family, been sharing with my coworkers, I'm just not seeing the massive revival that I was hoping for. Don't feel bad. Your job is not to save people. Your job is to tell people about a savior, who saves people. Noah did his job, and he did his ministry. He built his boat and he preached the gospel. The boat got built just fine, and the ministry didn't have a big return on investment. And it doesn't mean that he wasted his time. It doesn't mean that he did anything wrong. And it doesn't mean that he failed. He did what God told him to do. And people decided they didn't care about the Lord. And that's between them and the Lord. That's not between Noah and them. And that's not between them and you. And your ministry is where you serve in some form or fashion, how God has created you to, and we want you to serve. So, what if he didn't do his ministry? What if Noah didn't preach like God told him? Well, he wouldn't have seen his family saved, but also he would've had a tremendous guilt for the rest of his life. Seeing all those people perish if he didn't at least try, he would feel very guilty about that. Well, I didn't even talk to 'em I didn't even tell 'em flood's coming and see, God flooded the earth with water, and in the end he's gonna flood it with fire. Ultimately, we are warning people about the second coming of Jesus Christ, the final judgment, the judgment by fire. And I don't know who's gonna get saved or not saved, but at the end of the day, it's our job to tell them about Jesus and then them and Jesus gotta sort out whether or not they're saved. And had he not done that, can you imagine all the guilt? Can you imagine his sons, his sons' wives, his wife, all those people that perish. "Did you even try to tell him about the Lord?" "Did

you even talk to him?" "Did you have the awkward conversation?" "Yes, I did. I told everybody about the Lord, I tried. I'm telling you, my conscience is clearing. My hands are clean. Like I told everybody about the Lord and I did it for 120 years and I tried my best and I don't feel guilty about that. That's between them and the Lord." The way that Noah was able to build his ark that preserved, saved, rescued his family is he kept his five priorities for 120 years. So for you and I, as men, what I'm saying is if we're gonna build whatever ark God has for us to preserve our family, then we need to keep the priorities that Noah did. Let me say a few things practically. So let me ask you this. If a man or men in general make a mistake, what priority do they usually elevate too high? What is the one that we tend to put in the wrong spot?

- Work

- Work, work. some will even put it, well, I can't go to church, my job doesn't allow it. And I mean, I love my family and so I'm gonna work hard. So I can't really know my kids 'cause I gotta provide for them. It's like, no, no, no. I believe in making money. I believe in being in business, I believe in turning a profit, I'm totally for it. But what I'm saying is this, your business not blessed by God will not outperform your business blessed by God. A lot of guys are like, well I'm gonna invert the order that God gave me, 'cause if I throw more of my energy into my work, I know I can get a better return on investment. God's in heaven going, "Actually, if you kept my priorities, maybe I would bless your work." See we tend not to factor in the blessing of God on what we're doing. When you keep God's priorities, don't be shocked if you see God bless your priorities, 'cause those are his priorities. Most of the time men will take work and push it up the list. And sometimes it's because we don't wanna deal with our wife at home. You're like, I know it says to love my wife. She drives me crazy so I'm gonna work more. My kids are a lot of time and energy, so I'm gonna work more. Or we want a lifestyle thinking that lifestyle equals quality of life. This is one of the great myths that men believe. How many of you men have made good money and had a bad life? Anybody ever done that? How many of you have had income but not quality of life? Meaning your relationship with God is healthy, you and your wife are getting along, you got time, margin and energy to know, love and enjoy your kids. You do have a job and do provide and pay. But then you've got a little margin left for ministry, serve God's people, serve in some form or fashion. There's a big difference between the amount you make and the life you live. They're not commensurate. I'm not against making money. I believe in Jesus and math, feel free to make money. But at the end of the day, what men tend to do, we tend to take work and push it way up. And then here's what happens. Ultimately, God doesn't bless 'cause the priorities are out of order. Sometimes then it breaks the marriage and it hurts the children. And then we take all the money that we made, we split it between two divorce attorneys. We split all the assets. We have a lot of complication with the kids and we end up with less money than we would've had, if we would've actually not made so much money and had more family. And I'm not saying this to pick on you old guys, 'cause there's old guys here going, "that son of a gun" So I'm not picking on you, but there are older men in this room who would be honest with you and say, "I made more money, but I had a worse relationship with God. I had a worse marriage and worse children." And some would say, "I took a lot of what I earned and I spent it on breaking apart our family. And that was not a good use of my time and energy." And they

would urge and encourage you, keep your God-given priorities. In addition, one of the things that men tend to do that is an error, we tend to take those priorities, two and three, your wife and your kids, we collapse them into one priority and we call it what? Family. You have two priorities under your roof, not one. Your wife was there, before your kids. And when your kids come, the hope is that when they leave, she'll still be there, that's the hope. And what men will do, they will collapse two and three, being a husband and a father, into family. What happens then is, it kind of works. The husband gets a little jealous 'cause the kids get the best time and energy of mom, and mom gets a little jealous 'cause the kids get the best time and energy of dad. It kind of works a little bit until the kids grow up and launch and leave home. And then the marriage, what? Craters. Why? Because we didn't really work on the marriage. We were working on parenting the kids. And we called that family, but it wasn't marriage. And when the kids left, the marriage crumbled, 'cause it wasn't really the marriage holding us together, it was the kids. And once the kids leave, the icing's out of the Oreo, we just fall apart. And so what I'm telling you is for those of you who are single men, your relationship with God, highest priority, You're never gonna have this much time and energy to invest in your relationship with God. You guys who are married, your marriage is now your second priority. Your extended family, your former family, your former friends, they're now down the list. Your wife is in second position of priority. Once your kids come, love your kids, enjoy your kids. I got five kids. I love, love, love being a dad, but I still need to make sure that my priority is my marriage. And then, work. It's good to work. God made us to work. Men are built for work. God made Adam, put him in the garden to work. It's good to go to work, but make sure that you don't allow work to displace God, your wife or your kids. And then leave some time to serve in ministry. And I'll close with this. Let's have this brief conversation. What are some things that are not on the list? And you can add other things to the list, but where do they go? Down the list. So anything you're gonna add to the list, it needs to be able to not be competing with or taking from your priorities. What other things tend to invade a man's life and try and command a place on that list?

- [Man] Hobbies.

- Hobbies. So I'm telling you this, you probably won't have the same golf score, the same number of days on the lake with a pole in your hand or the same number of days out trying to hunt down some protein. You're probably going to need to realize that if you're gonna have your time and energy go to the Lord, your wife, your kids, your job and ministry, your hobbies are probably not gonna get as much time and energy as you would've liked. Now what you can do, I'll let you know a little secret. You could try and get your wife into your hobbies and then you're kind of, you're working the system a little bit, okay, so some of you are like, I know one guy, he's always going fishing. Any of you fish? He's always going fishing. His wife is like, "I hate that he goes fishing. He's just gone all day." I said, "Why don't you go with him?" She said, "Well, I don't wanna go fish. "Well you wanna hang out with him. He's in the boat and he can't leave, so you could talk to him for hours. He's like a hostage situation, he's trapped. So she decided she'd go fishing with him. Well, now what he's doing is he's saying I do have a hobby, but if I involve my wife, it's kind of a date. So you gotta get a little creative. Is it okay if you've got a hobby to say, well, I'm gonna do that with my kids. I like to hike, so I'm gonna hike with my kids or I like to golf

so I'm gonna golf with my kids. Well that's okay. Other things though that can push their way into a man's priority list or try to push their way up the man's priority list, hobbies for sure, what else?

- [Man] Sports.

- Sports. Entertainment. Some guys are like, I got season tickets. Well, but wait a minute. Once you get kids and they've got games, you may not be able to make it to all the major league games 'cause you gotta go to the little league games. And the truth is the Diamondbacks are terrible anyway, so why would you wanna go? They're terrible. I mean, they were a really good high school team last year, but they just had a rough season. But a man can get so into, for example sports, that all of a sudden the family is working around the schedule of the athletics. Other things that can jam onto or up a man's list?

- [Man] Best friends.

- Your buddies. And what happens when you get married and you have kids, your buddies are displaced. Meaning, they're going down the priority scale. How many of you guys are newly married and your friends who are single don't understand it? And they're like, "You've changed." You're like, "Duh, I get ya, I put a ring on a girl. That's an official pivot. And she's pregnant, and, so yeah. I mean, yeah, I love Xbox, but you are no longer a priority. It was great to hang out with you, but you're single, I'm married, she's pregnant. You're not a priority. I like you, but you're number 14 on the list, okay. You are, you're under the dog. I'm just gonna tell you where you fell." And I don't even like the dog. Other people or things that push their way on or up a man's list?

- [Man] Addiction.

- Addictions. What addictions will do, they will displace and replace your priorities. All of a sudden you're like, "Yeah, I can't go into work, 'cause I'm hungover. I can't make it to my kids' game 'cause it was a night game and I had too much to drink after dinner, and I can't get in the car." What addictions will do, addictions will want to push themselves all the way to the top of the list, to where they replace God as your highest priority and your first commitment. In addition, in our day, political infighting and polarization, every day, there's another fight over something. Any of you notice this? And if you just spend your whole time obsessing over things that you have no authority over, you could be overlooking the opportunities you do have to exercise your loving authority. And lastly, I'll say this, what happens is a man can establish his priorities and some unhealthy, crazy person is gonna try to get on and climb up your list. This can be extended family, relative, person who is self-destructing person who majored in drama in college and they've carried it on as a side job, career, it's just always drama. We all know somebody and usually they're extended family or former friends. You're like, they're just nuts. They just create chaos and havoc and drama and problems and emergencies and noise. And they want me to just be like the fire department where as soon as they pull the alarm, I stop everything I'm doing, and I slide down the pole and I run out the door. No. No. Just because

they create drama, doesn't mean it changes your priorities. Now you may look at it and say, that is a ministry. That's priority number five. So how can I minister to that person without having my wife, my kids or my job be displaced because the least healthy, most demanding person in my life is now setting my priorities. And you gotta be careful about this with your wife as well. And you gotta have some very difficult conversations. Say, "Honey, here are our God-given priorities. And if we're not invested in those, I'm not sure we're gonna build the ark that God has for us. In addition, I don't think God is gonna bless unless we live according to His priorities. And I know you love that person. I know they're related to you. I know maybe even they have the same last name or maybe even you shared a bedroom with them as a kid, but they're an adult and that's their responsibility. They're not a child, they're not our child, that's not our highest priority." And this is the absolute crucial leadership that Noah demonstrates. If he would've let unhealthy people take his time and energy, the boat wouldn't have gotten built by the time the flood came. It'd been half built. Had he not kept his God-given priorities, everybody he loved wouldn't have made it on the boat and had he not walked with God, he would've even known to build the boat. And I love you guys with all my heart, I truly do. It's an honor to be with you. If you don't know how to build your ark, find the guys in the room that know how to build the ark that you're needing to build, and we're here to help you build that ark. But I'm telling you, ultimately, one of the great things about Noah is this, in the eyes of the world, he's a total failure. Nobody gets saved. But in the eyes of God, his family got saved and he was obedient to God. I think sometimes we overestimate how big our footprint is in the world. And we underestimate how big our footprint is in our family, with our wife and with our kids. And I'm gonna pray, and we're gonna give you guys some time to hear a testimony and chat together. Father God, I pray against the enemy of servants works and effects. And God, I thank you for the story of Noah. His day is like our day. Everybody was doing evil, only continually and all the time. Their hearts were just bent on madness. And God, that's the days in which we live. Somehow Lord, Noah was able to keep his priorities. He walked with you. He loved his wife, he loved his kids. They married believers. He did his job and he fulfilled his ministry. We ask for the grace to do the same thing to the best of our abilities. And God, I pray for these men. I pray for their marriages. I pray for their children, and I pray like Noah, there would be blessing on their grandchildren. And God, we don't know how many people we know are gonna make it with us through the storm that is this world into the new world that awaits us on the other side in your kingdom. But God, I do pray for our wives and I pray for our kids and I pray for our grandkids, that they would follow our leadership and that you would help us know how to build an ark, to get everyone home safely in Jesus' good name. Amen, love you guys, thanks for letting me teach.