

Wednesday Word

2024: SETTING THE STANDARD

Proverbs 16:1-3 “The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit. Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

Naomi and I met in 2001 at Church for all Nations in Tacoma. At the time I had absolutely no interest in having a girlfriend let alone pursuing a marriage. I was focused on my Bible study and my ministry calling. I wanted all my energy focused on preparation, prayer, and training for full-time ministry. I wanted to give my attention and affection to the Lord and to him alone.

Well, as you may have figured, life went in the opposite direction, and we were engaged just under a year later and married a few months after that. I think we both remember different things about our wedding day. I remember how amazing she looked in her dress; I remember how tired I was after the ceremony; I remember praying over one of the families in attendance as they rushed their 1-year-old to the hospital (he is totally fine and a grown man now); I remember how long it took for the food to be ready and I also remember how good it was.

Naomi and I grew up in very different family cultures which created both fun and challenging aspects in our marriage. We both had to learn to compromise and sacrifice certain things for the health of our marriage and future families. We have both agreed and disagreed on many issues over the years but there are two foundational things we agreed we wanted as Standards in our home and marriage.

The first was Setting the Standard of church attendance. Naomi and I have been committed since day one to attending and being active in the local church. We have attended amazing, bible-based churches over the years and have made life-long relationships from each one. Church attendance and involvement was non-negotiable in our home from the beginning. While we have taken sabbaticals and seasons of rest, we never strayed from that standard. And to this day I am grateful as it has created a righteous stability in our lives.

The second was Setting the Standard of having one parent active and present in the home to care for and raise the children on a daily basis. This is extremely challenging from a financial standpoint, especially living in an expensive state like Washington. Many families have both parents working full-time and while I respect any parent who does what is necessary, this is not something we wanted for our home. Primarily, I have been the one to work while Naomi stayed home but we have gone through seasons where the roles reversed. Due to this Standard, we have not been able to afford nice cars, or luxurious vacations- we went camping on a budget in used vans. We don't own a massive estate- we own a fixer-upper. We can't afford to send our kids to private school- we homeschool. It hasn't always been easy, but it has always been right and always been healthy.

As we all consider the theme and direction for 2024, Setting the Standard, I want you to consider: What Standards have you set in your life that you refuse to compromise? What Standards have you set that have been difficult to uphold? What Standards have you set that you are so glad that you did?

When we are actively Setting the Standard for how God wants us to live, we have set a non-negotiable expectations for life and godliness. We have made a stance and a statement that the Standard we set is how we are going live no matter what.

I want to encourage you today, no matter how difficult or unattainable it seems, be active and prayerful about Setting a Standard of righteous living and godly expectation in your life. If we do, we will stand strong when the weakness of the world begins to crumble around us.

Setting the Standard,

Pastor Eric Lundberg