



MUMC Retreat | 2026

**MANAGING EXPECTATIONS AS A FATHER,
TO YOUR WIFE, IN-LAWS, SIBLINGS AND
THE CHILDREN AND THE IMPACT ON
MARRIAGES.**



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INTRODUCTION

As Christian men in the diaspora, we face unique challenges in balancing our roles as fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, and leaders.

Christian fathers must:

- *Manage expectations*
- *Navigate societal pressures*
- *Fulfill biblical mandates*

Dr. James Dobson states: "The family is the most important institution in society."

Today, we explore how to:


- *Manage expectations effectively*
- *Thrive in our families*
- *Pursue God's purpose*







UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS


DIFFERENT RELATIONSHIPS PULL DIFFERENTLY





WIFE → PARTNERSHIP




-  Emotional availability
She expects you to listen and understand.
-  Shared decisions
Major choices should include her.
-  Financial teamwork
She expects you to plan and provide.
-  Protect and provide
She looks to you for security and leadership.





IN-LAWS → TRADITION/RESPECT



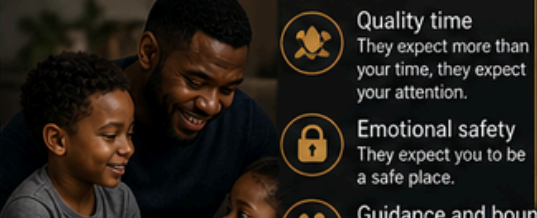
-  Respect their elders
They expect honor, politeness and deference.
-  Include them in family matters
They expect to be kept informed and considered.
-  Uphold family traditions
They expect you to participate and continue the family ways.
-  Represent the family well
They notice how you carry yourself and treat others.





SIBLINGS → LOYALTY

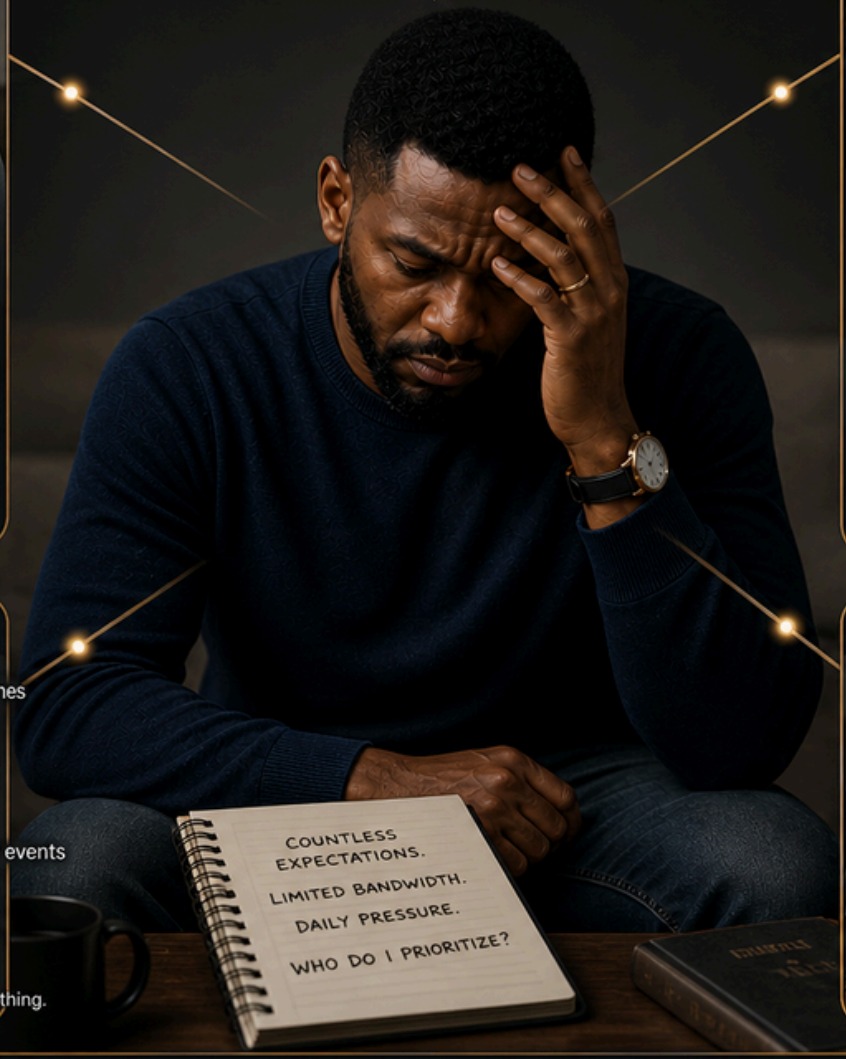



-  Be there in tough times
They expect support when it matters.
-  Keep confidences
They expect trust and discretion.
-  Show up for family events
They expect you to be present.
-  Maintain the bond
They expect you to reach out, not just when you need something.

CHILDREN → PRESENCE



-  Quality time
They expect more than your time, they expect your attention.
-  Emotional safety
They expect you to be a safe place.
-  Guidance and boundaries
They expect direction and consistency.
-  Active involvement
They notice if you're engaged in their lives.



 You can't meet every expectation. But you can manage them with clarity, communication and consistent effort.

Different relationships pull differently.

- *Wife → partnership*
- *In-laws → tradition/respect*
- *Siblings → loyalty*
- *Children → presence*

When expectations:

- *Clash*
- *Remain unspoken*

They create:

- *Resentment*
- *Strain*
- *Pressure on marriage*



UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS

Managing:

- *Taking active, ongoing control rather than reacting by default*
- *Setting boundaries*
- *Communicating clearly*
- *Prioritizing*
- *Adjusting when needed*

You are steering, not reacting

Expectations:

Beliefs or assumptions about:

- *What you should do*
- *How you should act*
- *What others will receive*

They can be:

- *Spoken or unspoken*
 - *Fair or unrealistic*
-



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

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IMPACTS:



FAMILY



Stronger relationships.
Healthier communication.
More presence.
Lasting legacy.

DR. JAMES DOBSON:
“The family is the
most important
institution in society.”

“



WORK



Better focus.
Clearer priorities.
Improved performance.
Respected leadership.



PERSONAL LIFE



Less stress.
Better health.
Peace of mind.
Purpose and fulfillment.



BIBLICAL FOCUS:



BALANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

A time for everything,
and a season for every
activity under heaven.



PRIORITIZE FAITH

Seek first his kingdom
and his righteousness.



MODEL GODLY CHARACTER

Set an example for the
believers in speech,
in conduct, in love,
in faith and in purity.



AS A FATHER

Dr. James Dobson:

"The father is the key to the family."

Deuteronomy 6:6-7:

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home..."

Proverbs 13:24:

"Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them."

Key responsibilities:

- Teach God's Word
- Balance discipline with love

Practical Tip:

- Weekly family devotions
- One-on-one time with each child



AS A FATHER

*You have **Self Goals & Ambitions***

- - *"The purpose of our lives is to be happy." - Dr. D. James Kennedy (Kennedy, 2003)*
- *Philippians 3:13-14: Press toward the goal.*
- *Align personal goals with God's purpose (Jeremiah 29:11).*
- *Practical Tip: Set SMART goals and review annually.*



IMPACT ON MARRIAGES

- *"A strong marriage is the foundation of a strong family." - Dr. Ed Young (Young, 2015)*
- *- **Ecclesiastes 4:12**: A cord of three strands is strong (unity with God and spouse).*
- *- Invest in your marriage (**Song of Solomon 8:7**).*

Practical Tip:

- *Attend marriage enrichment workshops and pray together.*
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SOME KEY ASPECTS FOR CONSIDERATION

BUILDING A STRONG MARRIAGE MANAGING EXPECTATIONS TOGETHER



1. PRIORITIZE COMMUNICATION & PARTNERSHIP
Proverbs 31:10-31

Build a relationship based on teamwork, respect, and open communication.

- Listen actively
- Speak with kindness
- Work as a team

2. LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY
Ephesians 5:25

Love your wife as Christ loved the church—sacrificially and unconditionally.

- Prioritize her needs
- Show empathy
- Be her biggest encourager

3. LEAD WITH HUMILITY
Ephesians 5:23
Mark 10:42-45

As the head of your household, lead with humility and serve your wife and family.

- Put others before yourself
- Serve with a willing heart
- Lead by example

4. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
James 1:19-20
Proverbs 15:1
Colossians 3:13

Communicate with honesty, patience, and grace.

- Listen more, respond less
- Speak truthfully in love
- Resolve conflicts peacefully
- Forgive and move forward

5. PRACTICAL TIP
Schedule regular date nights and share household responsibilities.

5. PRIORITIZE YOUR WIFE
Ephesians 5:28-29
Proverbs 5:18-19

Show your wife love, respect, and attention, just as Christ does for the church.

- Compliment and encourage her
- Spend quality time together
- Cherish and protect your bond

6. SEEK GUIDANCE & GROW TOGETHER
Ephesians 1:3
Proverbs 19:20
1 Thessalonians 5:17

Seek God's wisdom, grow spiritually together, and surround yourselves with godly counsel.

- Pray together daily
- Read and study God's Word
- Seek wise counsel and accountability

5. PRACTICAL TIP
DATE NIGHTS | SHARE RESPONSIBILITIES

REMEMBER: Managing expectations is an ongoing process that requires effort, patience, and commitment. Keep God at the center of your marriage.



TO IN-LAWS & SIBLINGS

- -"Leaving and cleaving is a process, not an event." - **Dr. Gary Chapman** (Chapman, 2015)
- - **Genesis 2:24:** Leave and cleave to your wife.
- - Set healthy boundaries respectfully (Matthew 7:1-5).
- - **Practical Tip:** Communicate regularly and involve them appropriately.

THE DIASPORA PRESSURE COOKER

THREE LOYALTIES PULL AT YOU:

1. YOUR WIFE
Genesis 2:24
"leave and cleave"

- Build a Christ-centered marriage
- Prioritize your wife
- Protect your home
- Communicate and lead with love

2. YOUR PARENTS / IN-LAWS
Exodus 20:12
"honor"

- Honor and respect them
- Show gratitude
- Set healthy boundaries
- Love them without losing your calling

3. YOUR SIBLINGS
Psalm 133:1
"how good when brothers dwell in unity"

- Stay connected
- Support and build
- Encourage unity
- Resolve conflicts
- Love like family

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE PRESSURE

- ✝ **KEEP GOD FIRST**
Seek His will daily.
- ⚖ **DISCERN & BALANCE**
Pray, think, and make wise decisions.
- 🛡 **SET BOUNDARIES**
Love everyone, but protect your calling and family.
- ❤ **LEAD YOUR HOME**
You are the spiritual leader of your household.

REMEMBER: You can honor all three without losing yourself.
GOD GIVES WISDOM. YOU LEAD WITH LOVE.



GOD'S ORDER OF LOYALTY

God's Order of Loyalty: Wife →
Parents → Siblings

Key verse: 1 Timothy 3:5 "If
someone does not know how to
manage his own household, how
will he care for God's church?"

== GOD'S ORDER OF LOYALTY ==
WIFE → PARENTS → SIBLINGS

KEY VERSE: 1 TIMOTHY 3:5
"If someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"

1 WIFE FIRST
♥ Your marriage is your primary covenant.
🔗 Decisions start with her.
👫 You two are "one flesh" before you're a son or brother.

2 PARENTS SECOND
👨👩 Honor means respect, care, provision when able (1 Tim 5:8).
♥ Support them emotionally, financially, and practically.
👉 Not obedience.

3 SIBLINGS THIRD
♥ Love them, help them, and be there.
👤 You are not their father.
🛡️ You don't owe them your wife's peace or your children's future.

4 DIASPORA TRAP: ELDEST-SON SYNDROME
🦆 "You're abroad, so you carry everyone."
✝️ Biblically, each man carries his own load (Galatians 6:5)
👥 while bearing burdens together (Galatians 6:2).

REMEMBER: You can honor all three without losing yourself. **GOD GIVES WISDOM. YOU LEAD WITH LOVE.**



BOUNDARIES THAT HONOR EVERYONE

BOUNDARIES THAT HONOR EVERYONE

Key verse: Proverbs 4:23 – “Guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”
Boundaries protect love.

RELATIONSHIP	COMMON EXPECTATION	BIBLICAL BOUNDARY + RESPONSE PHRASE
 IN-LAWS	 “Send \$500 monthly, you’re in UK”	 “We tithe + budget. We can commit \$100 monthly. Emergencies we’ll discuss.”
 IN-LAWS	 “Don’t tell your wife about family issues”	 “My wife and I are one. I don’t keep things from her.”
 PARENTS	 “You must visit every Christmas”	 “We’ll alternate years. We’ll video call on the day.”
 SIBLINGS	 “Let my son stay with you till he settles”	 “Our home isn’t set up for that. I’ll help with 1 month’s rent + job links.”
 SIBLINGS	 “Why does your wife work? Control her.”	 “My wife and I prayed about this. We’ve decided together what works for our home.”



RULE: NEVER MAKE A BIG PROMISE WITHOUT YOUR WIFE.



NEVER LET “FAMILY” MEAN IGNORING YOUR OWN HOUSEHOLD.



MONEY: THE #1 BATTLEFIELD

Key verse: *Proverbs 22:7 – “The borrower is slave to the lender.”*

- In diaspora, you're seen as the ATM. Two filters before you give:
 1. Can we afford it without debt or resentment? If you'll be bitter, don't give. *2 Cor 9:7*
- Does it help them or enable them? Paying school fees = help. Funding lifestyle = enable.
- Practice: Set a “family help” line in your budget. When it's gone, it's gone. “We've hit our limit for this quarter, but let's pray and look at other options.”



WHEN YOU'RE THE FATHER-IN-LAW OR ELDER BROTHER

- **Key verse: _Colossians 3:21 – “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”_**
- **Your role now is blessing, not control.**
 - **Don't compare your son-in-law to how you did it 30 years ago.**
 - **Don't triangulate: speak to the couple, not just your daughter/son.**
 - **For siblings: Stop parenting your adult brothers. Advice when asked, help when wise, release when needed. “I love you, but I trust God with you.”**



FORGIVENESS KEEPS THE FAMILY



- Expect it. Forgive fast. Don't preach your boundaries; live them quietly and consistently. After 6-12 months, people adjust.
- Key verse: Colossians 3:13 – “Bear with each other and forgive... as the Lord forgave you.”_
- Wife first, parents honored, siblings loved. Boundaries aren't selfish – they're how you love everyone without losing your home.



TO CHILDREN

"The greatest legacy we can leave our children is a godly heritage." - Dr. Ravi Zacharias (Zacharias, 2016) CHILDREN need parental grooming from birth!!!

This one hits hard because diaspora dads are raising kids between two worlds.

The Diaspora Father's Dilemma

- You're raising British/Zimbabwean kids. They don't fully get your home culture, and your home culture doesn't get their world. So expectations clash:*



TO CHILDREN

- *Your expectation: “Respect, grades, church, no back-talk, carry the family name well.”*
- *Their reality: TikTok, school culture, identity questions, “Dad you don’t understand.”*
- *Result: Ephesians 6:4 warnings happen – we provoke them to anger, or they become discouraged.*



TO CHILDREN

- *Manage YOUR Expectations First: You're Raising Disciples, Not Duplicates*

KEY TRUTH:
**YOUR KIDS ARE NOT YOU AT 15.
THEY'RE NOT GROWING UP IN ZIMBABWE!**

 God gave **you** your story.  He's writing **theirs.**



DIFFERENT WORLD
Different times.
Different culture.
Different challenges.

DIFFERENT PURPOSE
Don't force your dreams on their assignments.

BE THEIR GUIDE
Not their dictator.
Lead. Teach.
Pray. Release.

TRUST THE AUTHOR
God is more interested in their future than you are.

FAITH FAMILY FUTURE

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” – Proverbs 22:6




TO CHILDREN

- ***Wrong expectation: “They must speak my language perfectly, choose my career, never embarrass me.”***
- ***Biblical expectation: “They must love Jesus, know who they are in Him, and walk in wisdom.”***
Prov 22:6
- ***Diaspora trap: Trying to recreate your childhood in London. That country doesn’t exist for them. Parent the child God gave you, in the culture they’re actually in.***
- ***Application: Write down 3 non-negotiables _faith, character, respect_ and 3 preferences _language, career, hobbies_. Only fight for the non-negotiables.***














TO CHILDREN

- Wrong Diaspora Dad Move Biblical Father Move




2. DISCIPLINE WITHOUT EXILE: — RULES + RELATIONSHIP —

 INSTEAD OF THIS	 DO THIS
 “Because I said so”	 Explain the “why,” then enforce calmly
 Shame in public	 Correct privately, praise publicly
 “Back home kids don’t...”	 “God made you unique” <i>Psalm 139:14</i>
 Only talk when angry	 10 min daily: “High + low of your day?”



**DISCIPLINE IS NOT ABOUT CONTROL.
IT'S ABOUT CONNECTION THAT BUILDS CHARACTER.**



 Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. – *Proverbs 22:6*

- Rule: If your kids only hear from you when they fail, they’ll assume God is like that too. Luke 15:20 – the father ran to the son.



TO CHILDREN

- *Cultural Expectations: Bridge, Don't Bulldoze*
- *Your kids are "third culture kids." They'll never be 100% British or 100% African. That's okay.*
- *Moses was raised in Pharaoh's house but never forgot he was Hebrew _Heb 11:24-25_.*



TO CHILDREN

Navigate these 3 areas:

- ***1. Language/Identity: Don't force it with anger. Make it fun + purposeful. "This helps you talk to Grandma" works better than "You're disgracing me."***
- ***2. Education/Career: Excellence yes, but don't make doctor/lawyer/engineer a condition of your love. _1 Cor 12:4-6_ – different gifts.***
- ***3. Dating/Marriage: Talk early, talk often, talk biblically. If you wait till they're 18, YouTube already disciplined them. _Deut 6:7_ – "as you walk along the road."***



TO CHILDREN

Your Presence Beats Your Presents

- *Key verse: _Deuteronomy 6:7 – “Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home...”_*
- *Diaspora dads often overwork to “give them a better life.” But if they get your money and not your heart, you’ve failed.*
- *10 minutes daily 1 big holiday a year.*
- *Ask: “What was high and low of your day?” Then just listen.*
- *Model it: They’re watching how you treat mum, handle stress, repent when wrong. _1 Cor 11:1_*



TO CHILDREN

Release Them to God: You Don't Control Outcomes

- *Key verse: _Psalm 127:3-4 – “Children are a heritage... like arrows in the hands of a warrior.”*
- *Arrows are made to be released. Your job is to shape, aim, and fire – not to fly for them.*
- *Provoking to anger often means we put expectations on them that only Jesus can carry: “Make me proud, fix our family name, succeed so I look good.” That’s idolatry.*
- *Your job: Be faithful. God’s job: Save them. _1 Cor 3:6*
- *_Father them the way God fathers you: with clear expectations, patient discipline, present love, and grace to release them*



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

WORK-LIFE BALANCE



“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
– *Mother Teresa*



Matthew 6:33:
Seek God’s kingdom first.



Prioritize time management
(1 Corinthians 9:24-27).



Practical Tip:
Use planners or apps to balance work, family, and personal time.



WORK IS IMPORTANT,
BUT IT’S **NOT EVERYTHING.**



PRESENT TODAY,
BUILD MEMORIES.



SEEK HIM FIRST,
AND HE WILL **GUIDE THE REST.**



“ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” – Matthew 6:33



CONCLUSSION

- 1. Divided attention Time/emotional energy spread across 4 roles → wife can feel deprioritized.*
- 2. Loyalty conflicts: Parents/siblings' expectations vs wife's needs creates "who comes first" tension.*
- 3. Stress spillover: Pressure from family obligations lands in your marriage as irritability or distance.*
- 4. Decision fatigue: Constantly balancing everyone's needs → fewer resources left for intimacy/connection with spouse.*
- 5. Resentment loop: If you over-function for family, you under-function in marriage. Wife feels like she's competing.*



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THANK YOU



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