

I must tell you that I have the *hardest* job here this evening. That's because I've been asked to talk about what (in my opinion) CJ has done best – and that is – be a husband and a father. Though I am profoundly grateful to God for the substantial and significant fruit He has enabled CJ to produce as a pastor, a leader, an author, and a preacher of God's Word, nothing can compare to the gratitude I feel for the extraordinary way that CJ has loved and led his very own family. It has been in these two roles that CJ has excelled the most! And what makes this so challenging for me tonight is that I'm simply not gifted enough to accurately represent this man's remarkable leadership in our home. So please know right up front that what I will share – it's an insufficient account.

This coming May, CJ and I will celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary. Now I make mention of this fact because I want you to know that everything I highlight about my husband's life is backed by a thirty-year track record.

For thirty years, CJ has made his family his top priority. Our 3 adult daughters and 11-year-old son will join me in telling you that there has never been a whiff of doubt that we hold first place in CJ's heart and in his care. It is for this reason, when kind individuals thank us for the sacrifice we make in releasing CJ to fulfill his many responsibilities, we have to honestly say: *given the priority of time and care he provides for our family, it doesn't even feel like a sacrifice.* And that's the truth!

For thirty years CJ has loved his family with passion. There is nothing dutiful or half-hearted about his love for us. Every member of our family is the recipient of CJ's daily, ardent expressions of affection and love. For me, I still experience all those exciting, giddy, romantic feelings of when we first fell in love. That's because my husband has never slowed down one iota in romancing me with carefully composed words, weekly

date nights, cards, gifts, getaways, surprises, and anything else he can conjure up to express his love. Even to this day, when he and I are out together, we occasionally receive comments such as “you two look like high school sweethearts!” I feel like the most prized woman on planet earth because of this man’s passionate love for me.

For thirty years CJ has lavished his family with encouragement and spoiled us with generosity. Now, if you know CJ even a little bit, no doubt you have been affected by his encouragement and generosity. Well, imagine how blessed those of us closest to him have been! His incessant encouragement daily fills our home and invades our hearts with life-giving hope. And his generosity towards our family knows no bounds. In fact, I try to be careful not to mention something I like, because I can be sure he’ll be out the next day trying to purchase it for me. *Although*, I can’t say the children have always tried to be so careful.

For thirty years CJ has led his family with grace. He’s never been reticent to lead, even if one of us was making it difficult for him to do so. However, though strong, his leadership is bolstered with grace. He has this extraordinary ability to decisively lead yet kindly care for us at the same time; to help us see ways in which we need to grow all the while pointing out evidences of grace; to confront our sin only to the degree he acknowledges his own. Needless to say, it’s easy to follow a husband and father who thinks of himself as the worst sinner he knows! CJ has been this kind of husband and father and we have flourished under his humble and grace-motivated leadership.

Finally, but most importantly, for thirty years CJ has modeled the cross centered life for his family. This is what has affected us the most. I love the Savior more because of his life and example. Every one of our children loves the Savior more because of his

life and example. To paraphrase one of CJ's quotes: "He has never allowed our family to move on from the cross, but has only led each one of us into a more profound understanding of the cross." What higher commendation could a husband and father receive than that?! I daresay there is none.

CJ, every one of our children has read the words of this tribute and we all heartily agree that these themes haven't characterized your life for some of these past 30 years, or even most; they have truly characterized your life for all of 30 years. So for loving us and leading us in all these ways for all these thirty years, tonight we thank you.