

**BUILDING A ROCK SOLID MARRIAGE
&
STRONG FAMILIES**

Pastor Frank Adams

Building A Rock Solid Marriage

Gen. 2:18-25; Luke 6:47-49

There is a definitive statement in scripture concerning marriage. This statement appears four times in scripture – once in the Old Testament, three times in the New Testament. Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5; MK 10:7-8; Eph. 5:31. There are four truths involved in building a rock solid marriage.

1. LEAVE

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother ...”

This is a severing of old relationships for the purpose of establishing a new one. We upgrade to an adult relationship with our parents. We may not leave them geographically, emotionally or no longer seek their council.

You can't remain unduly attached and leave at the same time. Parents must prepare their children to leave home. We must embrace a new focus, new source of encouragement, new roles, and new relationships.

2. CLEAVE

“... and be joined to his wife...”

One doesn't attempt to cleave, hope to cleave, but actually cleave. The word cleave both in O.T. and N.T. means to be “glued” to or adhere to. This speaks of a commitment to a permanent relationship. Marriage is an until death we do part commitment.

Marriage is not for convenience, or temporary companionship, it is a commitment to covenant relationship which covenant was made before God. (Malachi 2:14, Prov. 2:17) Marriage is a lifetime investment.

3. BECOME

“... and they shall become one flesh.”

This union is not primarily physical, but essentially spiritual. This unity of becoming one flesh is a process.

The physical relationship is predicated on a spiritual union. A physical union without spiritual wholeness in relationships creates harm. When the spiritual union is broken, priority must be on restoration of the unity.

4. NAKED & NOT ASHAMED

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

The result of unity is intimacy. Husband and wife are not only to enjoy physical intimacy, but also spiritual intimacy. When we “bear” ourselves in relationships there must be a safe and respectful valuing of each other's feelings and comforts.

Sexuality should never be a tool of manipulation or bargaining tool. When a breach comes the breach must be healed.

Strong Families: Express Appreciation

Eph. 4:29-32

Strong families show approval to each other. They make each other feel good about themselves. They build each other up. Strong families do not tear down. This doesn't mean there is no place for correction or criticism. A rule of thumb is 80% of our communication should be positive and affirming.

Showing appreciation allows relationships to grow, build self-respect, a sense of accomplishment and self-reliance. No individual can live in an atmosphere of constant criticism.

“The deepest principal in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”

William James

The world needs cheerleaders, not critics!

1. SHOWING APPRECIATION TO OUR MATES

- A. Stop the flow of corrupt words.
- B. Release the flow of good words.

4 Predictions of Divorce

Criticism

Contempt

Isolation

Withdrawal

2. SHOWING APPRECIATION TO OUR CHILDREN

“The essential function of a family is to provide a safe place in which children build self esteem.” James Dobson

We tend to become what the most important person in our lives thinks about us. Parents are God's to their children. Home is where we confer the blessing. We bless our children through words and touch.

In addition to affirmation, all children need boundaries, discipline and consequences for wrong behavior. The boundaries need to be clear, constant and consequential.

3. SHOWING APPRECIATION AMONG SIBLINGS

Siblings should be required to respect, affirm, and appreciate each other. The Admonition of Ephesians 4:29-32 applies to the entire family including children.

4. SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR PARENTS

Children should be free to express their feelings, but never show disrespect or Dishonor parents. Parents must model the respect they require. We create the Atmosphere we live in. There are special promises to children who honor Parents. Eph. 6:2-3

Strong Families: Have Good Communication

James 1:19-20

The Benefits of Good Communication

- Practice righteousness
- Promote growth
- Produces peace

“Let every man” man is a generic term for all mankind, male and female. Every man, woman, boy, girl, aunt, uncle, in-law, out-law – there are no exceptions.

1. BE SWIFT TO HEAR

Good Communication begins with good listening. We listen on three levels.

- Ears – 10% of communication
- Eyes – 60% body language, gestures
- Heart – 30% feelings

- A. Listen to hear
- B. Listen to help
- C. Listen to heal

Suggestions for Aid to Good Communication

- Face the speaker
- Lean forward
- Open posture
- Honor personal space
- Maintain eye contact
- Relax and be sincere

2. BE SLOW TO SPEAK

“See a man hasty in his words, there is more hope for a fool than for him.”
Prov. 29:20

- Speak slow – Prov. 18:13
- Speak softly – Prov. 15:1
- Speak smart – Prov. 17:27
- Speak sincerely – Prov. 24:26
- Speak w/self control – Prov. 17:14

3. BE SLOW TO WRATH

When one is swift to hear and slow to speak, you will be exercising self-control.

“Anger” does not produce righteous results. Prov. 17:27, 16:21

Good Communication Patterns

Adults set the example
Speak the truth in love
Show respect
Express feelings freely
Be positive in tone
Acknowledge differences
Promote self-esteem

The average family communicates 17 minutes a week or 2:42 minutes a day.
Anger is allowed, but not permitted to remain overnight.

Strong Families: Spend Time Together

Deu. 5:12-19, 6:4-9; Dan. 7:25; Eph. 5:15-17

1. The Significance of Time

Deu. 5:12-19, 6:4-9

- A. Share life
- B. Show life
- C. Shape life

Deu. 5:12-19 speaks of the Sabbath rest. The Sabbath is for families to rest, reflect, refresh, to spend time reconnecting with each other and God.

Deu. 6:4-9 – time spent together in the home is to be together – to teach, to talk, tie things down and impart truth. The significance of the door post is “going out & coming in”. The significance of between the eyes is “perception”, seeing truth. Binding on the hands is to “influence actions”.

2. The Struggle of Time

Dan. 7:25 speaks of a tactic used by the anti Christ spirit already operating in the world is to “wear out” the saints. 2 Peter 2:7 echoes the identical truth in the Amplified version.

In Mark 4:19 three primary causes of stress for believers is given as: cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, the desire for other things. These things choke the word and wear out the saints.

“Wear out” – to be spent, wasted, exhausted, consumed, unable to continue.

3. The Suggestion for Time

Eph. 5:15-17 admonishes believers not to live clueless, outwitted lives by redeeming the time.

- 1) Control time
Monitor intrusions – set limits
- 2) Choice time
Choose to have time to reflect on your values and to produce the results you desire.
- 3) Change time
Accept responsibility for time, plan, prepare, prioritize.
- 4) Connect time
Use quality as well as quantity of time to connect and stay connected with family.
- 5) Conflicting time
Expect conflict, be flexible and resolve scheduling issues.

CONCLUSION:

Give up the rat race

Simplify when possible

Conquer time bandits

Get free from the tyranny of the urgent

Come apart before you “come apart”

Strong Families: Deal Positively With Crisis

Matt. 7:24-29, James 1:2-4

Crisis like storms come in various sizes, intensities and durations, but come they will.

1. Strong Families Experience Crisis

- 1) All families experience crisis
“From the day of your birth till your ride in a hurst, things are never so bad that they couldn’t get worse.”

Three Types of Families

Those in crisis

Those entering crisis

Those coming through crisis

- 2) Strong families accept crises as a fact of life.
“It rains on the just and the unjust” Matt. 5:45
- 3) Strong families are not defined by their crises.
Strong families resist a victim mentality

2. Strong Families Deal With Crisis

They don’t deny, ignore or avoid crisis, they deal with them.

Immediately

Appropriately

Responsibly

Compassionately

Proportionately

If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to view everything as a nail.

3. Strong Families Deal Positively With Crisis

How to Hang Tuff in Tuff Times

Re-affirm your faith

Re-call past experiences

Re-joice in the Lord’s intervention

Re-commit, don’t quit

CONCLUSION:

In crisis:

Avoid accusation

Take responsibility

Get help

Have good times in bad times

Strong Families: Affirm Biblical Values

Deu. 6:1-9, 2Tim. 1:3-5, 3:13-17

The Deu. text says we are to teach, talk and tie our values in our children and grand children, “that it may be well with you.” Deu. 6:3

Timothy’s mother and grandmother had imparted their “genuine faith” to Timothy.

There is a definite connection between marital happiness and family bliss and Biblical values.

1. Biblical Values Gives Purpose

Only Biblical truth answers the big questions of life. Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? A secular progressive philosophy can’t answer these questions. Secularism breeds hopelessness, the Bible gives hope.

Billy Corigan of Smashing Pumpkins band once described his life as a rat in a cage. To be without God is to be without purpose.

2. Biblical Values Give Perspective

Perspective deals with how one views and interprets the world and their life in the world. Only God has perfect perspective – He is the only one able to see and include all the variables in His view.

God’s perspective is called truth. To accept God’s perspective is called faith. To live from His perspective is called wisdom.

3. Biblical Values Gives Priorities

To choose based on priority is the ability to decide what is most important. One’s values come from perspective, how you see life. One’s values are revealed in their choices. One’s choices determine character and character determines destiny.

We are to shape our children’s life and values that it may be well with them.

4. Biblical Values Give Power

Power is ability to forgive, to change, exercise control, to be patient, practice righteousness, to serve and to sacrifice.

An article in Fast Company Magazine states that 90 percent of heart patients who were told to change their lifestyle habits or die, chose death over change. – Biblical values give power to make needed change.

CONCLUSION: As Christian parents, we must seek to live and leave a legacy of Biblical values to our children and grandchildren.

Strong Families: Nurture Commitment

1 Peter 3:1-12

When I asked my wife “How does one nurture commitment?” She replied – time, attention, and affection. That’s how it’s done on any level.

1. Commitment to Jesus Christ.

Strong families recognize that all relationships are stronger when this relationship is in place. A commitment to Christ is encouraged by strong families.

“You will never drift into becoming a wholly devoted follower of Jesus Christ.” **Bill Hybels, Willow Creek Church**

2. Commitment to One’s Spouse.

The behavior of one’s spouse will often influence the behavior of the other spouse. How we live together can help or hinder our relationship with Christ. Our life can help or hinder our prayers.

A. The wife – 1Peter 3:1-6

What submission doesn’t mean.

- Your husband is smarter or wiser than you.
- Your opinion doesn’t matter.
- You should follow your husband into sin.
- You’re less valuable than your husband.
- It’s okay for him to be selfish and cruel.

What submission does mean.

- An inward gentleness that supports the leadership role of the husband.
- Cooperative, supportive attitude in the husband’s role goes a long way in the relationship.
- Winning your husband to faith and correct behavior is more an inward adornment of the heart rather than nagging.

B. The husband – 1Peter 3:7

- Live with your wife with understanding.
- Giving honor to the wife.
- Giving consideration to her struggles and frailties.
- As heirs together of the grace of life.
- That your prayers be not hindered.

God will shut down your relationship with him if you mistreat your wife. We all recognize that prayer helps us live. How about the way we live helping our prayers.

3. The Broader Commitments Within the Church 1Peter 3:8-12

In chapter two of 1Peter the believer's relationship with unbelievers, government officials and employees and employers is addressed.

There are five virtues mentioned that should be part of our relationship with other believers. The admonition is to "all of you".

Be of one mind
Having compassion
Love as brothers
Be tenderhearted
Courteous

The result of this commitment to bless and not curse is that we may obtain the blessing of God on our lives and churches.