

Marriage & Family

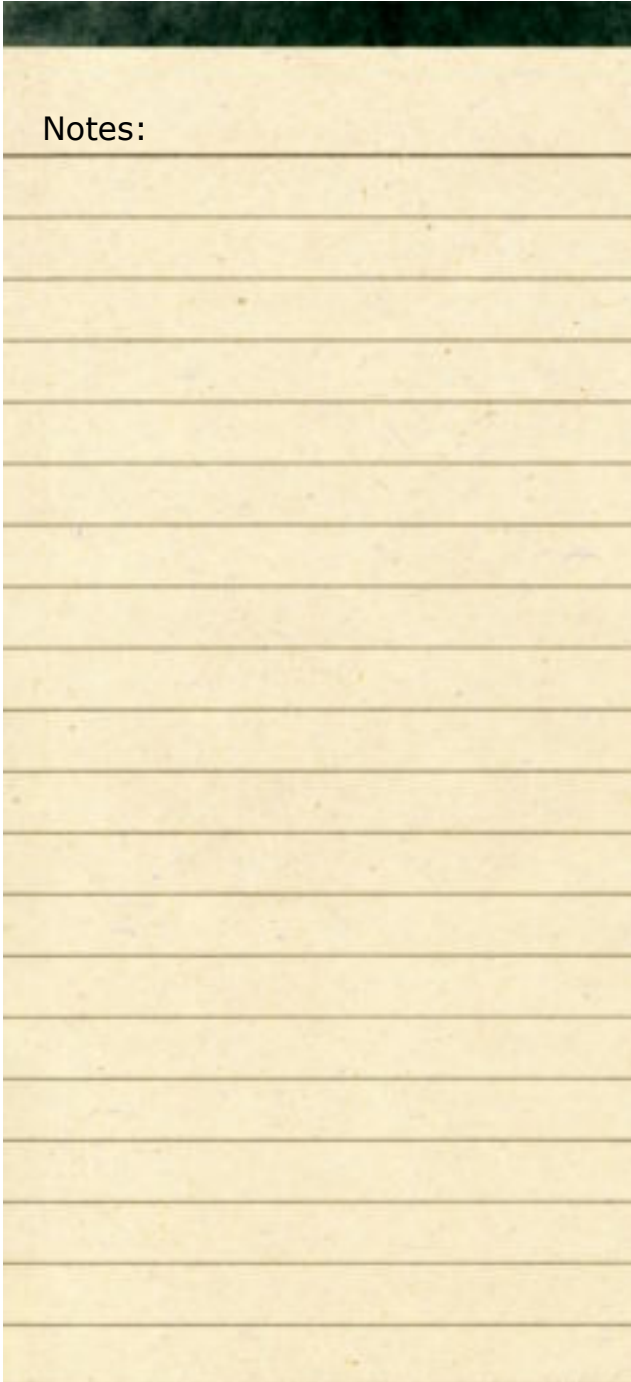
Marriages and families seem to be in more trouble today than ever before. Divorce is rampant in both the church and the community. Kids are out of control. Parents are frustrated, disconnected, and uninvolved with their children. Singles are afraid of commitment. Couples are bored or irritated with each other. True intimacy and connection seem to be mere wishful thinking.

Marriage is a constant struggle, even for couples who are doing well. In a world where feeling good seems to be the highest value, struggle in marriage is unacceptable. Yet, the honest reality is that there is no marriage that is exempt from conflict. Any time you have two sinners living in close proximity to one another, there will be friction, heat, and sometimes fire. So how does a couple build a relationship that can go the distance “till death do us part”?

Honestly admitting that there are struggles is the first course of action. Telling the truth to your spouse because you love them (Eph. 4:15,29) begins to build a foundation of trust that says, “I’m for you, no matter what.” A willingness to openly talk about everything in your relationship—especially when it comes to how you impact each other—is necessary if you are going to progress deeper than mere superficiality in your marriage.

When a couple takes steps to build an authentic intimacy with each other, that relationship becomes the foundation from

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which they can more meaningfully face the challenges, sorrows, joys, and struggles of parenting. Raising children is an awesome privilege that gives the parent an opportunity to experience some of the greatest joys in life as well as some of the greatest challenges and sorrows.

What frees parents to really parent well is when they understand and embrace the truth that their goal cannot be to raise godly kids, because that can become a subtle form of idolatry. While they deeply desire that their children be godly, they recognize that they can't control the choices their children make. Focusing on producing godliness will force a parent to exert a kind of control that is inconsistent with loving one's children well. Freedom comes when the focus shifts to becoming the kind of man or woman God is calling you to be and to representing Christ well to your children.

Parents who don't obsess about how their children are performing but who enjoy their children throughout the various stages of parenting are less likely to be controlling in a manner that their children will resent. Treating one's children as fellow image-bearers who are worthy of love and respect cultivates a core sense of security and significance in children that they carry with them into adulthood. It also helps parents to not fall into the trap of making their children into idols.

While parenting certainly has its fair share of challenges

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and struggles, it also has the incredible potential of producing some of the most powerful and poignant moments of sheer joy that two people can share together.

Our goal at HelpForMyLife.org is to set the table for honest, balanced, meaningful, and biblical discussions about marriage and family issues that will assist both couples and parents to embrace and celebrate their calling and to impact the lives of their spouses and children.

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