



APRIL 2014

**Purposeful Parenting**  
Connecting Church and Family  
Deut.6:7

## Marriage

### Child-centered or Marriage-centered Homes

The order of things matters. That's why we have clichés like "don't put the cart before the horse... don't let the tail wag the dog... don't count your chickens before they hatch." We know this. Yet if it's so obvious, why do we forget this so easily when it comes to our families?

Genesis 1-2 show the picture of our first parents' home in its beautiful order. Let's look at a snapshot:

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. (Gen 1:27-28, 31 NIV)*

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Gen 2:24, NIV)*

This is where a little good theology can make a great home. What do we notice about the first family? **God made man and woman, united them in marriage, blessed them, and said this is VERY GOOD. And there are no children in the picture yet!**

That tells us something huge about marriage and parenting. Order matters. Parenting comes out of a marriage full of oneness, not the other way around. **To put it simply, the healthiest homes are marriage-centered, not child-centered.**

And that's good news for everyone in the family: moms, dads, and kids. There's more than we can say about this than will fit in this newsletter. So let's just highlight a couple of things:

#### **Moms and Dads Need a Marriage-centered Home**

Let's face it; raising children takes a ton of time and physical/emotional/relational energy. When Lisa and I finally celebrate our 40th anniversary, we will have had children in our home for 38 of those years. We have to constantly fight the pull to center our marriage on our kids and grandkids.

I love my children and grandchildren more than I can say, but I am not and never will be one with them. There is only one person that I can be one with - Lisa. So to not make my marriage the priority relationship in my home is to violate the reason God created our marriage in the first

place. And going against God's purpose for our marriage never leads to God's blessing in and through our marriage.

Children are designed to leave the home. Attaching our hearts to our children as the priority relationship hamstrings them from leaving well (or for some, at all!). And when they leave, mom and dad will be able to continue enjoying the oneness of their marriage and the next season of fruitfulness that comes from it. That should be a wildly creative and joy-filled season. I've seen this in many couples in our church.

#### **Children Need a Marriage-centered Home**

Little Jack is 6 years old and in kindergarten. His greatest challenges are learning phonics and trying to sit still. Can you imagine the pressure that's added to his life when he subconsciously senses that he also has to be the point of mom and dad's happiness? Talk about carrying a burden!

Our children are not designed or equipped to carry the emotional and relational load of being central in a home. Children in these homes are like Atlas carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders. Instead, our kids grow and function best when they are like the moon orbiting around the world of mom and dad's relationship.

The happiest and most secure children are raised in marriage-centered homes, because children are not meant to be the point of the home. Jesus is the point of our homes! And oneness in marriage paints a picture of Jesus and invites our kids into it. That's the security and joy of marriage-centered parenting. And our kids crave this whether they can articulate it or not.

#### **More than the Butler and the Maid**

As I said, Lisa and I have to fight for a marriage-centered home, especially when our 4 older kids were young. They filled so much of the space of our lives that there was little margin for us as a couple. When we were losing the battle, we would look at each other and say, "We will not be the butler and the maid who cohabitate to raise children. We are a husband and wife first." And then we looked for ways to keep our marriage as the priority relationship.

Sometimes we succeeded; sometimes we failed. But the journey toward a home that comes from our oneness is too worth it to everyone for us to quit.

**-Mark Schatzman, Mosaic Congregational Leader**

## Family Tool Box

Resources for your family on marriage.

### Books

[Love and War: Finding the Marriage You've Dreamed Of](#) - Walking alongside John and Stasi Eldredge, every couple can discover how their individual journeys are growing into a story of meaning much greater than anything they could do or be on their own.

### Articles

[The Power of Words in Your Marriage](#) - an article for wives on how to speak to and about their husbands

[Blended Families](#) - portraits of step families and their unique challenges

[12 Secrets of a Great Marriage](#) - excerpt from Fawn Weaver's new book, Happy Wives Club

## Studies

[Divine Portrait](#) - Fellowship's Baseline marriage small group study.

## Video

[Husbands, Lead Your Wife in Prayer](#) - Author Sam Ingrassia shares about his book, Just Say the Word, in which he encourages spouses to pray through the word together.

## What's Happening?

### Calendar of Events: April-May

Apr 30: **High School Senior Dinner**, 6:30-8:00, Student Center East

May 3: **Next Gen**, junior high students worship with families

May 10: **Parent/Child Dedication**

May 24: **Outdoor Baptism & Extravahoopla**, Family Service, no classes

## Stay Connected



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[Early Childhood](#) / [Elementary](#) / [Students](#)

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

- Deuteronomy 6:7