



Your Thriving Values

Teach Your Children About Marriage

Part One



You Are Cordially Invited:

To Understand God's Design For Marriage

To Model Healthy Marriage to Your Children

*To Discover Why Marriage Matters:
For Children, Men and Women and The World*

 THRIVING VALUES™ 

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®



*But for Adam there was not found
a helper fit for him. So the Lord God
caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,
and while he slept took one of his ribs and
closed up its place with flesh. And the rib
that the Lord God had taken from the man
he made into a woman and brought her to the
man. Then the man said,*

*"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man."*

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his
mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall
become one flesh.*

Genesis 2:20-24



You Are Invited...

To Understand God's Design For Marriage

We know marriage is important because God created it, and the Bible shows us how vital marriage is by using it as a picture of our own relationship with God. Marriage is foundational for individuals, intended to be a safe and loving place for new life to come into the world, a place for children to grow and learn. It's also foundational for society, shaping the next generation.

Because marriage is so valuable, we've created this resource to help you give your children a solid foundation—using both words and actions. **Part One** offers some **practical tips for modeling married love and commitment** to your kids (p. 5-8) and **explains why marriage is so important** for our world (p.9-11).

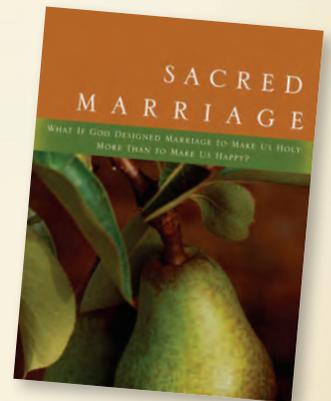
In **Part Two**, which you can download at FocusOnTheFamily.com/SocialIssues, there are **creative ideas and suggestions for talking with kids about marriage at different ages and stages**—from toddlers to junior high and beyond.

 *God's Design for Marriage*

God designed marriage to be: Between one man and one woman; united for life and faithful to each other; with intimacy and love that reflects Him; bringing new life into the world; and raising children who love Him and love others.

Learn more about God's design for marriage:
<http://bit.ly/1is8dFo>

Sacred Marriage: What if God Designed Marriage to Make Us Holy More Than to Make Us Happy? by Gary L. Thomas
<http://bit.ly/ISwCaE>





Jesus answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Matthew 19:4-6

Some of you may be asking yourselves, "How can I talk to my kids about marriage when I'm divorced? Or a single parent? Or my marriage isn't the best?" We understand your concerns, and we want you to know: When it comes to relationships, marriage and sexuality—*everyone* has failed in one way or another. We've all fallen short.



Photo: © istockphoto.com/aldomurillo

Thankfully, God gives us a way to deal with our failures. Through Jesus Christ we can receive forgiveness, freedom and restoration. So we can still learn, grow and teach our children well—helping them to have thriving values, marriages and families. **This issue is so vital that we encourage you to move ahead and talk to your children about marriage, in spite of any problems or failures from your past.**



You Are Invited...
**To Model Healthy Marriage
To Your Children**

What a privilege we have as married believers—to demonstrate a healthy marriage to our children and to a hurting world! We know our marriages are a work in progress; nevertheless, we encourage you to continually work to strengthen your relationship with your spouse, especially for the sake of your kids.

This doesn't have to be complicated. Here are a few simple ideas to demonstrate to your children that you love your spouse and are committed to your marriage:



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 **Write Love Notes:** Write your spouse a love note and post it on the fridge or on the dashboard of the car where your children will be sure to spot it. Or, leave a card where the kids will find it and, with your direction, can give it to your spouse.

*To my wife,
I love you and will always stay with you.*

*To my love,
You grow more beautiful every year. I love being
married to you.*

*To my husband,
Thank you for working so hard and for taking care
of me and our family. I love you.*

It doesn't have to be long—just enough to embarrass the kids!



Photo: © istockphoto.com/monkeybusinessimages

 **Demonstrate Affection:** One of our co-workers says he is intentional about touching his wife—in a non-sexual way—at least 10 times a day! In the car, at the table, watching television or at church. A hug, a caress, holding hands or an arm around the shoulder are nonverbal actions that speak volumes to your spouse and your children. (And yes, some of this public display of affection should be in front of the children!)

 **Speak Loving Words:** Author and speaker Josh McDowell says that the greatest security for children today is to know their father loves their mother and that their parents will never divorce. So tell your children:

I love your Mom. When we married I vowed to always stay with her.

I promised your Dad I would stay with him, regardless of the circumstances. I'll never leave your father. We made a covenant—a commitment—before God.

It's sad your friend's parents are divorcing. I want you to know I made a promise that I will not divorce your Mom. I will stay with you—that's how important you both are to me.



 **Watch The Video:** If you have a video of your wedding, pull it out some time, make some popcorn and watch it with the kids! The same holds true for photographs. Let them see the vows you made to each other and tell them you intend to keep them:

Didn't your Mom look beautiful the day we married?

And she looks even more beautiful today!

I'm so happy I married your Dad. What a great day—sharing our promises in front of family and friends.

When we married, I made a public promise to stay with your Mom, and with God's help I always will!

 **Pray a Blessing:** At meals, devotions or bedtime, bless your spouse in prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for Mommy. We love her and thank You for her kindness, patience and love.

Father in heaven, encourage and bless Daddy as he works to provide for us. Thank You for his strength and creativity. May he know You love him and that we love him, too!

Father, thank You for our marriage. I pray we would love and serve You together all our lives and we'd reflect Your image to others.

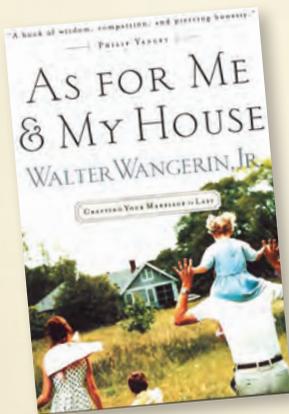


“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”



Photo: © istockphoto.com/szefei

Deuteronomy 6:6-9



Learn More About Building a Healthy Marriage:

“The Role of Friendship in Marriage: Twelve Steps to a Deeper Friendship with Your Spouse.”

<http://bit.ly/1bBeEDp>

As For Me And My House, by Walter Wangerin.

<http://bit.ly/ISrHpJ>

“Date Night Challenge” is a fun and helpful way for couples to model a healthy marriage.

DateNightChallenge.com



You Are Invited...
**To Understand Why Marriage Matters:
For Children, Men and Women and The World**

 **Marriage Is Good For Children**

Having both a mother and father matters to a child in countless ways. It takes a man and a woman to make a baby, and marriage is what holds that man and woman together to create the healthiest environment for that child.

There are numerous, respected studies in the social sciences that demonstrate how children benefit when raised by their married mom and a dad. This is just a short list from one study, which found, in general, children in this family structure:

- Live longer, healthier lives, both physically and mentally
- Perform better in school
- Are more likely to attend college
- Are less likely to be violent or sexually active
- Are more likely to have successful marriages

 **Marriage Is Good For Adults**

Marriage isn't just good for the kids; it's also good for men and women. Research helps us count the ways in which marriage generally helps men and women:

- Protects against feelings of loneliness
- Protects women from domestic violence
- Provides the highest levels of sexual pleasure and fulfillment for both men and women
- Enhances a parent's ability to parent
- Increases individual earnings and savings



Marriage Is Good For Society

Do you want to fight poverty? Stop violence against women? Help children succeed? Marriage is the ultimate “social justice” issue. When a husband and wife stay together and raise their kids, there are benefits for all society. Their children are less likely to live in poverty, to abuse alcohol and drugs, and to be in trouble with the law.

In his 2008 Father’s Day speech, then-U.S. Senator Barack Obama recognized this important role of marriage for all society, saying:



Photo: © istockphoto.com/arekmalang

We know the statistics—that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to live in poverty and commit crime; nine times more likely to drop out of schools and twenty times more likely to end up in prison. They are more likely to have behavioral problems, or run away from home, or become teenage parents themselves. And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it.

Many young people today want to make a difference in the world: to help alleviate hunger and poverty; to create jobs; and to help children receive an education. God’s design for marriage contributes positively toward all these goals. When we understand the just and beneficial role marriage plays in the lives of children, men and women, and all of society, we can and should teach this reality to our children. Preserving marriage between a man and a woman is an effective social justice solution, as it is foundational to all society.

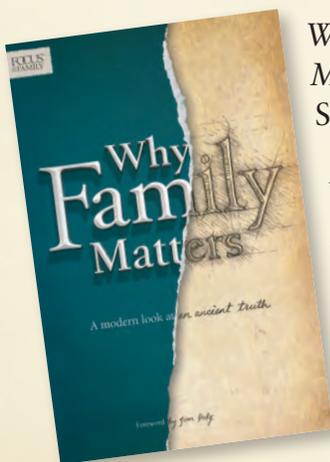


Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

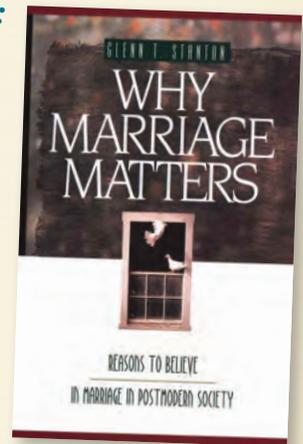
Learn More About Why Marriage is Foundational:

Dig deeper on the various aspects of marriage at FocusOnTheFamily.com/SocialIssues.



Why Marriage Matters: Reasons to Believe in Marriage in Postmodern Society, by Glenn Stanton <http://bit.ly/1c9E79K>

Why Family Matters: A Modern Look at an Ancient Truth, Focus on the Family, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1jf2nLv>



We want your values to *thrive* in today's culture,
so we invite you to check out our host of helpful resources
at: FocusOnTheFamily.com/SocialIssues.aspx.

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THRIVING VALUES™



Helping Families Thrive™

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