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Bask in the Son's Warmth!

THEIR DREAMS INSTEAD OF YOURS

BY JIM DALY

CHILDHOOD IS A TIME FOR BOYS AND GIRLS TO DREAM BIG ABOUT WHAT they want to be when they grow up. From basketball players to ballerinas. From scientists to surgeons. Anything is possible. Which offers you a beautiful opportunity to come alongside your children as their futures unfold.

How? By encouraging them to pursue their dreams instead of yours.

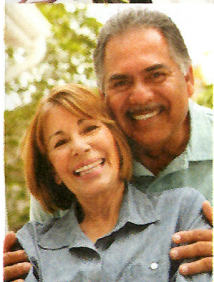
A dream I had for my two boys was that they would love football. It was my favorite sport growing up, and I played quarterback in high school. I imagined watching them play on Friday nights and enjoying games together on Sunday afternoons.

That scenario didn't really pan out. One of my boys played for a couple of seasons, but neither one grew to share my enthusiasm for the game. I used to be disappointed about that, but over the years I've learned to appreciate—even cherish—the ways they're different from me.

And that's the whole point: My boys are individuals with unique interests. I've treasured watching them discover who they are. And now that they're grown, we connect in meaningful ways I couldn't have anticipated when they were younger.

As your children grow and discover who they are, join them on their journey as they catch a vision for their future and become all that God has created them to be.

Want to know more? Visit www.focusonthefamily.com.





HUSBANDS AS SERVERS

Here are three practical ways a husband can serve his wife:

1. Read the Bible and Pray Together

My wife and I try to spend at least a half hour in the Word first thing in the morning. We close these morning devotional times in prayer.

You don't have to limit this to Bible reading and prayer. Read a devotional book together. Listen to a sermon together. Pray before you go to bed. Whatever the case, it is important and healthy for couples to spend time together seeking God.

Pursue God wholeheartedly (Psalm 63:1) and lead your wife to do the same.

2. Confess Your Sin

Married couples sin against one another. One of the best ways for a husband to minister to his wife is by being humble and fessing up when he is wrong.

The Bible says, "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5). A big part of humility is admitting when you are wrong,

and confessing your sin as needed (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9).

More than likely, the person you will sin against more than anyone else is your dear wife. If you've had a fight, don't wait for her to apologize first. Humble yourself, take the initiative to confess your sin and seek reconciliation.

3. Pursue Her Daily

Your wife is a special person for all kinds of reasons. She is a blessing to you and everyone around her. Don't let the craziness of daily life keep you from pursuing the most important person (except Jesus) in your life.

Pursuing your wife is simple. It involves a lot of listening, talking, and laughing together. Yes, you need to pursue her sexually (1 Corinthians 7:1-5), but remember that marriage is more than what goes on in the bedroom.

Find ways to do fun things together. A monthly date night, a weekly game night or a movie night are a few ideas to that end.

—Daniel Stegeman

BE AN ACTIVE, GOSPEL-CENTERED MOM

We sat on the floor, the three of us, staring at each other while I tried to figure out what to say. At 10 and 12, my sons were struggling in their relationship. They had gotten into a heated argument and used their words to hurt each other. They didn't know it, but what they needed most in this moment was a gospel-centered mom.

In the past I might have reacted to their quarrel in anger, but this time I asked God to help me get to the heart of the matter. I prayed out loud, asking the Holy Spirit to convict my boys of their sin and give each the courage to tell me the truth. Then I began gently asking questions and explaining the biblical concepts of love and kindness, until their whole story tumbled out.

As we talked, both boys felt conviction. And at the end of our time together, two brothers who really do love each other hugged and asked each other for forgiveness. The outcome of this altercation was

different from many past experiences where I had simply reacted instead of inviting God into the process. Through them, God started teaching me to be a gospel-centered mom.

That night, in a moment when I really didn't know what to do to move us forward, I simply fell back on the Word of God. Ever since my children were old enough to understand, I've tried to teach them basic truths from the Bible.

Our children don't need less of God's Word. They need more. They will fall short, but it's the falling short that will teach them about their great need for Jesus. Frame Scripture verses and hang them in your home. Write the Word on index cards and place it in their lunchboxes. Talk about it often, and do your best to help your children understand their lives through its lens.

—Brooke McGlothlin



LIVE IT CHALLENGE

BUILD UP YOUR FAITH BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

We all want to be firm in our faith, but sometimes that can be very difficult. That's why we need to read and understand our Bibles—so we can further trust in God and be prepared for life's trials.

Psalm 118:8 tells us, "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man." Still, at some point, we will have questions about our Christian faith. Or we may need to respond to someone challenging our beliefs. So do you know how to answer tough questions about Christianity?

This month's Live It Challenge is to respond to these five questions with biblical answers:

1. Why does God allow evil? The reality of evil in our world presents one of Christianity's most common objections.
2. Why is Jesus the only way to heaven? Why can't other religions be true too?
3. Can I lose my salvation? Will the Holy Spirit leave me if I keep sinning?
Can I act so badly that God will stop loving me?
4. Why are Christians so judgmental? Is it right for Christians to judge sinfulness? Aren't we called to be loving instead of judging?
5. Is the Bible reliable? Is it true that the Bible contradicts itself? Are there errors in the Bible? How can I know that a really old book can be trusted?

This month's Live It Challenge also offers some points to consider for each of these questions. After answering these questions for yourself, pick one of our activities to help reinforce your learning. Strengthen your faith before school starts by taking this month's challenge!

Ready to build up your faith before school starts? Check out this month's Live It Challenge. Be sure to encourage your friends and church youth or children's ministries to join you! To sign up or for more information, just use this QR code.



For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

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