

Bulletin

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Rekindle the Ember in September!

DIY MARRIAGE

BY JIM DALY

TO SAY I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HOME IMPROVEMENT IS AN understatement. A few years ago, a contractor assessed water damage at my house and told me it was a simple fix, a weekend DIY project. I smiled at the guy, but when he left, I went in the house and asked my wife, "What does DIY mean?"

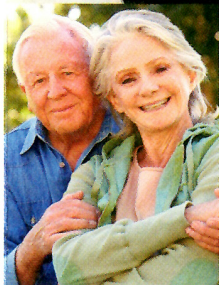
That's embarrassing to admit, but I'm not alone. Many couples find home improvement a mystery, whether it's fixing a leak . . . or fixing a marriage. They may know how to paint a room or build a deck, but they scratch their heads about improving their relationship, communicating better or resolving disagreements.

If that's you, keep in mind a couple of ideas. First, get a game plan. Ask yourself what your marriage needs. Would a few adjustments do? Or would you benefit from a counselor who can draw up a blueprint? To build the marriage you want, you need a strategy.

Then, get to work. Nothing will be accomplished unless you roll up your sleeves and put your plans into action. Schedule date nights. Read marriage books together. Seek professional help. Good things happen when you invest yourself.

Your marriage is one DIY project that doesn't have to intimidate you. If you have a good plan and you're willing to work, you can build a marriage that will last.

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





THE ONE GLORIOUS PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

God created marriage for one glorious purpose—to illustrate the love relationship between the Lord Jesus and His church.

God didn't look around over His creation, searching for a metaphor that would illustrate His loving commitment to His people, and ultimately decide that marriage was the closest thing He could find. No, He created marriage specifically to illustrate His intimate and sacrificial love for His church.

It's hard to overestimate the importance of this truth. Let's say a husband and a wife seek a pastor or counselor for help. They are both sincere Christians, but they have been married for some time, and things are falling apart. The fun and ease of their early relationship have eroded in the relentless winds of day-to-day life. Their marriage has devolved into something like running a not-so-profitable small business together.

What does that couple need? More than anything, they need to understand that their marriage exists to serve a much larger and more important purpose than their personal pleasure and happiness. They need to believe that God has given them to each other so that they might display His love to

each other, their children and the world.

Think about what the love of God in Christ looks like:

- It is a *forgiving* love (Ephesians 1:7). God's love doesn't hold our sins against us but frees us from the guilt that we bear.
- It is a *sacrificial* love (Hebrews 9:26). God's love came at the cost of Christ's death in our place.
- It is a "*despite you*" love (Matthew 5:44-45). God's love is perfect because He doesn't need there to be anything good in us to love us. He loves us even though we have made ourselves His enemies. He loves us when we are unlovely.
- It is a *glorious* love (2 Corinthians 4:4). The gospel displays God's glory. God saves His people to demonstrate the riches of His glory to the world (Romans 9:23).

If couples understood that this kind of love should stand at the center of their relationships, it would allow them to glorify God by responding to His sacrificial, forgiving love by showing that same love to their spouse.

—Michael McKinley

HELP FOR ANGRY PARENTS



I sat my children down and confessed my anger.

“I have become an angry dad, and our home has become an angry home. I have asked God to forgive me, and I ask you to forgive me.”

God poured out His grace on us that day. As a pastor, I had counseled many from the book of James that “the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (James 1:20) but allowed my impatience and selfishness to rule the day in my own home. By God’s grace, I took the advice I had given others: “Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you” (James 4:10).

Before my confession, I noticed how quickly my mood could change. One minute I felt happy, filled with joy, only to erupt the next minute with a wave of anger when my wife or children upset me.

My children began to follow with quick tempers against each other. My wife also followed my poor example. By God’s grace, I determined to turn from my sin, which began with a conversation with my wife.

She admitted her pattern of anger and expressed a desire to follow my confession to the children with her own. We gathered the kids, sat all five on the living room couch and confessed our sins.

One by one, each of our children followed with their own confession. Just as they had followed our poor example, they joined our repentance. The Holy Spirit was at work, meeting my humility with an outpouring of grace.

That day we made a family promise—that if any of us should become angry, we each could place a hand on the other’s side or shoulder as a reminder to check our heart. We also pledged not to reject anyone’s hand upon us in a conflict.

That day of confession marked a change in our home. It’s not that we vanquished all anger, but we no longer welcomed angry conversation. By God’s grace, we began to change and help one another.

Rather than use another’s anger as an invitation to retaliate, we recognized more and more their need for help and prayer.

—*Marty Machowski*



LIVE IT CHALLENGE™

SCRIPTURE MEMORY FOR BRING YOUR BIBLE TO SCHOOL DAY!

Did you know that the Bible is the most printed and sold book of all time? Over five billion copies have been sold! The Bible has influenced kings and kingdoms, laws and morality, science and technology, and even the arts and sports world.

Although these are all super impressive feats, the most impressive aspect of the Bible is that it tells us about the heart of the Creator of the universe. The one who made the stars and planets gave us a book so that we could know and love Him. *That's a big deal!*

It's pretty clear this is a very important book. But rather than just talk about what the Bible is, let's see what the Bible says about itself.

Regardless of whether you have grown up Christian, or are a completely new believer, it is important to understand that the Bible is vital to your life. It is the living and active Word of God that speaks to us and through us. It helps us learn about who God is and what He has done. Also, the Bible is used to teach, correct and train all believers in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible is God's truth that cannot be changed and will never fade away (John 17:17; Isaiah 40:8). When we are unsure or doubting, the Bible is a guide for us (Psalm 119:9).

For this month's Live It Challenge, we've put together a helpful list of Scripture verses for you and your family to memorize to help you understand how important the Bible is. Learn more about Scripture memory and applying it to your faith by scanning the QR code below.

Ready to learn more about the Bible? 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.



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