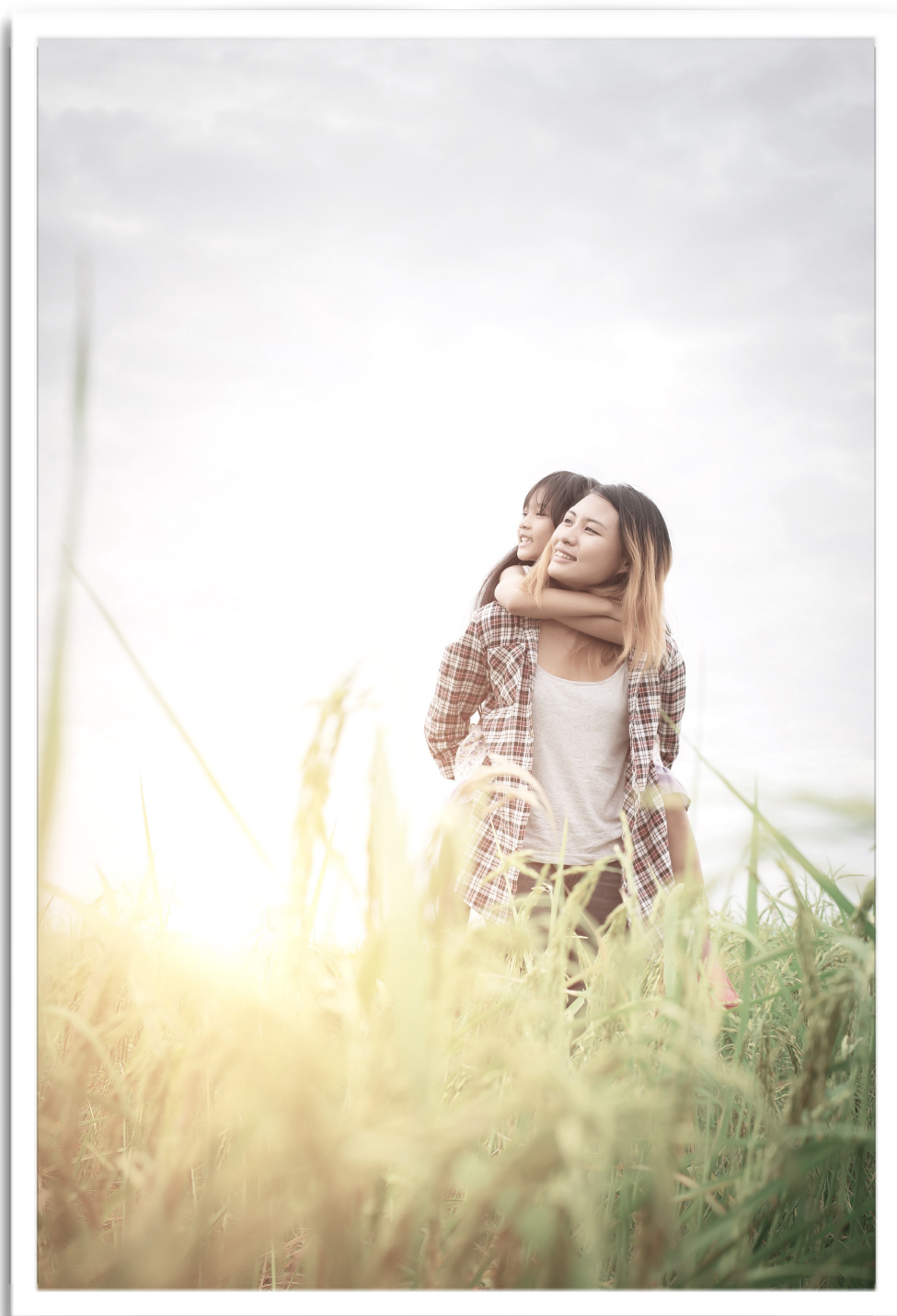


The Mother Design

empowering mothers in a fatherless generation



Christian Workbook

**A course for mothers in support of
“The World Needs a Father” training.**

“It is time for women of biblical faith to reclaim our
territory.

We know the Designer.

We have His instruction manual.

If we don't display the Divine design of His female
creation, no one will.

But if we do, it will be a profound testimony to a
watching, needy world.”

Susan Hunt



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Chapter 1

“Satan came to earth, sir!”

PRAYER 🙏 **INDIVIDUALLY:**

Bless your husband/father figure of your child(ren) according to Num. 6:24-26:
“May the Lord bless _____ (NAME) and protect _____.
May the Lord smile on _____ and be gracious to _____. May
the Lord show His favour and give _____ His peace.”

(PRAY THIS EVERY DAY OVER YOUR HUSBAND/FATHER FIGURE OF
YOUR CHILD/REN.)

A Father Figure for the Children of a Single Mother

In the following 3 chapters you will see the importance of having a father figure in the lives of your children. Perhaps they already have one in the form of a family member (e.g. grandfather or uncle), a family friend or male figure that's close to your children, like a teacher or a coach.

How was the World Needs a Father-movement birthed?

In 2002, in a refugee camp in Tanzania, East Africa, God clearly spoke to my husband, Cassie. There he saw the devastating impact of genocide and listened to the stories of war atrocities that were committed by the likes of 18-year-old fatherless militia.

One of the elders in the community, trying to come to terms with the carnage, voiced it like this: “Satan came to earth, sir!”.

My husband's heart was broken for this bleeding, turbulent continent of Africa. He saw the desperate need for fathers and life coaches to raise up Godly children. This led him to formulate a curriculum that would train men to become the fathers God intended them to be.

Today, in communities across the world, we witness the terrible effects of fatherlessness and how this has affected the faith of those involved.

We hold the firm belief that fatherlessness is a stronghold of satan in his war against the Church. Children without fathers will struggle to believe in a loving and caring Heavenly Father. As a couple, my husband and I have dedicated the rest of our lives to combat fatherlessness.

Chapter 2

The Cry Of The Children Researching the curse of fatherlessness

ACTION

DISCUSS IN GROUPS: What are the effects of fatherlessness on the children in your family or community?

The Impact of Fatherlessness

1. The problem of fatherlessness worldwide is massive. It is the root from which most problems in society arise.
2. To address this crisis, one must be highly motivated to make a difference.
3. Fatherlessness is the stronghold of Satan to destroy society and the Church. By destroying the smallest unit of community, the family, he targets the very heart of society.
4. Many children have a father in the home, yet the father is absent - either because he works late hours and his children never see him, or because he is abusive and/or distant and fails to connect with his children.
5. An absent or abusive father destroys or distorts the image of Father God in the mind of the child.
6. Countless social evils arise out of fatherlessness:
 - 70% of inmates in SA's prisons are fatherless.
 - Gangsterism and substance abuse are rife where fathers are absent.
 - 85% of children with behavioral problems come from fatherless homes.
 - 71% of children who do not finish school are fatherless.
 - Worldwide, even in Christian communities, divorce rates are escalating (87% in Moscow, Russia).
 - Single mothers often struggle with the absence of financial support and having to handle their teenage children.
 - The single mother-cycle is perpetuated from one generation to another. (Single mothers often have daughters who become single mothers themselves.)
 - As single mother-families outnumber dual parent-families worldwide, there's a massive outcry for fathers that will love and lead their children well.

Mal. 4:6 warns us: *“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.”*

LADIES, A MASSIVE ONSLAUGHT IS NEEDED TO TACKLE AND UPROOT FATHERLESSNESS!

ACTION 🙋

DISCUSS IN GROUPS OF 2: What does today's family culture look like?

God's plan for the family:

1. To bring Heaven into the home through a **Christ centered parent team**, growing children who live for Christ.
2. To restore His **intended purpose** for fathers.
3. To exchange the secular family culture with a **Biblical family culture**:
 - The secular culture we live in has **contaminated our understanding** of fatherhood, family and life.
 - To change culture, you need a huge amount of **courage and firm conviction** as you swim against the stream – it starts in your home and it can be done!

PRAYER 🙏

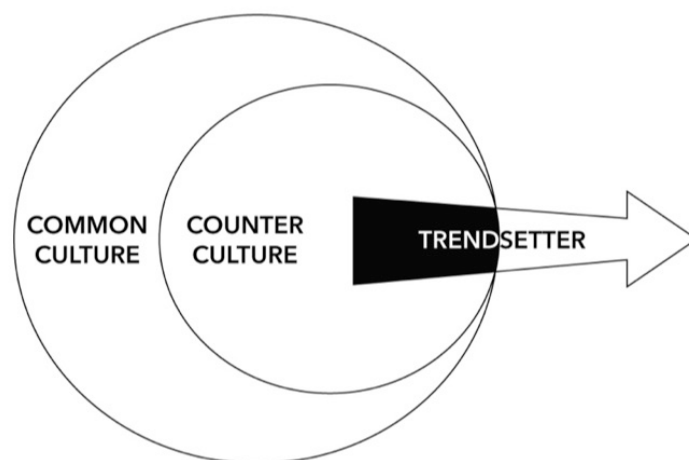
PRAY IN GROUPS OF 3: (Each woman prays for 3 points or as the Spirit leads, 12-14 for single mothers)

1. For the restoration of a Biblical family culture.
2. That the hearts of the fathers will be turned toward their children.
3. Pray for the absent, distant, overly busy father in the home.
4. Pray for fathers working in other countries, e.g. migrant workers.
5. Pray for the abusive father. Bind verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Pray protection over those who are vulnerable to abuse, with no father to protect them.
6. Against the stronghold of Satan and his attempts to destroy the family unit. Bind his power.
7. Pray against the effects of fatherlessness in your community.
8. Pray for the fatherless in prisons and against the spirit of violence.
9. Pray for the fatherless drug addict and alcoholic. Pray against the spirit of addiction.
10. Pray against behavioral problems, e.g. depression, cutting, aggression.
11. Pray against teenage pregnancies.
12. Pray for widows, single moms and their children. Pray for strength in their struggles with finances, discipline and the temptation to resort to prostitution.
13. Pray for the single mother-cycle in families to be broken - from mother to daughter and daughter to granddaughter.
14. "In you alone, O Lord, the fatherless find mercy." (Hos. 14:3)

The Pull of Culture

What is culture? Culture can be defined as people made in God's image interacting with the world that God Made. After the Fall, culture was thrown into turmoil when sin and rebellion against God introduced a fierce struggle.

- The Christian family is faced with 2 spectrums concerning culture:
- On the one end: **Separation** (2 Cor. 6:17) "Come out from them and be separate." That is avoiding evil.
- On the other end: **Assimilation** (John 17:6, 11,) "in the world but not of the world," As Christians we are called to be "**salt and light**" in the world. (Matt. 5:13-16.) Being holy while engaging with the world.
- Contemporary culture is so important for our teenagers. What are we to do as parents to guide our teenagers through the pitfalls of their present culture?
- They must understand that:
 - 1) Culture is driven by the **philosophy** of the present day in which they are immersed.
 - 2) A typical philosophy of today is: Putting **self first**, **gratifying** one's desires, and exercising one's **independent judgement** apart from external moral norms and values.
 - 3) God's Word confronts the world with a clear, counterculture message. As Christians we ought to **put others first**, live for the **glory of God** and **submit** to His moral directives and values in the power of the Holy Spirit. From a young age we must continually repeat the words: "**As Christians we are different to other people and it is OK to be different. We do not think like other people, we do not act like other people.**"
 - 4) The cultural air that we breathe is polluted and the Christian needs **spiritual filters**, Biblical values to screen out negative influences "to keep oneself unstained from the world." (James 1:27.)



The Purpose and Power of Fatherly Involvement

What is the primary role of the father?

Fathers are not to be reduced to mere financial providers and disciplinarians.

Research has shown that fathers have a vital role to play in the development of their children. Here follows a summary of the results of more than 100 studies on the role of a father. (*FIRA Document, compiled by Sarah Allen, PhD, and Kerry Daly, PhD, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada)

Fathers contribute pivotally and powerfully to all 5 areas of a child's development:

Intellectually:

Children with fathers generally do better academically at school. Even toddlers are more skilled at problem solving and exhibit a higher IQ by the age of 3 years. Fathers tend to ask more “where?” and “what?” questions, which stimulates thinking.

Emotionally:

Children with fathers tend to react better to stress and frustration. They have less chance to develop depression. They possess better conflict solving skills and self-control and show less impulsive behaviour.

Socially:

Children with fathers tend to have less behavioural problems. They exhibit higher levels of well-being and peace. They have better social skills and relationships and are more successful in career and marriage.

Physically:

Children with fathers are generally more healthy, and struggle significantly less with asthma. Infant mortality rates and obesity are lower.

Spiritually: (*Our own research, not part of the FIRA Document.)

The father is God’s representative in the family. He models to his children the image of God the Father. Children with fathers generally score higher on measures of moral judgement, values and conformity to rules and discipline.

Without a father, a child can have shortfalls in most of the above developmental areas.

PRAYER 🙏

FOR THE INTELLECTUAL AREA:

1. Pray that fathers will make the time to stimulate the cognitive development of their children.
2. Col. 1:9-11: "Father God, I do not cease to pray for _____ (NAME OF FATHER/FATHER FIGURE) and to ask that _____ may be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that _____ may walk worthy of You, fully pleasing You, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in his knowledge of You, God. May _____ be strengthened with all might, according to Your glorious power."

FOR THE EMOTIONAL AREA:

1. Pray that fathers will take responsibility for the emotional development of their children by helping to create a relaxed atmosphere in the home.
2. Pray that fathers will model self-control and healthy conflict resolution skills for their children.
3. Pray that fathers will love their children and their wives unconditionally and self-sacrificially, providing the necessary emotional security.

FOR THE SOCIAL AREA:

1. Pray that fathers will have a warm, loving relationship with their children.
2. Pray that fathers will model a healthy relationship with their wives.
3. Pray that fathers will have healthy social interaction and prioritize quality time with their children.

FOR THE PHYSICAL AREA:

1. Pray that fathers will take responsibility for the health and well-being of their families.
2. Pray that fathers will take responsibility to guide and train their children in responsible, wise social media use – and model it for them. Pray that they protect their children from negative media influences, e.g. harmful video games and chat rooms.
3. Pray that fathers will take an interest in their children's sport and exercise activities.

FOR THE SPIRITUAL AREA:

1. Pray that fathers will take up their responsibility as the spiritual head of the family.
2. Pray that they will intercede for and strive for the salvation of their children.
3. Pray that they will follow Christ and demonstrate a Spirit-filled lifestyle.

Discuss with your husband/father figure how you can contribute to the well-being of your children in the following areas:

Spiritual: _____

Intellectual: _____

Emotional: _____

Social: _____

Physical: _____

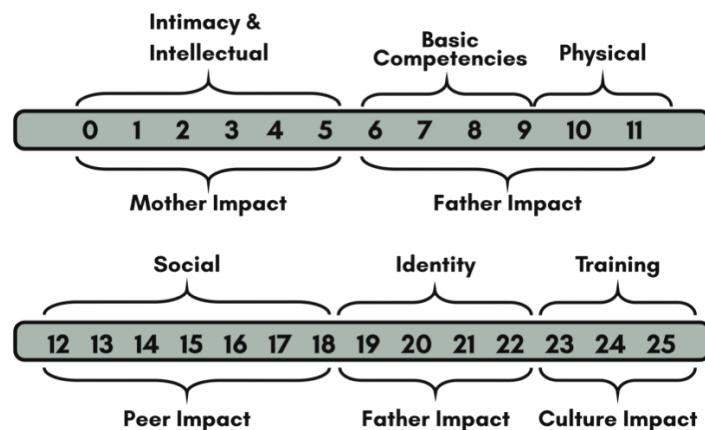
Chapter 3

Every Season Counts

Understanding the critical rhythms of life

If we understand the developmental needs of our children, we can help ensure they will be met at the right time.

People impact throughout life:



There are 9 seasons of life:

1. 0 - 5 years: Mother Impact phase
2. 6 - 11 years: Father Impact phase
3. 12 - 18 years: Peer Impact phase. Group adventure. Rite of passage (13 years).
4. 19 - 21 years: Father Impact phase. Stepping out and up. Rite of passage 21 years.
5. 22 - 25 years: Training and learning of career.
6. 26 - 42 years: Success season. Working hard. Climbing the ladder.
7. 43 - 48 years: Half time. Looking back, pausing and taking a new path.
8. 49 - 70 years: Significance. Leaving a legacy, mentoring others.
9. 71 + Finishing well. Having no regrets!

Conception to Birth

- **Physical:**
Mother: no alcohol, take folic acid supplement.
Father takes green foliage.
- **Social and Emotional**
Mother needs calm environment that the father helps to create.
- **Cognitive:**
Mother sings to baby and increases omega 3 and 6 intake.
Father speaks to baby as baby will recognize his voice at birth which

will calm the baby.

- **Spiritual:** Father blesses the baby.

Mother Impact Phase

80% of Intellectual development, belonging and trust.

(Ps. 22:9) "Yet you are he who took me from the womb, you made me trust you at my mother's breast."

Birth – 1year

Social/Emotional

Oxytocin excreted by mother and baby for intimacy.

Skin on skin contact very important for the first 3 months,

Breastfeeding enhances intimacy.

Physical

Development of sight and hearing. Singing and talking to baby is important. Baby recognizes voice of mother, father and siblings. Making eye contact is important.

Rocking and carrying baby provides important stimuli for brain development.

Breastfeeding delivers the necessary nutrition.

Crawling and tickling of tummy is important.

Older babies should be encouraged to explore.

Cognitive

Fastest neurological connections are being made.

Narrate what you do to baby. Around 6 months, expose your baby to new tastes and textures.

Reading to baby develops vocabulary and speech. Read rhymes and sing to baby daily

Games to play with baby

- **Peek a Boo.** Putting blanket over the face of the parent . saying where is baby, where is baby and then pulling it away saying Peek a boo. (This develops trust in the baby that when the parents will return when they leave.)
- **Blowing bubbles.** (Lots of fun.) Creates a sense of wonder in the baby.
- **Rolling Baby in a Blanket** and slowly unraveling the one point. Helps stimulate the vestibular system which is important for balance and core development.

2 Years

Social/Emotional

Intimacy, nurture and care, breastfeeding. Learning trust and mistrust.

Learning the balance between freedom and restriction.

Appropriate discipline with the help of the father.
(Father creates a secure emotional environment.)

Physical

Gross motor development. Child walks between 12-18 months.
Fine motor development. Child learns pincer grip.
From 2-3 years child is toilet trained. (Parents model the desired behavior)
Core strength and balance.
Sufficient sleep. (10-12 hrs.)

Cognitive

Brain boosting of 15-30 hrs. per week.
First words by 18 months.
Sensory games, reading, singing, learning rhymes, one on one games, group games, puzzles.

3 Years

Social/Emotional

Intimacy, nurture and care,
Learning the balance between freedom and restriction.
Developing entrepreneurial skills
Appropriate discipline with the help of the father.
(Father creates a secure emotional environment.)
The child easily experiences separation anxiety. Parents must always say:
I am going to work etc. but I am coming back. That is against the
separation anxiety.
Speak about the emotions of the child. (I see that you are angry because
you threw the puzzle pieces.
The child is not being difficult, he is experiencing a difficult emotion.

Physical

Child must be encouraged to run, climb and throw (balls)
Fine motor muscles develop: drawing, painting, cutting with scissor.
Precursors for writing.
Eating with knife and fork. Development of speech. Orally being exposed to
different texture

Cognitive

Brain boosting of 15-30 hrs. per week .

4 Years

Social/Emotional

Intimacy, nurture and care,
Learning the balance between freedom and restriction.
Developing entrepreneurial skills
Appropriate discipline with the help of the father.
Industry vs. inferiority.

Skills to empower the child in perceived strengths.

Giving the child practical things to do like making his own bed.

Physical

Outdoor play allowed as much as possible: running, jumping, dancing, standing on one leg.

Nutrition must consist of fruit, vegetables, protein and iron rich foods.

Cognitive

Brain boosting of 15-30 hrs. per week.

After reading to the child ask the child to retell the story or to answer comprehension questions.

Affirm the child often, needs reassurance.

Always be very honest with the child and ask the child's opinion as an answer to a question. Stimulates cognitive thinking.

Encourage contact with the father. Sharing, wrestling.

Creativity and fantasy.

Choices and consequences.

Play with the child allowing the child to be the leader of the game.

5 Years

Emotional/Social

Discovering and developing strengths

Discovering gifts

Creativity and fantasy.

Physical

Gross motor skills

Curiosity with body usually starts. Having questions about the differences between boys and girls.

Fine motor skills become more refined.

Cognitive

Start with schooling preparation but still having enough time for free play and sensory development.

Child starts to recognize the beginning sounds of simple words in their mother tongue.

Carry on with reading stories, rhymes and songs.

Brain Boosting games (2-5 Year olds)

1. Reading to your child.
2. One on one games:
 - * Building blocks
 - * Puzzles
 - * Word Hunt (Matching word to picture.)
 - * Role Play (Teacher, mother/father, super hero etc)
 - * Find the thing in the picture.
 - * Mazes

3. Group Games

- * Board games(Snakes and ladders, chess)
- * Simon says (clap your hands)
- * Hokey Pokey
- * Hide and Seek.
- * Musical numbers/objects.
- * Statue (Freeze when music stops.)
- * New language.
- * Sport activities.
- * Creativity and Communication. (Identifying potential & development.) Dance, art, music, singing.

What about day care?

1. Many mothers today and nearly all single mothers have no choice but to put their children in day care.
2. Many women receive more and better education these days and have a deep desire to carry on with their career soon after the birth of their baby.
3. Countries have different policies concerning maternity leave: The USA has none; South Africa has 4 months unpaid leave and a very small child grant system; Germany offers an after birth-child grant and leave for both parents for up to 14 months, depending on their income.

ACTION

DISCUSS IN GROUPS:

- What is best for our babies, toddlers and children?
- What do we say to the working mother?
- What do we need to say to our authorities concerning maternity leave?

The Working Mother

- What do we say to her concerning feelings of guilt?
 - What do we say about time management?
 - What do we say to her about finding time for each child?
 - What do we say to her about finding time for herself?
- (Copied from chapter 11 Fulfilling The Female Design.)

EACH GROUP DISCUSSES ONE QUESTION FROM ABOVE:

The “Father Gap”

You might be wondering about a gap in the lives of your children concerning the Father Impact years. (Can have many causes: e.g. absent/dysfunctional father or single mother.)

In this session you've seen the importance of a Godly father figure in your children's physical, social, intellectual and emotional development.

2 options to fill the “father gap”:

1. Find a father figure in the life of your child/ren, e.g. grandfather, uncle, family friend, teacher or coach.
2. Find a mentor family that offers your child/ren a father figure and also exposes them to healthy interaction between husband and wife. The how, what and when of the mentor family will be covered in detail later in the training.

PRAYER 🙏

COMMUNAL PRAYER OF RESTORATION

PRAY IN GROUPS OF 2 (Each woman chooses 2 from the list or as the Spirit leads):

1. Pray Prov. 16:23:
“Father and All Wise One, I pray that _____ will grow in wisdom and become a man marked by great wisdom and common sense, one who trains his mind, mouth and body to speak and act carefully and with sensitivity. Move in _____’s heart to get wisdom. Please, Lord, give him wisdom to guide our family at home.”
2. Pray 1 Pet. 5:2-3:
“Heavenly Father, I come before You now to pray for _____, the father of my children. I pray for _____ to see himself as the shepherd of the flock You have placed in his life – our children. Give _____ Your love and wisdom as he leads as a loving shepherd of our flock, not as a lord over them, and not because he has to, but willingly and joyfully. May _____ set a Godly example in our family.”
(From “A Woman After God’s Own Heart.” by Elizabeth George)
3. Pray that fathers/father figures will take up their responsibility as life coach in the family.
4. Pray that he will understand and take responsibility for his contributions in the Father Impact years (from 6 – 11 years).
5. Pray that he will support the mother emotionally throughout the difficult baby and toddler years.
6. Pray that he will support the mother concerning discipline during the Mother Impact years from 0 – 5 years.
7. Pray that he will form a strong bond with his child from birth.

BOOKS TO READ

By Brenna & Stan Jones: *God's design for sex-series*

The story of me (3-5 years)

Before I was born

Facing the facts, The truth about sex and you.

What is the big deal? Why God cares about sex.

WEBSITE TO VISIT

www.verywellfamily.com

Chapter 4

The Father and Mother Wound Revealed and Healed

Bonding in weakness and healing towards strength

“Father wounds are mostly inflicted by abuse and neglect. The impact of abusive fathers manifests itself mostly in a rebellious heart or in a victim or slave mentality. The rebellion is obviously more evident. This defiance of authority pops up in the conflict many adults have with authority at work, church or home.”

The World Needs A Father by Cassie Carstens.

The hole left by the father (or mother) wound has been filled with insecurities, anger, violence, addiction, inferiority, sadness, wealth, intolerance towards discipline and a sense of never feeling complete.

The goal of discovering your mother or father wound is to assist the healing process. It is never to blame or point a finger at the parent in any way.

Causes of Mother Wounds:

(Circle those that refer to you.)

1. Neglect of impartation of intimacy

- I struggle with opening up emotionally.
- When people come too close to me emotionally, I pull back.
- I often feel lonely, as if I am on an island.
- I withdraw to a lonely place to get space between me and others.
- I stand at the door of people's lives, but seldom enter into the inner chambers emotionally.
- I show signs of an orphan spirit, feeling I do not belong.

2. Neglect of nurture and care from mother

- I have serious bouts of fear.
- I feel lonely in my pain.
- I do not need anyone to share my pain with.
- I react with strong emotions when I feel my spouse is not sensitive to my feelings.

3. Neglect of social guidance

- I am ignorant of the lives/intricacies of others around me.
- I struggle to think and function more broadly than my own world.

- When it comes to being connected to the emotions of others, I score low on emotional intelligence.
- When it comes to managing the emotions of others, I score low on emotional intelligence.

4. Neglect of demonstration of validation

- I struggle with supporting others.
- I struggle to play “second fiddle” (following the leader).
- I struggle with submission.
- I struggle to move others to support a cause that is not my own initiative.

Possible Causes of Father Wounds:

1. Inappropriate/absent moral authority

- I have a need for knowing right from wrong.
- No-one showed me how to lead.
- I do not know absolute norms.
- I cannot apply delayed gratification (“I want it now”).
- I struggle to submit to authority.
- I want to do things my way.
- I have inflexible convictions that guide my decisions.
- I find it difficult to respect my superiors.
- I do not like to be held accountable.
- I struggle to listen to my conscience.
- I do not own responsibility easily.
- I struggle giving or receiving discipline.

2. Loss of identity

- I do not know where I belong/fit (orphan spirit).
- I do not know my unique significance.
- I am plagued by insecurities.
- My work becomes my identity.
- I do not know who I am; I have identity confusion.
- I mask my real self. (Adopting a different identity that will be accepted, e.g. Goth-style, piercings and tattoos.)
- I am aggressively defensive when criticised.
- I am uncertain about making choices.
- I have no clear set of values.
- I do not have close soul mates.
- I have no clear sense of purpose or calling.

3. Absence of emotional security

- I feel I probably deserve nothing.
- I feel I can never get enough attention/care; I have attention addiction.
- I always tend to support the underdog (identify with the losing competitor).
- I do not know my real feelings.
- I try to earn respect/love by trying to prove that I am good enough.
- I cannot identify my deepest feelings.
- I am unsure if people really accept or love me.
- I struggle to manage my emotions.
- I am pestered by bouts of shame and fear.
- I have a negative approach to most things in life.
- I am not confident to correctly interact with others emotionally.
- I often feel emotionally threatened by others.

4. Lack of affirmation

- I do not feel I have any contribution to make.
- Compliments are observed with suspicion.
- I always feel uncertain.
- I always question myself.
- I try to impress people all the time.
- I struggle with immaturity.
- I do not know my real value.
- I am not sure if I will ever live up to expectations.

Healing of Father and Mother Wounds:

1. Own the Problem

- You have to **identify** the wound, know where it came from and why it caused so much pain; then understand what damage it caused in your life.
- You have to **acknowledge** that you have a father/mother wound and that you want to get it healed.
- **Name the wound**, e.g.: “My father/mother has done this or that” or “my father/mother has neglected to do this or that.”

- **Name the unfulfilled need** by stating it verbally: Say clearly what you wanted to hear/see/experience from your father/mother. To get closure, you may need to write a letter to your father/mother without actually delivering it.

- **Face the impact** of the wound: Acknowledge if it created anger in you towards your father, mother, life and/or God. Acknowledge any other related symptoms in your life, e.g. passivity, escapism, procrastination, outbursts of anger, gossip...

2. **Forgive the person** (See notes at the end of this chapter.)

- Forgiveness is not weak surrender. It is a strong act of writing off the debt of someone else and deciding to pay the price yourself. This is why taking authority over the transgression first is important. To then swing it from “you owe me” towards “I owe you” is the hard self-sacrificial act of forgiveness.

“I forgive you for...”:

- **Release unfair expectations of your father/mother:** This asks for being reasonable about what your father/mother had to deal with when they dealt you the wound and understanding that they, though flawed, tried their best.

“I no longer expect you to...”:

- **Take authority** over any negative spiritual impact your father/mother wound could have caused in your life and over any power or habit that

consequently may hinder you to heal or conquer your wound.

The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ are the acts of God on our behalf to “conquer the grave” of our sins, the sins of others and the power of all transgressions over our lives.

- **State clearly:** “Because I partake in the power of God’s victory over sin, in His name I will conquer this attack on my spiritual health.”
- **Extend forgiveness:** Here forgiveness for your father/mother or the pleading of the blood of Christ over generational sins may be needed.

PRAY 🙏

For the forgiveness of any generational sins (e.g. neglect, abuse, incest, divorce, violence, absence...):

3. Step into inner victory.

- Allow God alone to have the right to make you happy or sad.

PRAY 🙏

“I will give no other person the right to make me happy or sad...”

- **Decide** to be disciplined in capturing all thoughts and making them obedient to Christ (change negative thoughts into positive thoughts.)

○ PRAY 🙏

“Lord, I choose to capture all my negative thoughts and make them obedient to You in the Name of Jesus Christ, thoughts of inferiority, pain, desertion, shame, blame, guilt...”

- **Change has 4 steps:**

1. Say how the father/mother wound makes you feel.

“I feel...”:

2. Say what you normally would say/do when you feel like that. What does your downward spiralling, destructive pain cycle typically look like?

“I normally say to myself...”:

3. Say what you now know is the truth about you.

“According to what the Bible says about how God sees me, I am...”:

4. Say what your action will be because of this truth.

“I commit to...”:

- **Find actions** that connect with your new pattern of thought and practise them until they become habits:_____

- **Be disciplined** about daily prayer times, praying Scripture relevant to your wound, reaching out to others, being salt and light instead of delving into the depths of depression and negative thoughts.

- **Know this is a journey** of repetitive healing episodes. Keep on trusting and trying...
- **Identify behaviour and thoughts in yourself that inhibit your own growth.** Actively work to change that with the support of a mentor or accountability partner.
- “The following things prevent or slow down my emotional and spiritual growth”:

4. Walk together

- Many people don't experience total restoration because they are too **independent and individualistic**.
- Churches help many to personal commitment, but the process of discipleship which means “**practising Jesus together**,” is often not followed through.
- **Fight against pride or self-pity** and ask someone to keep you accountable. (Women counsel women, men counsel men.)

“I can ask _____ to walk with me.”

- Set your mind to use your healing wounds as a **healing balm** for the wounds of other.
- “I can help _____”
- Spend time in **healthy relationships** with older men/women (mentors) that could model fatherhood/motherhood to you. List possible people that could mentor you:

- **Become** the mother you never had.
- **Mentor** other fathers/mothers with your husband into authentic fatherhood/motherhood.
- List possible couples:

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FORGIVENESS

Total Forgiveness by RT Kendall:

What total forgiveness is *not*:

1. Approval of what they did. We choose to forgive what we don't approve of, because that is the way God is with each of us.
2. Excusing what they did. We do not cover up for them or try and explain away their behaviour.
3. Justifying what they did. God never justified evil and does not require us to do so.
4. Pardoning what they did. Legal procedure has to continue if applicable.
5. Reconciliation. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not always the same. You do not have to be best friends with the person you forgive.
6. Denying what they did. Total forgiveness is not achieved by repressing what has happened.
7. Blindness to what happened. Pretending it never happened.
8. Forgetting. People say forgive and forget. But literally to forget may not be realistic or possible. We must not dwell on it, but we cannot always easily forget. It is grace to choose to forgive while remembering.
9. Refusing to take the wrong seriously. Some may think you are to dismiss the wrong as insignificant. But that is only avoiding the problem.
10. Pretending we are not hurt.

What total forgiveness *is*:

1. Being aware of what someone did and still forgiving them.
2. It is a choice to keep no record of the wrong. (1 Cor.13:5)
3. Refusing to punish. Giving up the fear that they may not get what they deserve.
4. It is being merciful, as our Father in heaven is merciful. To get what we don't deserve (forgiveness) and extending the same to others
5. It is being gracious. Not getting what we do deserve (punishment) from God and doing the same.
6. It is the absence of bitterness. To be able to bless those who hurt us. (1 Pet. 3:9)
7. Forgiving God. Why? Because unconsciously we often blame Him for allowing bad things to happen to us.
8. Forgiving ourselves. We matter to God and He wants us to have joy!

Chapter 5

Real Fatherhood

The 4 Responsibilities of the Father

The mandate of a father is taken from Matt. 3:17:

“And a voice from heaven said: ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’”

1. A father establishes moral authority.
2. A father confers identity.
3. A father provides security.
4. A father affirms potential.

Concerning child rearing, certain tasks have much more impact when done by the father than when done by the mother. For instance, it is much better for boys to be affirmed by their father when it comes to things like sport achievements and school reports. Children tend to react much better when the father does the disciplining.

Bringing up children is all about choosing what is best for them. Therefore, if a certain thing has greater effect when done by the father, then let us choose the best way.

Generally speaking, mothers have mostly been performing the tasks outlined in the TWNAF-curriculum as “Father roles”. Fathers need the understanding and support of their wives to carry out these roles.

For most men, these will be new challenges. It is essential that mothers acquaint themselves with the curriculum, give their buy-in and support their husbands in implementing and applying it in daily family life.



Chapter 6

The Father Establishes Moral Authority

Taking the low road to the high ground

Part 1 Moral Authority

Moral authority is the authority you acquire when you live a life of self-denial, integrity and submission to a higher mission, calling or loyalty.

PRAYER 🙏

IN GROUPS OF 3, PRAY THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES OVER YOUR HUSBAND/FATHER FIGURE ATTENDING THE WNAF-TRAINING. PRAY AS THE SPIRIT LEADS YOU:

1. *“The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” (Is.11:2)*
2. 1 Tim. 6:9,11: “Gracious Father; I lift up my husband before You and pray that _____ would be a man of God, that _____ would flee foolish and harmful lusts – those things that would tempt him to sin. I pray that instead, he would pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience and gentleness.”
“Woman After God’s Own Heart.” By Elizabeth George)
3. *“O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Mic. 6:8)*
4. *“Don’t copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Rom. 12:2)*
5. *“Don’t love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, I will never fail you.” (Heb. 13:5)*
6. *“The father is the head of the house”. (1 Pet. 3:6)*
7. *“Children, obey your parents; this is the right thing to do because God has place them in authority over you...” (Eph. 6:1-3)*

Part 2 The Clarity of Purpose

Knowing the Mission

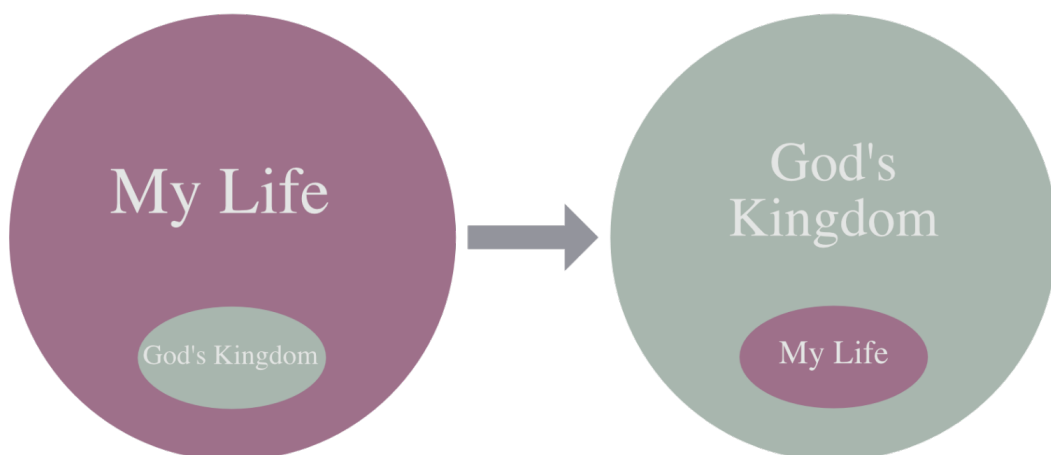
QUESTION: What do we say to a child that asks: “Mommy, what is life about?”

Moral authority is acquired by submitting to a higher calling to be part of God’s mission.



Primary Calling, Mission/Purpose

- Life is about God being on a mission, bringing Heaven to Earth.
- Our primary purpose is to follow God and His instructions as He works through us towards the completion of His mission to bring all men to faith in Him.
- We must become part of God’s mission to reach and disciple the nations.



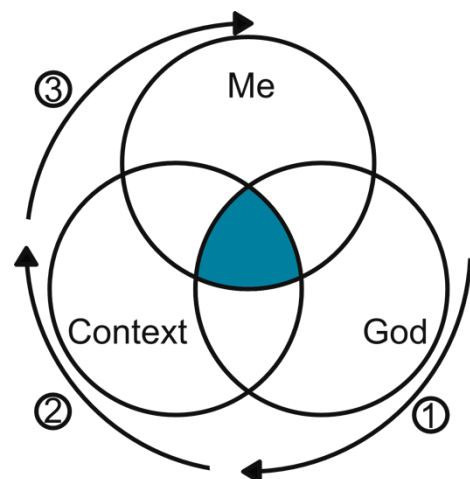
- God should not occupy only a room in my life, I should be part of His Kingdom mission.
- God must not be *part* of my life, He must *be* my life!

Secondary Calling/Mission/Purpose

- My secondary calling is the convergence of my context (where God has put me in place and time), God's mission and the gifts and passions He has given me.
- It is related to where God is working and to His restoration plan for this time in history.
- My calling is related to the events, needs and opportunities that I experience in the place and time that God has placed me in.
- It is related to a special burden, passion, need that God has placed on my heart. (See diagram below.)

Remember: Children and husband are a *responsibility*, not a *mission*.

Your mission need not be the same as your husband's, but get his blessing to practise yours.



Determining my Calling/Mission/Purpose

1. God's mission:

What is God's all-encompassing mission?

Whom, where or what would Jesus prioritise/do if He were to visit my community/city/country today?

How is the Holy Spirit prompting me, what do I sense Him pulling me towards?

2. My context:

What are the needs of my community/city/country? What is God's pain for my community?

3. Me:

Which opportunities/gifts/training do I have to help address these needs?

3.a My passion for people groups:

If I only have 5 years to live, whom will focus on? (Circle your group, choose a maximum of 3.)

Infants	Poor	Hospitalised	Disabled
Teen moms	Elderly	Artists	Refugees
Parents	Career women	Orphans	Business people
Homeless	Children	Widowed	Singles
Sports people	Unemployed	Youth	Leaders
Professionals	Newly married	Empty nesters	Executives
Divorced	Other faiths	College students	Educators
Prisoners	Single parents	Farmers	Families
Mothers with babies	Trafficked women	Government	Other

3.b My passion for issues:

Which articles do I tend to read first, from beginning to end, when I scan the news? (Circle your issues, choose a maximum of 3.)

Environment	Poverty	Injustice	Corruption
Violence	Hunger	Addiction	Medical care
Education	Sport	Reaching the lost	Homosexuality
Discipleship	Domestic abuse	Crime	Politics
Economy	Child care	Family	Racism
Homelessness	HIV/Aids	Literacy	Global affairs
Activism	Nutrition	Human trafficking	Church
Arts & culture	Life coaching	Farming	Labour

The most fulfilling/significant thing I've ever done, is:

3.c My gifts:

What gifts has God given me to prepare me for His purposes and plan?
(Circle your gifts, choose a maximum 3.)

Administration	Reshaping mindsets	Hospitality	Compassion
Practical skills	Generosity	Knowledge	Counselling
Discernment	Wisdom	Pioneering	Creativity
Communication	Organising	Encouraging	Empowering

3.d My skills:

What do I have in my "toolbox" to accomplish God's purpose? (Circle your skills, choose a maximum of 3.)

Analysing	Coaching	Designing	Implementing
Teaching	Manual skills	Technical skills	Managing projects
Marketing	Recruiting	Organising	Managing people
Writing	Influencing	Performing arts	Managing numbers
Persuading	Speaking	Researching	Managing money
Creating	Leading	Strategic design	Crafting

3.e My history: What golden thread(s) do I notice flowing through my life?

- I often find myself in leadership positions.
- I often find myself helping needy people.

- I often find myself encouraging people.
- I have always been the “life of the party”.
- I have always been the organiser of events.
- I have always been the initiator of things.

My life story, impacted by people/events/decisions, indicates that:

I often find myself:

3.f Choose a verb.

Which action encapsulates my preferred interaction with the chosen people group in **3a**? (Choose a maximum of 2.)

Train	Build	Be a tree for...	Comfort
Facilitate	Energise	Be a crutch for...	Empower
Motivate	Cultivate	Be a voice for...	Encourage
Manage	Teach	Care for	Write
Lead	Mentor	Protect	Other

Purpose Statement

- Identify your specific **target group** (chosen out of **3a**, eg. orphans).

- Formulate your **desired outcome** for your target group. (From current condition to desired condition, e.g. “I want to equip orphans to become skilled individuals that will be able to support themselves.”)

- Choose the **verb** (taken from **3f**) that encapsulates your preferred interaction with your target group (e.g. to teach, care for, empower...)

- Decide on the **vehicle/method** through which you want to reach your desired outcome (e.g. events, camps, workshops, small groups...)

Now put it all together: (Formulate it as if you had unlimited money/time/resources at your disposal.)

My Mission/Purpose Statement is:

To _____(verb) _____(target group)
from _____(current status) to _____(desired
outcome) through the means of _____(vehicle).

Example of a mission statement:

“To empower orphans to move from being hopeless to becoming self-sufficient through an educational programme.”

The True Joy of Life

*This is the true joy of life...
.... Being used for a purpose
... a mighty one!*

*My life belongs to the whole community.
I want to be thoroughly used up when I die!
Life is sort of a splendid torch...*

*I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on
To future generations!*

George Bernard Shaw

ACTION 🙋

Write your life mission statement at the back of this workbook.

Share your life mission statement with your group and pray for one another's missions.

Consider starting a WhatsApp group to support, encourage and hold one another accountable.

PRAYER 🙏

Commit to praying for one another on a regular basis and to let the others know of any developments concerning your mission.

Part 3

How to develop Moral Authority

1. To submit to the moral authority of the Word of God.

Be saturated by the Word:

“All Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16,17)

2. To allow the Spirit of God to take control.

“But the water I give them,” He said, “becomes a perpetual spring within them, watering them forever with eternal life.” (John. 4:14)

“Those who let themselves be controlled by their lower natures live only to please themselves, but those who follow after the Holy Spirit find themselves doing those things that please God”. (Rom. 8:5)

3. To purify and obey the conscience.

“Search me, O God and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything You find in me that makes You sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life”. (Ps. 139:23,24)

PRAYER 🙏

PRAY IN GROUPS OF 2:

1. To be conformed to Christ.
2. To think God’s thoughts after Him.
3. To love the things He loves.
4. To desire the things He desires.
5. To will the things He wills.

4. To say no to immoral activities.

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them... But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible.” (Eph. 5:11,13-14)

DISCUSS IN GROUPS OF 4:

What immoral mindsets and activities in our culture need to be addressed? _____

5.To submit to accountability.

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Eph. 5:21)

When we as adults submit to Christ and to our mentors, we demonstrate accountability to our children.

Part 4

A father should assume the disciplinary responsibility

The father has the ultimate disciplinary responsibility (Heb. 12:7-11).

Although the father is primary responsible for the disciplining of the children, the father and mother should work together as a team. (The single mother carries the ultimate responsibility for her children, but it is better when the responsibility is shared with a father figure.)

Unity between Mom and Dad forms the firm base of authority from which the children are disciplined.

It is essential that the rules and method of discipline are predetermined and agreed upon by both parties.

If not, it can lead to manipulation by the children and inappropriate/conflicting discipline by the parents/single mother and father figure.

Remember: Discipline is not just about curbing negative behaviour, it is about training in love towards spiritual maturity.

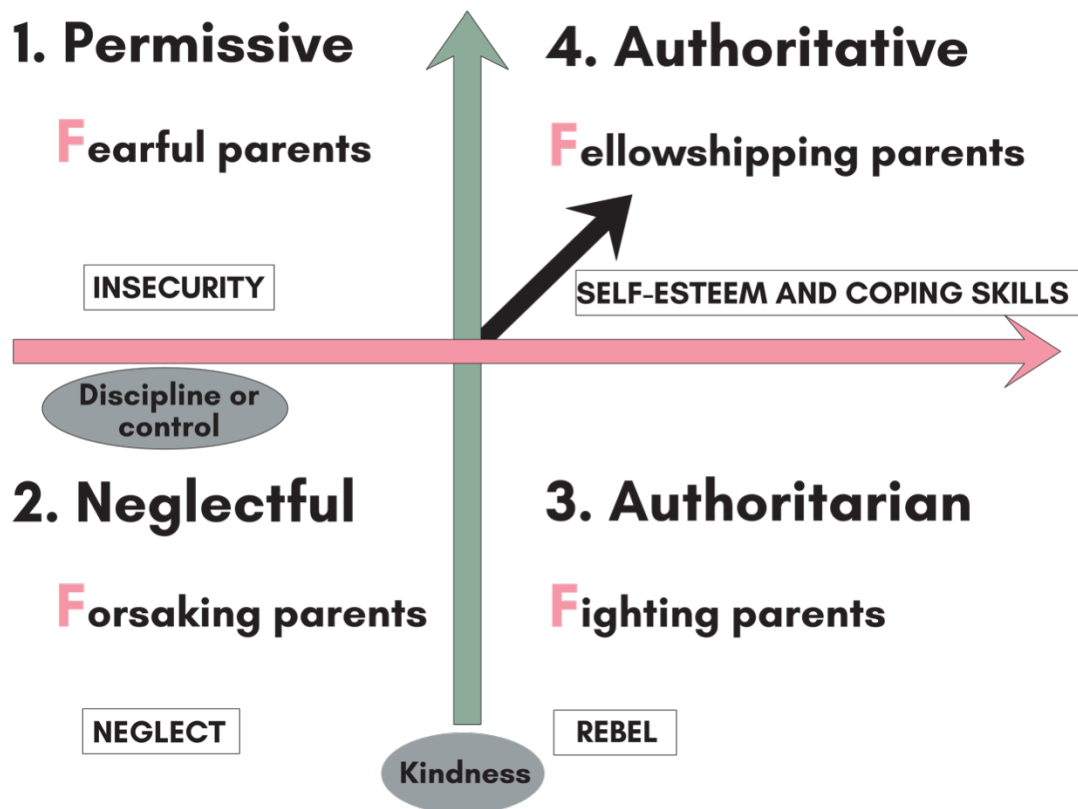
What do we do when our children misbehave?

Which style do we follow when we discipline?

It is good to understand the basic **4 different styles** of parents concerning discipline.

See illustration overleaf, taken from the **Reuben Hill Minnesota Report:**

4 Styles of Disciplining



4. Characteristics of Discipline by the Authoritative Parent:

High on love and high on control.
 Child gets clear direction, but is also highly valued.
 Experiences security through discipline.
 Relaxes fearlessly in the love of the parent.
 Child feels that parents are with him/her on the journey of life.
 Validation by parents provides self-esteem.
 Understanding the boundaries within which he/she should operate, provides child with valuable coping skills.
 (Eph. 6:1-4: “Children, obey your parents...”)

10 Basic disciplinary rules:

1. Understand the world of your child (e.g. tugging at your trousers).
2. Understand different temperaments.
3. Stay emotionally connected with your child. A mere small eye movement may then reap the right results.
4. Only say “NO” when really necessary.
5. Do discipline *with* your child, not *to* your child.

6. Never discipline as an outburst of anger. Control your emotions!
7. Only discipline disobedience, immoral actions and as safety precaution.
8. Always give two warnings for toddlers.
9. Be super patient between 5 – 7pm.
10. Always debrief before and after disciplining: Give the reason why you are disciplining them before *and* after you do so. Re-affirm your love to the child. Re-state the rules.

PRAYER 🙏

PRAY IN GROUPS OF 2: (Each chooses 2 points.)

1. For you as mother-and-father-team to adopt an authoritative disciplinary style.
2. That your children will experience security through discipline.
3. That they will relax fearlessly in an atmosphere of love and acceptance.
4. That they will discover their mission and purpose in life.
5. That they will understand and feel safe within the firm, healthy boundaries that have been set by discipline.
6. That they will develop valuable coping skills in life and grow in self-esteem.

ACTION 🧑

1. Make sure you and your spouse have a clear policy of discipline.
2. Go through this session with your teenager to discover their mission.

BOOK TO READ 📖

12 Huge mistakes parents can avoid by Tim Elmore

“Your children will become what you are; so be what you want them to be.”
(David Bly)

Chapter 7

A Father confers Identity

A child's glory is his father (Prov.17:6)

Moving from Identity confusion to Clarity

- When it comes to identity, we see identity **confusion** the most acutely in the **teenager** as they grapple to find their identity in a valueless society.
- Another issue that also complicates their understanding of identity is the **internet** where they juggle between living in the **virtual world** and living in the **real world**. Are they part of the community or are they part of the global virtual world.
- They will have to have a fair understanding of their identity, gathered in the **home phase** before they enter the teenage years, so that they will not be completely **swallowed by the group identity** in the group-adventure phase.
- They will have to discover their **social identity** in the teenage years as they interact with their peers.

1. **My Primary Identity** as a Christian: I am the child of the living God!

(1 John. 3:1)

2. **My Secondary Identity** is the sum of a number of factors:

- My past What I've inherited.
- My present Values I live by.
- My present Friends I associate with.
- My present Choices I make. (Father directs the child's choices.)
- My future What I dream/plan to become.

We must be proactive and intentional in helping our children secure their identity in God. Our culture has opposite values to God's values. If we do nothing, our children will simply adopt the values of the prevailing culture.

Values are the filters for our decisions: Values influence our mind and emotions, which influence our decisions, which determine our behaviour, shape our character and impact our destiny.

Choice of values

When it comes to values, it is often easier to state which values we *don't* adhere to, rather than those we *do* adhere to, e.g. "Our family does not do..., or does not stand for..."

Homework

Gather as a family and choose 5 values you want to live by. The lists below will help you.

Value Sets

Set 1 (Positive)	Set 2 (Negative)
Absolute truth	Relative truth
Integrity	Image
Interdependence	Individualism
Social involvement	Social isolation
Service	Self-survival
Energetic participation	Passive observance
Originality/Creativity	Imitation
Constant reorientation towards God	Thoughtless busyness
Skill and care	Haste and ease
Self-control	Impulsiveness
Long-range perspective	Instant gratification
Productivity	Unproductivity
Occupation as vocation/calling	Work to survive
Profit as a means to security	Profit as the ultimate goal
Honesty	Dishonesty
Family ties as an anchor	No family responsibility

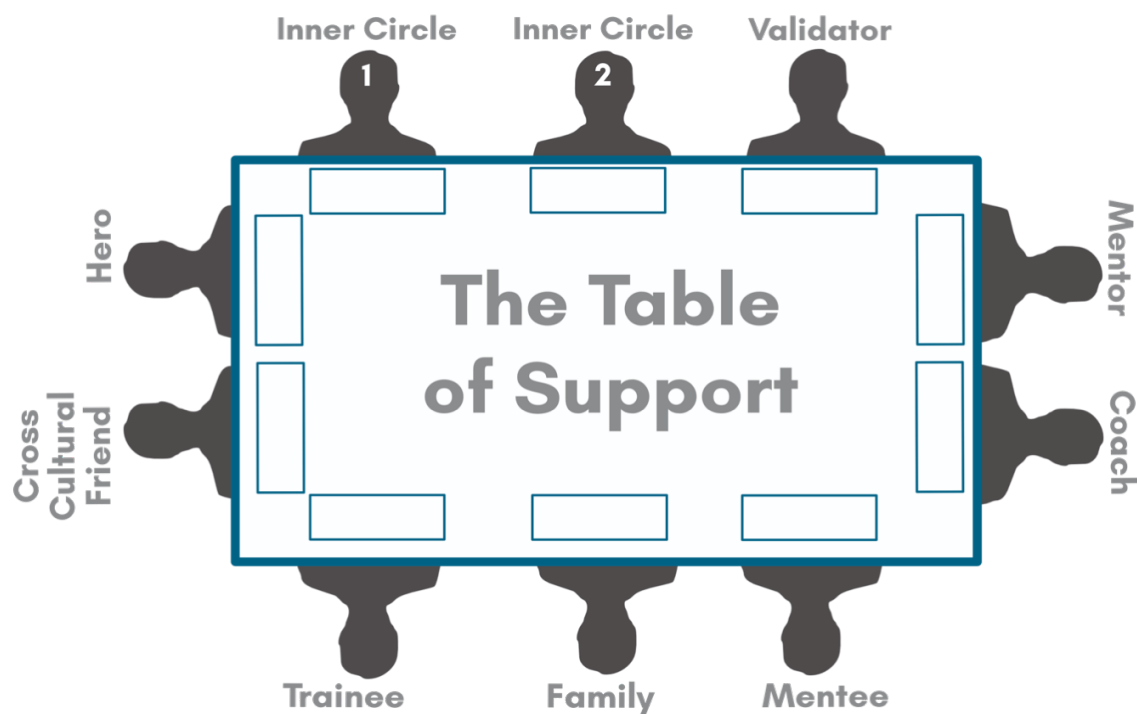
More values: (All good)

Accountability	Adversity	Honour	Support
Accuracy	Discipline	Humility	Security
Achievement	Discretion	Independence	Self-actualization
Adventurousness	Dynamism	Ingenuity	Self-control
Altruism	Economy	Inner harmony	Selflessness
Ambition	Effectiveness	Intuition	Self-reliance
Assertiveness	Efficiency	Inquisitiveness	Sensitivity
Balance	Elegance	Insightfulness	Serenity
Being the best	Empathy	Intelligence	Service
Belonging	Enjoyment	Intellectual growth	Shrewdness
Boldness	Enthusiasm	Joy	Simplicity

Calmness	Equality	Justice	Soundness
Carefulness	Excellence	Loyalty	Speed
Challenge	Excitement	Leadership	Spontaneity
Cheerfulness	Expertise	Legacy	Stability
Clear-mindedness	Exploration	Love	Strategic
Commitment	Expressiveness	Merit	Strength
Community	Fairness	Making a difference	Structure
Compassion	Faith	Mastery	Success
Competitiveness	Family ties	Originality	Traditionalism
Consistency	Fidelity	Obedience	Teamwork
Contentment	Fitness	Openness	Temperance
Continuity	Fluency	Order	Thankfulness
Capable	Focus	Positivity	Thoroughness
Contribution	Freedom	Patriotism	Thoughtfulness
Control	Fun	Perfection	Timeliness
Cooperation	Generosity	Piety	Tolerance
Correctness	Goodness	Positivity	Togetherness
Courteousness	Grace	Rigour	Trustworthiness
Creativity	Growth	Playfulness	Truth-seeking
Curiosity	Happiness	Professionalism	Understanding
Decisiveness	Hard work	Prudence	Uniqueness
Democratic	Healthy living	Quality-orientation	Unity
Dependability	Helping society	Reliability	Usefulness
Determination	Humour	Resourcefulness	Vision
Devoutness	Holiness	Restraint	Vitality
Diligence	Honesty	Results-oriented	Vigour

Choice of friends

Your choice of friends is an indication of who you are. Choose the right family friends with the right DNA/values. Surround yourself with people who make a positive impact on your life and those of your children. We call it the Table of Support. It is essential that you and your husband have a Table of Support, as well as each of your children from 11 years and older.



The Table of Support roles:

1. **The mentor** – your whole-life coach.
2. **The mentee** – the one whom you disciple/do whole-life coaching with (Eph. 4:13; Matthew 28:19)
3. **The coach** – someone who trains you in a specific skill.
4. **The trainee** – someone whom you train in a specific skill.
5. **The hero** – someone whom you admire greatly, although you may not be able to become like this person.
6. **The family member** – a relative to whom you are emotionally close (choose 2).
7. **The inner circle** – a friend who is a real soul mate (same gender).
8. **The validator or successor** – the one who will take over the baton of your mission in life and run with it after you have died. (In the case of children, this chair will be absent.)
9. **Counter-cultural friend** – Someone who teaches you about life from another point of view. A person from a different culture, faith or vastly different economic background.

A Father confers Identity by:

- 1. Helping his children sift through the past** and only embrace the beneficial part of their heritage.

HOMEWORK

Discuss with your husband/children the good and bad of your family heritage.

- 2. Holding on to the right values.**

HOMEWORK

Discuss with your husband/children how you as a family will practically live out your chosen set of values.

- 3. Encouraging association with the right friends.**

ACTION

Make a list of your children's current friends:

PRAYER

Pray for these friends by name. Ask that they will influence your child only in a positive way. Pray also that your children will influence their friends in a positive way.

ACTION

List any major or minor choices that need to be made with/for your children.

PRAYER

Ask that the Holy Spirit will lead your husband/father figure in guiding your children through making the right choices.

4. Directing his children to stay on the course of the beneficial mission they have embarked on.

HOMEWORK

Discuss with your husband/father figure how you can support your child in going on a mission/outreach.

PRAYER

Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you as a family to support one another in your God-given missions/callings.

Chapter 8

A Father Provides Security

Walking the journey from fear to love

“... You are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.” (Ps. 23:4)

Fathering that creates a “No Fear” Environment

How we normally love:

Expectational love

- I expect you to make me happy.
- I expect you to give me security.
- I expect you to give me significance.
- I expect you to provide a certain financial living standard for the family.
- Because I treat you well, you should become what I expect.
- I expect you to become the ideal husband/child.

Idolizing love

- My ideals/dreams are centered around my husband/child.
- I give my husband/child the power to make me happy or miserable.
- My husband/child is the centre of my life orientation.
- I create in my mind the idol that my husband/child must become.
- I control/manipulate my husband/child to become my idol.
- My self-made idol must supply my needs of happiness, fulfilment and significance in the place of God.

The Impact of Expectational and Idolizing Love

- At the heart of most misery, anger and frustration is a disappointed expectation rooted in self-love.
- We cannot love anyone we idolise.
- We become the slave of the idol, expecting it to benefit us.
- We have an “idol trail” of relationships.
- Idolatry, not love, may be for many the chief cause in wanting to marry.
- Even our relationship with God can be idol-worship. We walk away from Him when He does not meet our expectations or answer our prayers.

Fathering that creates Fear, Shame & Guilt



How God loves us:

- One-sidedly, irrespective of return.
- Unconditionally, no expectations or manipulation.
- Perpetually, He keeps on loving and forgiving.
- Self-sacrificially.
- He loves, no matter our worth.
- He loves internally and eternally.
- I can be useless and God will still love me.

PRAYER 🙏

PRAY IN GROUPS OF 3:

1. Confess your expectations of your husband/father figure/others and ask God for forgiveness.
2. Confess your expectations of your children and ask God for forgiveness.
3. Confess all forms of control and manipulation.
4. Ask God to help you love unconditionally.
5. To love in one direction, with no expectations.
6. To love those that irritate or mistreat you, as it gives you an opportunity to love them with God's love, the way He loves us.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him." (1 Jhn. 4:7-9)

“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” (1 Jhn. 4:16)

Security in a Happy Marriage

Nothing can give children more security than knowing their parents love each other: Dad will never leave Mom and Mom will never leave Dad. Dad and Mom will find a way to settle their conflicts. Dad and Mom are totally committed to respecting, comforting and supporting each other.

How we as wives love our children’s father is the first and primary relationship our children observe. To love our husbands well is the core of our children’s security.

If we truly love with God’s love, can divorce ever be a possibility...?

The Security of No Divorce

“... the Lord has seen your treachery in divorcing your wives who have been faithful to you through the years, the companions you promised to care for and keep. You were united to your wife by the Lord. In God’s wise plan, when you married, the two of you became one person in His sight. And what does He want? Godly children from your union... Keep faith with the wife of your youth... the God of Israel says He hates divorce...” (Mal. 2:14-16)

PRAYER 🙏

1. Pray for the protection of your marriage against divorce.
2. Pray that your children will know how to love by looking at your marriage.
3. Pray that Godly children will be a by-product of your marriage.

Single mothers:

4. Pray that God will preserve the faith of your children or draw them to Him.
5. Pray that your children will experience an atmosphere of love in the home you have created.
6. Pray that God will help you expose your children to a loving marriage relationship.
7. Pray that God will grant you wisdom, brokenness and transparency to confess to your children how they became fatherless - if you have not already done so.

ACTION 🧑

Come together with your husband and renew your marriage vows. Do it also in front of your children.

Building Security by Investing in Communication Skills in your Family

Let your children guess the emotions in the emoji faces.



Degrees of Communication

Level 1: Chit chat

This is very superficial, e.g. “How are you?”

Level 2: Facts

This is when you share or ask for details, e.g. “How did you do on your test?”

Level 3: Opinions or solutions

This happens when you respond with your idea, or suggest a solution to the issue at hand.

Level 4: Feelings

This happens when you connect with the person on a “feeling”-level by reflecting that you understand more than the facts; you understand what the situation has done to the emotions of the person.

Level 5: Total transparency

This intimate communication is experienced when there is nothing hidden between two people. Where they share their most intimate feelings, fears, dreams and disappointments.

The most important thing to remember is: Stay in the room of the feeling!

HOMEWORK

Practice Level 5 communication with your husband and children tonight.

Security in Provision

Children should grow up with the sense of security that 'my father will or should have provided for me'. (Some young men born to single mothers take it for granted that it is the responsibility of their mother to provide for them. Later, when they marry, they might expect their wives to do the same.)

HOMEWORK

DISCUSS WITH YOUR HUSBAND: What should the understanding be when husband and wife share the financial responsibility? What if the wife is the bread winner or earns more than the husband?

Chapter 9

A Father Affirms Potential

Learning the language of building them up

The **effect** of affirmation by the father/father figure is much more pronounced than affirmation by the mother. Both boys and girls need the affirmation of both parents, but for certain things - especially for boys - the greater weight of affirmation lies on the side of the father.

God is an Affirmer

“In solemn truth I tell you, anyone believing in me shall do the same miracles I have done and even greater ones.” (Jhn. 14:12)

“As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.” (Jhn. 20:21)

We are Christ’s ambassadors...

“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (2 Cor. 5:20)

“As God’s partners we beg you not to toss aside this marvellous message.”
(2 Cor. 6:1)

We as parents need to:

- **Realize** that affirmation is vital for the development of our children - especially the affirmation of the father.
- **Understand** that affirmation of positive behaviour has far better developmental results than correction of negative behaviour. Simply put: affirmation is a better educator than correction.
- **Affirm** each child according to his/her age, gifts, character and unique personality style, developmental phase (mother/father) as well as season.

PRAYER 🙏

PRAY IN GROUPS OF 2:

Pray that God will help us to affirm more than we correct.

Pray that God will remind us to affirm our children at the right times and in the right season.

Affirm Gender Identity

Continual affirmation of gender from as young as 2 years is vital, especially since we have so much gender confusion today. Both parents, and especially the father/father figure, affirm the masculinity of the boys and the femininity of the girls.

ACTION

DISCUSS IN GROUPS OF 4:

How can we as parents affirm the gender of our children in creative ways?
What can I do when I notice my child leaning towards gender confusion?

PRAYER

Pray for clear gender identification in our children.
Pray God's protection over their safety from harmful influences, e.g. paedophiles and negative peer influence concerning gender.

How to Affirm your Child

(Adapted from: *One Minute Affirmation* by Ken Blanchard, author of *The One Minute Manager*.)

- Praise your child immediately.
- Tell your child what he/she did right – be specific.
- Tell your child how good you feel about what he/she did right, and how it helps the family dynamics.
- Pause for a moment of quiet to let them 'feel' how good you feel.
- Encourage them to do more of the same.
- Hug or touch your child in a way that makes it clear that you appreciate them.

Release Into Destiny: The Rite of Passage

We suggest 2 ceremonies:

1. Between 12 – 14 years: Release into young adulthood/squirehood/group adventure phase. (Bar/Bat Mitzvah or Bar/Bat Barakah)
2. At 21 years: Release into adulthood/knighthood/womanhood.

Key elements of the Rite of Passage:

- Symbol(s) personifying the values or intended purpose of the person.
- Calling forth and affirmation of positive character qualities.
- Recital of prophetic words (not forced).
- Confirmation of gender identity.
- Pronouncement of specific personal blessing of father/father figure and mother.
- Release into early adulthood or adulthood.
- Symbolic act(s) like the anointing of your child; for boys, e.g. knighting by sword into manhood; for girls, e.g. a special gift like a shiny locket representing light.

Examples of age appropriate Symbols used for Boys:

The '20s:	A mirror: finding your identity and seeing yourself through God's eyes.
The '30s:	A Swiss army knife: discovering and living the adventure in God's Kingdom.
The '40s:	A medal: the role that success and performance play.
The '50s:	A fingerprint: making your mark in life.
The '60s:	A chain with links: passing on a legacy to next generations.
The '70s:	A laurel wreath: victory
Other symbols:	
Bridle	Controlled strength
Toolbox	Equipped for life
Wooden hammer	Good judgement
Breastplate	Integrity or right standing with God
Helmet	Salvation
Sword	God's Word
Shoes	Spreading the Word
Family Crest	Identity or family values
Chess set	Strategic thinking
Backpack	Life journey (<i>"You are on a journey. As parents, we will add to your backpack things you will need for your journey."</i>)
Exchange of a toy for a gift	Transition into adulthood

Or any of the symbols used for girls or women (see overleaf).

It is essential that the father / father figure facilitates the rite of passage for the boys: **“It takes a man to tell a man that he's a man!”**

The Rite of Passage for Girls and Women

Our daughters have physiological milestones, like the start of menstruation, that tell them they are becoming a woman. Marriage and childbirth are markers in their lives that automatically help them grow into becoming and being recognised as an adult.

We as Christian parents need to develop and prepare our children from a young age to continue carrying Biblical and family values into adulthood, countering the influence of the prevailing peer culture.

It is therefore wise to have a ceremony for your daughter when she becomes a teenager/starts menstruation and also around 17 – 21 years (adult rite of passage).

The elements of a rite of passage for a girl can be the same as that for boys (see previous page), or consider the following examples:

Symbols used for Girls:

A pendant	With engraved values/Scripture to keep close to her heart, indicating the centering of her life around these principles.
A locket	Adorned with sparkling stones, representing being light for the world. Place a small treasure on the inside: salt representing Godly influence/mustard seeds representing a tree where many birds can nest.
Fancy shoes	Stepping into more mature responsibilities.
Bible	Guidance
Family jewellery	A legacy passed on to the next generation.
Family crest	Identity
A ring	Commitment to Christ, purity or a cause.
Compass	Firm direction
Chess set	Strategic thinking/wisdom/good decisions.
Bracelet/ Coloured beads	Fruit of the Spirit, denoted in different colours.
New clothes	Becoming a new person.
Belt	Truth
Crown/a garland of flowers	Royal identity as God's beloved daughter.

Usually the mother facilitates the rite of passage for girls. This role will depend on the family and the accepted cultural norms. When doing it for your daughter, it is important to emphasize her womanhood and your faith in her as an adult.

HOMEWORK

DISCUSS WITH YOUR HUSBAND/FATHER FIGURE:

Once your child/ren start nearing the relevant age, what could a rite of passage possibly look like?

Child Planner Form

Meeting the needs of your children

Name:

Age:

Impact Phase (Mother/Father/Peer etc.):

.....

Specific Impact Phase Needs:

1.
2.

Choice of Family Values (Chapter 7):

1.
2.
3.
4.

Primary Developmental Phase (See diagram):

1.
2.
3.

Holistic Development: (S=Short term, M=Medium term, L=Long term)

A. Spiritual needs:

1.
2.
3.

Action to address need:

1. (S,M,L)
2. (S,M,L)
3. (S,M,L)

B. Physical needs:

1.
2.
3.

Action to address need:

1. (S,M,L)

2. (S,M,L)
3. (S,M,L)

C. Social needs:

1.
2.
3.

Action to address need:

1. (S,M,L)
2. (S,M,L)
3. (S,M,L)

D. Emotional needs:

1.
2.
3.

Action to address need:

1. (S,M,L)
2. (S,M,L)
3. (S,M,L)

E. Intellectual needs:

1.
2.
3.

Action to address need:

1. (S,M,L)
2. (S,M,L)
3. (S,M,L)

Special Events: (Rite of passage, birthday):

.....

 ...

Special Dates: (School, church, sport, university):

.....
 .

 .

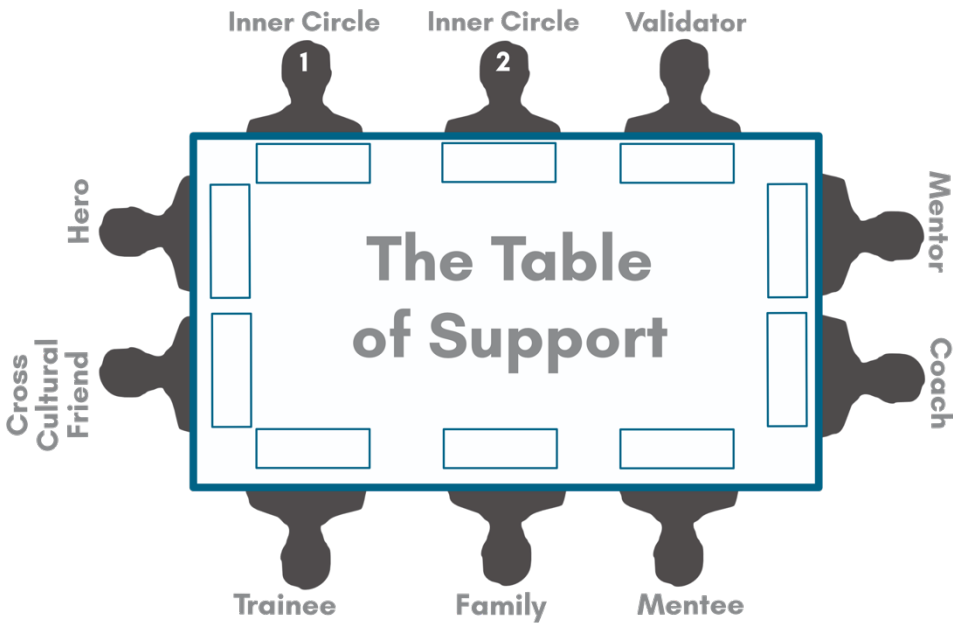
.....

Map the required actions (1 – 5) as well as the special events and dates on a year planner. Note whether the actions have a short, medium or long term focus and mark accordingly on the year planner.

Table of Support (Chapter 7)

Are all the chairs filled? Yes/No

See that the chairs are filled from the age of 11 years onwards.



Chapter 10 A

Restoring Damage

Moving from failure to restoration

As parents, we have all made mistakes.

The best thing to do is to be honest and confess our wrong behavior to each other and also to our children.

After having learnt many new things concerning the father's roles and responsibilities, your husband might be feeling concerned about all the things he did *not* do or the things he did not do *right*.

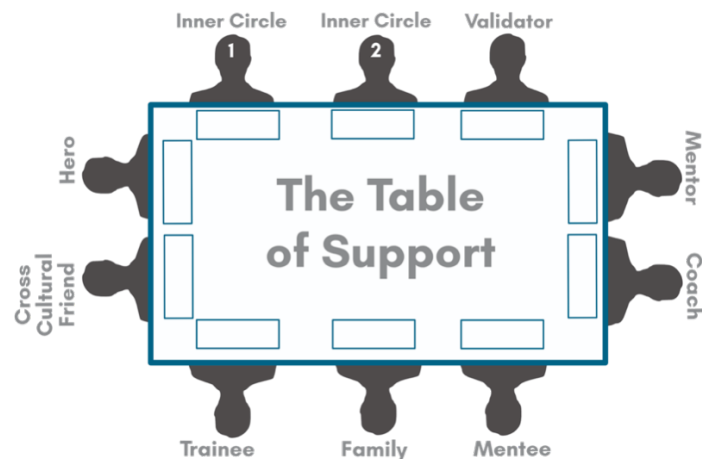
- DO NOT bring these matters to his attention.
- Give him time to work things out for himself.
- Be supportive and available if he wants to speak.
- Your job is to PRAY for him, not to JUDGE him.

Chapter 10 B

The Single Mother and the Mentor Family

Gathering Support

- Being a single parent is tough, and survival is the struggle of life. God sees and knows your struggles. “El Roi; The Lord who sees me.” Gen.16:13. God sees the suffering of Hagar.
- You need all the support you can get!
- Fill all the chairs around your Table of Support – have your children do so as well. (See Chapter 7.)



ACTION 🙏

Circle the chairs that are empty at your Table.

PRAYER 🙏

Pray that God will help you fill these chairs.

- Gather friends who can keep you true to your personal values and priorities for your children.
- Seeing the problem and being strategic about solving it may lead you to ask for help.

ACTION 🙏

DISCUSS: What do you think of the statement “It takes a village to raise a child”?

- In the previous modules, you have seen the vital importance of a father in the life of a child. (The Developmental Stages, Father Impact Years and The 4 Roles of a Father (Chapter 3); Establishing Moral Authority (Chapter 6), Conferring Identity (Chapter 7), Providing Security (Chapter 8) and Affirming Potential (Chapter 9).

ACTION 🙋

DISCUSS: How do you think your child could benefit from a father figure?

- You need to be intentional about the upbringing of your children. This means thinking ahead concerning their needs at different ages (Chapter 3). Affirmation of gender; developing physical skills like ball sense; wrestling and rough and tumble with a father figure; sex education...
- Find a father figure so your children can experience the support and input of a father during the important developmental stages of their life.

What does a suitable father figure look like?

- He must be a devoted child of God.
- Adhere to Biblical values.
- Have a good relationship with his own children.
- Have a good connection with your child(ren). Be able to make “heart”- contact and listen well.
- Trained by TWNAF in fatherhood.

Let us now think of a specific father figure for your child:

- Below is a list of a possible father figures that can help you in your search. As mothers we are careful to expose our precious children to just anybody. This must be done prayerfully. The person will need to be someone that is highly trustworthy.

“...for I will contend with those that contend with you and I will save your children.” (Is. 49:25)

PRAYER 🙏

Let us claim the above Scripture for our children and ask Father God to guide us as we search for a father figure.

Perhaps there is already such a person in the life of your child; perhaps there is more than one/a group of father figures? Our children benefit from every good adult to whom they are exposed.

ACTION

Tick what applies to you:

Grandfather	
Uncle	
Family friend	
Father of one of your child's friends	
Pastor/youth pastor	
Coach	
School teacher	
Other	

It is ideal when a father figure is connected to a family. The father figure and his family is referred to in this training as the “mentor family”.

We believe that the mentor family-concept will provide the best support for you and your child/ren. It offers your child/ren the best opportunity to be fathered and to witness healthy marriage interaction.

It is crucial that you give your child a point of reference concerning the roles of a father, husband and wife and how they interact with one another and the family. We are growing future fathers, mothers, husbands and wives!

What does a mentor family look like; how will it work?

“...and they shall bring your sons in their bosom and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers.” (Is. 49:23)

The Mentor Family

The husband and wife of the mentor family must:

- Have a good relationship with their own children.
- Have a good connection with your child(ren). Be able to listen and hear where they are emotionally.
- Ideally be trained by TWNAF in fatherhood and by TMD in motherhood.
- The wife must be one of the mentors around your Table of Support. (She must be motivated to help you and your family, as all the communication between the families will be done through her.)
- Be grounded in the absolute authority of the Word.
- Be filled by the Spirit.

- Be able to avoid and confront immoral activities.
- Be teachable and accountable to someone for their own actions. They must be mentored themselves.

(*The above criteria appears to be of a very high standard and virtually impossible to find. Most important is the connection with your child and being on the same page concerning issues of faith, values and discipline.)

ACTION

DISCUSS: Why is it so important that the mentor family and the single mother be on the same page concerning faith, values and discipline?

How do we pair up a single mother and a mentor family if there is no father figure in the picture?

Possibilities:

Through TWNAF/TMD training.

Through a cell group.

Through a family ministry at church.

How a single mother and a mentor family can be paired:

- The ideal way is for the trainer of TMD and TWNAF to recruit mentor families and to facilitate the pairing.
- When there's an existing potential father figure in the life of her child. (Someone she knows and trusts.)
- Approach the wife and ask if her family can play the role of a mentor family. The commitment of the wife is essential, as all the communication will be going through her and in her presence.

ACTION

DISCUSS: Why do you think all communication must go through the wife?

- Remind her of the importance of children having a father figure in their lives. (Hopefully she has been trained by TMD and will not need much persuading!) If not, explain the specific roles/responsibilities of a father that your child/ren need in order to thrive (refer to Chapters 3,6,7,8,9).
- Explain that your child/ren need to see healthy interaction between a husband and wife as a model for them as they grow up.
- If she and her husband agree to act as a mentor family, have a meeting with them and share all the information in this module.

The Divorced Single Mother with Custody of the Children

If the biological father of the children is able to play a positive role as father figure:

- Apply all the rules as for the mentor family. The father (and his wife, if he remarries) fulfils the role of the mentor family. This does not prevent you from getting another father figure/mentor family who will model Christian values to your child/ren.
- Refrain from criticizing your children's father; affirm him for what he does right.
- Try to keep any interaction with your ex-husband as unemotional as possible for the sake of the children.
- Share the values you have chosen as a new family and ask for his support and contribution.
- Share with him the important milestones and achievements in your children's lives. You two still have a co-parenting relationship.
- Being a united front concerning discipline is most essential, otherwise your children might try to manipulate you both and make life difficult for you. (More in Chapter 11.)

The Role of the Single Mother in the Mentor Family Partnership

- Most importantly: The single mother does not abdicate her responsibility to the mentor family. She remains ultimately responsible for her children.
- Validate the father of the mentor family, specifically as he exercises Biblical values, discipline and all the father roles. Your child must see unity and harmony (Chapter 11). (Remember, in your child's mind the father figure represents God the Father. You must demonstrate honouring God by honouring the father figure right in front of your child.)
- Affirm positive interaction between the mentor father and mother. Build a reservoir of positive references in the mind of your child/ren for future reference and application in their own families. They must know how to be a mom/dad, a husband/wife.

- Keep track of your children's needs at special times to prompt the mentor family in assisting in this.
- Have private meetings with the mentor parents to discuss any issues if needed. Sort out differences as soon as possible.
- Have regular combined family meetings with the mentor family to discuss issues. Decide how often the families will meet and what the agenda will be. (See notes on Family Meetings at the end of this chapter.) Here the interaction of the combined sets of children can be valuable when dealing with issues such as values, discipline and boundaries.
- Have regular family meetings *without* the mentor family. This is to help your children own the fact that they are a single family and to prevent them from adopting a victim mentality. A single family is still a family. It is simply different to a dual family, in no way inferior.
- Be on the lookout for how you can contribute to the lives of the children of the mentor family. It is good to have contributions from both sides, give and take.

The Roles of the Mentor Family

- The mentor family must honour and respect the single mother as the pillar of her family, knowing and acknowledging that the ultimate responsibility of the family is hers.
- The most important role is that of laying the foundation of love and discipline.
- The mentor father must be involved in a rite of passage for the children.
- The single mother and the mentor mother should initiate the celebration of the daughter's rite of passage.
- Working together as a united front is essential. Discuss and resolve differences privately. Be transparent concerning values, discipline and dating relationships. (See notes below on Supervision.)

Supervision and Mentoring of the Relationship between the Single Mother and the Mentor Family

ACTION

DISCUSS: Why do you think supervision is necessary?

- There must be a safe space for conversation, where any topic or issue can be discussed objectively and resolved before the relationship suffers.
- The relationship between the single mother and the mentor family is precious. It must be protected and nurtured for the sake of the child/ren who have suffered the loss of a father. They need stable, long term relationships!
- “The single mother’s children are vulnerable in this area. Therefore she must only introduce her children to a potential father after the engagement and then the children must have a year to get to know this potential father before they marry.” (From *Single parenting that works* by Dr. Kevin Leman, pg. 248)

ACTION

DISCUSS: Why do you think the above is a good/bad idea?

Different supervision structures:

- The mentoring/supervision of the single mother and mentor family can be done by a mentoring couple.
- Can also be done as a group with other single mothers and their mentor families, led by a mentoring couple.
- At church, they can form part of a family ministry (if in place).
- It is essential that in all cases, transparency (honest and open conversation) and accountability (allowing others to speak into your life, advise and correct you) be a high priority.

5 Essential Contributions of the Mentor Family

1. The presence of a father figure who:
 - Represents God the Father to the children.
 - Affirms their unique qualities and strengths.
 - Disciplines them according to the agreed upon code of conduct.
 - Leads the boys into manhood and the essentials of fatherhood.
 - Makes the girls feel appreciated by a male figure.
 - Helps the children understand their identity.
 - Demonstrates the right behaviour of a husband towards his wife.

2. Modeling of a husband and wife relationship:

- The wife models the right behaviour of a wife towards a husband.
- The children of a single mother only have a mothering example. They also need to witness healthy interaction between a mother and father, as well as between husband and wife.

3. Validation of a value system:

- It is imperative that the values of both parties are compatible.
- Talk through the practical application of key values in areas such as dating, drugs, discipline, family time, work ethics etc.

4. Appropriate interventions at certain developmentally sensitive times. (See Chapter 3):

- Specific windows of opportunity for developmental elevation should be captured and not missed.
- These essential interventions should be agreed upon by the single mother and mentor family.
- In these interventions, the unique profile of each child should be considered. (It is the responsibility of the single mother to keep track of the need for interventions and to remind the mentor family.)

5. Monthly family meetings:

- The goal of these meetings is to foster the involvement of the children in issues such as decision making, family values, family rules and doing Bible study.
- Family meetings help gel the family together.
- One can start when the eldest child is 6 years. Younger siblings are included.
- It is an opportunity to catch up where we are as a family and to communicate in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Family meetings create a sense of “our decision” vs. a decision imposed upon us. This fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership. (See notes at end of this chapter.)

PRAYER 🙏

“Father, You are a Father to the fatherless, You give justice to the widows, for You are holy. You even give families to the lonely (Ps. 68:5,6). In You alone, O Lord, the fatherless find mercy (Hos. 14:3). You have helped the fatherless who had no one to help them and You have caused the widow's heart to sing for joy (Job 29:12,13). Lord, put a song of joy into the hearts of the mothers of fatherless children. May they find comfort under Your wings. Help them find the

right mentors and father figures for their children. Give them grace to do this - for the sake of their children. Grant them a safety net of people that will support them. Help them remember that You are the Father of their children and that You will give them justice. May they depend on You and may You preserve their children (Jer. 49:11). In Jesus' name. Amen."

Details of the Family Meeting

Before the first family meeting:

A profile of each child and a strategic developmental plan should be submitted. This should include:

- The child's preferences and unique traits.
- Key events (e.g. birthdays and transition dates with rites of passage).
- Memory-making dates.
- All this so that the mentoring father will know when affirming intervention is needed.
- A prayer list. Exchange prayer requests so the two families can pray for each other.
- A list of your 5 most important values and 3 ways in which you would like to implement them. These should be revised regularly.
- A list of family rules and how discipline should happen. This should be discussed and agreed upon. Being a united front in this is essential.
- Give the mentoring family a copy of this chapter.

Summary of suggested meetings:

1. Weekly family meeting of the single mother and her children.
2. Monthly meeting of the single mother, her children and the mentor family (mother, father and their children).
3. Monthly supervision meetings of the single mother and the wife and husband of the mentor family.

Logistics of the Family Meeting

The goal of the family meeting is to foster spiritual growth, cohesion, mutual responsibility and family identity.

1. It is essential that each member feels they play an equal part in the meeting. No single person should dominate the conversation. Each member must feel they will be listened to and given an opportunity to speak.

2. The family decides on the time, place, frequency and duration of the meeting so that everyone's schedule is considered. Usually, weekly meetings are held to get an update on everyone's schedule, challenges and successes. A monthly meeting can be longer and used for decision-making and problem solving.
3. The mentor father or single mother usually leads the family meeting. In the case of older children, the lead can be rotated as wished.
4. Everyone contributes to the agenda. With younger children, the parents will do this. The meeting is a good space where the quiet or disengaged father can participate. It is also a good space where the usually more vocal mother can set the platform for the father and help set the agenda.
5. For the single parent family, it is better to have weekly family meetings without the mentor family as this empowers the children to take ownership of their situation. It prevents them from having a victim mentality, helps them solve their own problems and take responsibility for one another and for their situation. The mentor family can attend the monthly meetings as agreed upon by both parties. Some of these meetings can be held at their home, if so desired. A combined family meeting (all children present) can be useful, but if it causes problems, rather stop.
6. It is a good idea to keep a record of decisions made at meetings. One of the children can take the minutes. A record often proves to be a useful resource when later problems emerge.
7. Make sure that the meetings do not revolve around rules and problem solving. There must be an element of fun and mutual enjoyment. It is important that problems are discussed, but this should not be the focus. Members must not be blamed or criticized in the meeting, lest they later boycott out of fear of being criticized.

The following can be possible agenda-items:

- The mission of the family (see Chapter 6).
- The values of the family (see Chapter 7).
- Family rules.
- Feedback about weekly family schedule.
- Family fun, excursions and vacations.
- The sharing/rotation of chores and duties.
- Positive feedback.
- Steps in problem solving.

Chapter 11

The Brilliant Wife and Mother

Empowering the team by loving as one

The 5 Responsibilities of a Mother:

1. Letting the father shine.
2. Enhancing closeness.
3. Fulfilling the female design.
4. Developing connectedness and compassion.
5. Creating a space of worship.

1. Letting him shine

Validating your husband/father figure

The father is the head of the house. (See 1 Pet. 3:1-6)

Validation

- Validating your husband means **to visibly and verbally affirm** his worth, ability and relevance. The eyes denote a large amount of nonverbal communication.
- The validation of your husband is not just a Biblical command for you as wife, it has its greatest value in the **rearing of your children**.
- Your husband **represents God the Father** in the home. The faith of your children in Father God is closely related to the image of their own father/father figure. Your children are watching you very carefully and see and **sense your attitude** towards your husband/father figure. You must show in your attitude (visibly and verbally) that you support, honor and follow your husband/father figure. When your firstborn sees this, he or she will most likely follow you and the rest of the children will follow as well.
- By validating your husband/father figure, you strengthen the effect and fruit of the **father roles** such as moral authority, identity, security and self-worth.

“Honor Christ by submitting to each other. You wives must submit to your husband’s leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord... So again, I say a man must love his wife as a part of himself; and the wife must see to it that she deeply respects her husband, obeying, praising and honoring him”.

(Eph. 5:21 – 22,33)

Love and Respect

Women cannot live without love and men cannot live without respect.

HOW DOES A WIFE SPELL RESPECT: C-H-A-I-R-S

Conquest: Am I always standing behind him and letting him know I support him in his work and endeavors in his field?

Hierarchy: Do I let him know I respect and appreciate his desire to protect and provide for me and the family? What have I said recently to communicate this?

Authority: Does he know that, because he has the primary responsibility (to even die for me), I recognize him as having the primary authority? Do I let him be the leader? How have I helped in that regard recently?

Insight: Do I trust his ability to analyze things and offer solutions and not just depend on my “intuition”?

Relationship: Do I spend shoulder-to-shoulder time with him whenever I can? Do I let him know that I am his friend as well as his lover?

Sexuality: Do I honor his need for sexual release even when I don't feel like it?

Love and Respect; page 261; by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

The Five Respect Needs of Men

Taken from the book “For Women Only” by Shaunti Feldahn. She has completed extensive research on what men say about their respect needs: <http://www.imom.com/the-five-respect-needs-of-men/#.WUI3uxOGNE4>

1. Respect his judgement.

A man deeply needs the woman in his life to respect his knowledge, opinions and decisions. Several men confessed that they felt like their opinions and decisions were actively valued in every area of their lives except at home.

2. Respect his abilities.

Men want, even need to figure things out for themselves. And if they can, they feel like they have conquered something and are affirmed as men. The problem is, women want to help them and they interpret this as distrust. A man might think of it like this: If she doesn't trust me in something as small as finding my way along a road, why would she trust me in something important, like being a good breadwinner or a good father?

3. Respect in communication

Women hold an incredible power in the way they communicate to their men (both husband and sons) to build them up or to tear them down, to encourage or to exasperate. Some things just push a man's buttons. This goes beyond what women say, such as questioning a man's judgement or his abilities, and into how and where it is said. Some men in the survey said: “When my wife says something disrespectful, I often think, I can't believe she doesn't know how that makes me feel!”

4. Respect in public

It is painful for men when their wives criticize them in public, put them down, or even question their judgement in front of others. Consider this statement: "My wife says things about me in public that she considers teasing. I consider them torture." When we talk negatively about our men, even behind their backs, our disrespect may become even more embedded.

5. Respect in women's assumptions about men.

Men get hurt when women jump to a negative conclusion about them, sometimes with little cause. For example, women may assume: "He needs to be reminded". Repeatedly asking: "Have you done it yet?" is probably not a big deal for a woman. But inherent in the question is the assumption that the guy needs the reminder, that he is either incapable of remembering on his own or that he remembers just fine but needs our prodding to do the job. What men hear is: "I don't trust you."

ACTION

DISCUSS IN GROUPS:

In which ways can I validate/respect my husband/father figure of my child(ren)?

I have decided to:

PRAYER

According to Eph. 5:23: *"Dear Lord, I pray that You will strengthen and enable _____ to own his role as the head of our marriage, just as Jesus owned His role as head of the church. Please guide _____ and give him Your wisdom. Strengthen his faith and trust in You as he leads us as a couple and family with love and purpose. Amen."*

Single mother:

According to Eph. 5:23: *"Dear Lord, I pray that You will strengthen and enable me to submit to others, my mentor and the father figure of my child(ren). Help me teach my daughters to submit to and honour their husbands. Help me teach my sons to love their wives. Help me to model Biblical submission to them. Amen."*

Criticism

“...a wife’s quarreling is a continual dripping of rain.” Prov.19:13.

- Criticism, the opposite of validation.
- When you as mother continually criticize and undermine the father/father figure of your child, you erode his representation of Father God. You make it more difficult for your child to believe in God.
- You undermine the foundation of authority and identity that is provided by the father/father figure, which causes massive confusion in the child.
- This leads to confusion of his/her identity and self-worth.
- We must never allow criticism to mar the development of our children.

PRAYER

PRAY IN PAIRS:

1. Pray Prov. 14:1: *“Every wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears down”*.
2. Confess concerning the times you have criticized your husband, especially in front of the children.
3. Pray Phil.4:8 “ ...if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Resentment

Resentment and bitterness will eat away at your spiritual life.

“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.” Heb.12:15.

Deliver me, O Jesus

From the desire of being loved
From the desire of being extolled
From the desire of being honored
From the desire of being praised
From the desire of being preferred
From the desire of being consulted
From the desire of being approved
From the desire of being popular
From the fear of being humiliated
From the fear of being despised
From the fear of suffering rebukes
From the fear of being slandered
From the fear of being forgotten
From the fear of being wronged
From the fear of being ridiculed
From the fear of being suspected

ACTION

Do you harbor any resentment towards your husband/father figure/other person?

Name the resentment.

Write it on a piece of paper.

PRAYER

PRAY IN PAIRS:

“Dear Lord, I acknowledge that the root of my resentment is my own pride. Please pull it out, Lord, and destroy it. I submit to You as the source of my joy. It is not my job to judge my husband/any other person, it is Yours alone, Lord. I choose to forgive my husband/person for what he/she has done, just as You have forgiven me. I commit to support, serve and love them. Amen.”

Forming a United Front

1 Pet. 3:7: “Remember, you and your wife are partners (heirs with you) in receiving God’s blessing (gracious gift of life).”

- Your child finds security in the unity and team representation between you as wife/mother and your husband/father figure.
- This union is the foundation of authority from which we grow our children. Together, Mom and Dad shape the moral environment of the child.
- This united front is important for discipline. As parents, you decide on the rules and methods of discipline and support each other in the disciplining process.
- Your children are disciplined from this united foundation. This helps prevent manipulation by the children.
- It provides security for the parents, as both operate from the same set of rules and encourage each other to do so.
- Be united by the interpretation and transferal of chosen values: The role of the father/father figure and single mother is to confer identity (including the family values). The mother’s role is to translate these values into practical terms for the children.

PRAYER

PRAY IN PAIRS:

Pray that you and your husband/father figure will form a strong, united front/foundation for your children.

(Eccl. 4:9-10) *“Dear Lord, I pray for _____ to realize that he and I can enjoy greater harmony and accomplish so much more when we work together as a team. May _____ trust me and know in his heart*

that if he falls, I will be right there to lift him up, and together we will be better than one.” (Taken from “A Woman After God’s Own Heart.” by Elizabeth George)

Single mother:

(Eccl. 4:9-10) *“Dear Lord, I pray for the father figure of my child(ren)/mentor family to realize that we can enjoy greater harmony and accomplish so much more when we work together as a team. May they trust me and know that in times of trouble, I will be right there to support them, and together we will be better than one.”*

HOMEWORK

Ensure that you have an agreed upon set of rules, methods and consequences for discipline.

Keeping the Crown on his Head

“A worthy wife is her husband’s joy and crown...” Prov. 12:4

Many women complain that they have to fulfil the roles of the father, as he is either absent or unwilling to do so. In this case, the mother must be creative in encouraging the father to fulfil his roles by “keeping the crown on his head”. She can be the organizer behind the scenes and set him up to fulfil his father roles. Sometimes we must be creative and other times we must **lead from the back**. It is important that the children see that their father submits to God and that you validate your husband.

There are other women that complain that their husbands are difficult, obstinate, treat them like children, are condescending, disrespectful and sometimes or often abusive in various ways. (The following section is for the women whose husbands refuse to attend the TWNAF training or refuse to apply the teachings therein.) Seeing that here we cannot address the husband, we will address the **attitude** of the wife and how to **strengthen her spiritually**. She must never forget that Father **God sees and knows her pain and suffering** (Story of Hagar in Gen 16:13. “The Lord who sees me El-Roi.) and that He loves her dearly!!

Firstly the wife needs to :

1. Change her attitude

a) Count her blessings. (*Think of all that is good and true.* Philip. 4:8.) **What is he doing right ?** Make a list of the things he is doing for you and the children.

b) Not focus on his faults. It is her **own pride** that tempts her **to** focus on changing her spouse, while **neglecting her own weaknesses**.

Jesus warned us against this with very strong words in Luke 6: 41-42: *“Why do you look for the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye... First take the plank out of your own eye so that you can see clearly to help your brother with the speck in his eye.”*

If she keep on focusing on his faults it will **affect her spiritual life**. She will not be able to grow in character and not be a strong godly woman.

c) Learn perseverance. It is through **Perseverance** in difficult times that God wants to mature us, to teach us: strength, courage, dignity and Biblical wisdom. **Without trials we learn nothing!! 1Peter 1:7** *“...your faith is being tested as fire purifies gold...”*

2. Secondly the wife must be prepared to DO something.

a) Something must change! She will have to initiate something otherwise nothing will change!! “We will make a difference whether we are involved or not, whether we believe it or not, and whether we want it or not. There will be no neutral change. You are either part of the problem or part of the solution!!!” Her husband must understand that there are consequences for behavior: “If you continue to talk to me like this, I cannot listen to you.” Make space and or distance in the heat of the moment. “We can continue when we are both calm.” “If this behavior continues, I will have to get outside help.” Your reaction must be suited to the seriousness of his behavior. You must also stay calm.

b) A godly woman demands respect. She cannot influence her husband if he does not respect her.
Her walk with Christ which is her daily testimony, must be such that she gets her husband’s attention and admiration. 1Peter 3:1,2. (Living translation) *“Wives fit in with your husband’s plans; for then if they refuse to listen when you talk to them about the Lord, they will be won by your respectful, pure behavior. Your godly lives will speak to them better than any words.”*

c) She must be sure of her identity in Christ and what she was created to be: Co-created in the image of God. Genesis 1:27
Co-ruler of the Earth. Genesis 1:28 Daughter of the King. Child of God. Romans 8:16 Ephesians 1: 3-14(...blessed with every blessing 3, ...chosen from the beginning to be His 11, ...His presence within us 14.)

d) She must put on the armor of God to do battle: Ephesians 6: 10-18It can be that the attacks will come from a person that has some knowledge of the Bible and that scripture can be twisted and used against her. For this reason she must be prepared and learn the Scriptures.

e) It is only through self-sacrifice that we can attain victory

To attain this victory, to live a victorious life, she must be broken to the will of God. It is as simple as that. It is painful and it is humiliating but it is the only way. It is being not I but Christ. (a bent “C”) The proud self “I”, must be bent to form a “C”, to be broken.

This means: the **hard unyielding self**, Which justifies itself, Wants it's own way, Stands up for it's rights, And seeks it's own glory.

It is self who gets irritable and envious and resentful and critical and worried. It is self who is shy and self conscious and reserved and who has self pity, self indulgence, touchiness, self defense and fear.

f) She will need to be **broken continually**, every minute of every day!! This is very difficult: It is a **constant dying to self!!** It is a constant emptying of the self so that God can use her.

g) It means that **her plans, her time, her money, her pleasure time are all subject to the will of God!!! Everything belongs to God.**

It is a constant **yielding** to those around her, because **her yieldedness to God is measured by her yieldedness to man.** (Matt 25:40 "...When you did it to these my brothers, you doing it to me.") Her behavior and attitude towards others mirrors her relationship with Jesus!!

Her self centered life can never be victorious unless she is prepared to let God bring her life to constant death or constant emptying of self and for this she must choose! She must choose to die to self!

PRAYER

PRAY IN PAIRS: Ask God to help you honor, respect and validate your husband/father figure.

Be united through family meetings:

- Family meetings gel the family together.
- One can start when the eldest child is 6 years. Younger siblings are included.
- It is an opportunity to catch up where we are as a family and to communicate in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Family meetings create a sense of "our decision" vs. a decision imposed upon us. This fosters responsibility and ownership.
- Family meetings can be meetings that are held for the purpose of choosing values, family rules, making family decisions, doing Bible study etc.
- The mother can help the father with the agenda if needed and set him up to lead the meeting.
- (See more detail at the end of Chapter 10 B.)

HOMework

Discuss with your husband/mentor family/father figure when to start with family meetings.

HOMework

Be brave and ask your husband/father figure: “In which ways do I show that I do not respect you?”

BOOKS TO READ

Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs (ISBN 987-1-59145-187-7)

The Calvary Road by Roy Hession (Available free as an E-book.)

Sacred Influence by Gary Thomas.

2. Fulfilling the female design Nurturing and Caring

The first image of the female design we see in the Bible is that of companion and “wife”.

In Genesis 2:18 we read: *It is not good that the man should be alone; “I will make him a helper suitable for him”.*

The word “helper” in Hebrew is Ezer (Pronounced Ayzer) Which means **strong helper**. Ezer is almost always used in the Bible to describe God himself. **We can then say that Ezer means divine assistance.**

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created **them**, male and female He created them.”* Gen 1:27. Right from the start, we learn that women and men **together mirror the image of God**. Neither male nor female can mirror the image of God alone. This implies that His image includes female traits as well. We are so different and God created us this way. We were created to be **relational, to connect and to nurture**.

Let us now see how we as women can apply these abilities to nurture and connect with our husband and our children.

Firstly let us look at our marriage and our relationship with our husband. Let us look at the factors that feed this relationship. We will now investigate the primary needs in the marriage relationship.

Willard Harley in his book *His needs, Her needs*, lists the **needs of marriage as:**

1. Recreational companionship
2. Admiration
3. An attractive spouse
4. Affection
5. Domestic support
6. Financial support
7. Conversation
8. Sexual fulfillment

9. Honesty and openness
10. Family commitment (of the father)

Circle the 5 needs above that are the most important to you.

Willard Harley lists the **needs of married women** as:

1. Affection
2. Conversation
3. Honesty and openness
4. Financial support
5. Family commitment (fatherhood)

He lists the **needs of married men** as following (in order of preference):

1. Sexual fulfilment
2. Recreational companionship
3. An attractive spouse
4. Domestic support
5. Admiration

It is obvious that these needs differ vastly! Will the brilliant wife disregard the needs of her husband, or will she safeguard her marriage (and the well-being of her children) by taking them seriously and working on ways to meet them?

ACTION

REFLECT: Choose 2 of your spouse's needs from the married men's list that you think you've not been meeting very well:

1. _____
2. _____

Write down *how* and *when* you will start meeting these needs:

1. _____

2. _____

God has created the female brain in a wonderful way to enable her to connect, to nurture and care for her children!

- A woman has 15% more blood flow in her brain, which heightens her need for bonding and attachment.

- Her corpus callosum helps her multi-task and prolongs emotional connectivity.
- The cingulate gyrus in the female limbic system is linked to maternal bonding. This enables the mother to recognize her baby's cry amongst other babies.
- The female brain produces a rise in oxytocin when a baby cries, compelling the mother to pick up and cuddle the baby. Known as the “maternal instinct”.
- Women have more serotonin, the hormone that has a calming effect.

(From *The wonder of girls* by Michael Gurian)

NURTURING OUR CHILDREN

In Chapter 3 we discussed the needs and development of the child from pre-conception up to the age of 5 years. We will now discuss the age group 6-11 years , (the father impact years)

Boys and girls are not treated the same and they are not expected to behave the same.

The typically rough, robust, energetic and competitive behavior of most boys is just as acceptable as the often more quiet, gentle, relational behavior of girls.

Special care:

- The mother must be on the lookout for each child's gifts and special skills so that the child can receive training and affirmation in this area. This builds self-esteem and self-worth. This is especially important for the middle child and where one child seems less gifted than another.
- Some children are slower than others when it comes to schoolwork and learning abilities. Do not fall into the trap of comparing your children with each other and expressing frustration. Respect each child's pace and ability. Investigate also why they appear slower.
- Each child must be nurtured according to his personality type and temperament. One will not treat the introvert and extrovert in the same way.

Stress:

- Children nowadays are much more exposed to stress than ever before. Be aware of academic stress as well as social stress imposed by friends. Girls generally need to be talked through their problems, while boys tend to need help identifying their feelings causing the stress.

Smothering:

- Due to today's increasing prevalence of human trafficking, child abductions and sexual abuse, it is not unusual for a mother to become overly protective. However, it is important not to make our children fearful and to “smother” them with care! Sometimes we have to swallow our fears and let our children go, so that they can learn to be independent.
- Concerning our sons, we as mothers should never use them as an emotional crutch. It is unfair and generally leaves them with feelings of guilt and anger.

Diet:

- It's every mother's duty to see to it that her family enjoys a balanced meal every day. Nurture good and healthy eating habits from a small age and stick to it, even when your children leave home!
- Cane sugar is very bad for our health. Encourage your children to drink water (purified if possible).
- Take trouble to pack lunch boxes with healthy, low GI-snacks. Beware of refined carbohydrates like fries, potato crisps, white rice and bread.
- An obese child is an unhappy child and also runs the risk of developing type 2-diabetes later in life. Encourage your child to eat as much raw vegetables and fruit as often as possible. (limit grapes and watermelon due to high sugar content.)

Father and child connection:

Here the mother must help interpret the behavior, thought processes and feelings of both parties and help them understand each other.

She must remember not to undermine the father in front of or with the child, as this will cause other problems.

Keep the father up to date about where the child is and what he needs at the moment.

What Each Child Needs in Every Year from 6-11 Years

As you go through this list, mark which applies to your child and what you would like to do to support your child.

6 Years:**Emotional Social**

- The mother weans the child off to the father. (start of father impact years)
- Teach the child to express his or her feelings (emoji pictures.)
- Teach the child to co-operate and share.
- Talk about peer pressure.
- Give the child support at home.
- Strong affirmation is needed by the father (specifically) 6 "yesses" for every "no".
- Child wants to demonstrate how capable they are. Affirm! (Father)
- Child learns what is acceptable (Lying cheating and stealing occurs)

Physical

- The child's milk teeth begin to fall out to make way for permanent teeth.
- Sense of body image develops.
- Body aches can occur.
- Teach the child how to swim.
- Identify and develop the giftings of the child.

Cognitive

- Read to the child.
- Learns that words have multiple meanings.

- The child can understand humor.
- The child can focus for 15 minutes.
- Understands numbers(repeat 3 numbers backwards.)
- The child is able to tell the time.

7 Years

Emotional/Social

- Teach the child to identify and demonstrate emotions.
- Build self-esteem by encouraging the child in his strengths and positive qualities.
- Children start comparing themselves with others at school and become more self-critical.
- Alone time for reading is important as your child learns to read.
- Good influence from other adults is important.
- Routines become important for the child like bathing, eating and sleeping times.
- When doing activities or games ask : “what have we learned from this?”, rather than “success or winning”.
- It is OK to make mistakes. Show how you as parent make mistakes too.
- Do pretending like mimic play or role play.

Physical

- A lot of physical activity is needed to develop motor skills.
- Encourage sport, dance, climbing, trampoline and swimming.
- Identify ball sense or visual or performing arts ability and engage the child in his strengths.
- Teach the child to ride a 2 wheel bicycle.
- Encourage the child to dress himself, tie shoelaces.
- Encourage chores like setting the table, making his or her bed etc. and affirm.

Cognitive

- Math games are essential.
- Let your child read to you, tell you stories.
- Discuss what they learned at school.
- Share knowledge with younger children.
- Engage in the arts.

Spiritual

- Strong sense of empathy, morals and fairness is important to cultivate.
- The child must know that there are consequences for behavior.

8 Years

Emotional

- They can now mask their feelings. (Hide)
- Their emotions change quickly between self-confidence and self-doubt.
- Acknowledge their feelings and train them in regulating their feelings.

- In times of stress they want physical contact like hugs.

Social

- They enter a social phase of interaction with the same gender.
- Want “sleepovers” with friends.
- Help them develop their pro-social skills like being generous and supportive to their friends.
- Give attention if your child refuses to go to school.(bullying, academic stress.)
- They tend towards stereotyping.
- They usually to dance, sing and perform.(This encourages dev. of locomotor and motor skills)

Physical

- Physical co-ordination improves (Locomotor, motor skills and small muscle control improves.
- Find activities that help them feel good about themselves.(team or individual sport)

Cognitive

- They want to share their thoughts (They learn 3,000 new words in that year)
- Let them create their own solutions.
- They start to understand money they understand 3 digits numbers.
- They understand time better and can focus for 60 min.(wait for 10 min)
- They understand irony.(humor of meaning opposite)
- Able to think abstractly

Spiritual

- Able to understand the crucifixion story due to ability to think abstractly.
- Therefore a good time to accept Christ in their lives.
- Develop understanding what is right and wrong.
- They want to adhere to rules and to what is fair.

9 Years

Emotional

- They want to impress their peers
- They need freedom and assurance
- They have mood swings
- And anxiety about real world dangers.

Social

- They seek out peers to cope with emotions.
- They discover that friendships have many levels.
- Having a best friend comforts them.
- Attending group gatherings is important.
- Help them to respond positively to social issues and disasters.
- Include them in family decisions and family meetings.
- Vulnerable to inappropriate web content.

Physical

- Body image issues may arise.
- Growth spurts
- Timing of development should be discussed with them as well as sexual and puberty development.

Cognitive

- Analytical and logical thinking develops.
- Can understand more complicated math's.
- Can combine a variety of information. Visits to the library are beneficial.
- Can plan daily routine.
- Should learn to work co-operatively towards goals.

10 Years

Physical development with an emotional component.

- Growth spurts in both genders.
- Most girls will experience the onset of puberty with the flow of the female sexual growth hormones. This causes mood swings.
- Signs of puberty for both are sweat, oily skin and hair growth.
- The grey matter in the brain of the girl's doubles.
- Has improved agility, speed, co-ordination and balance.
- Should get 9-10 hours sleep per night. (no technology in bedroom)
- Identify with favorite sport star or singer etc.
- Parents must set the example of healthy eating habits.

Emotional

- They create a better sense of their own identity.
- Experience a time of stress.(socially, emotional and cognitive.)
- Help child to deal with uncomfortable emotions.
- Fighting with younger siblings occurs.

Social

- More skilled at negotiating solutions.
- Admires and imitates older youth.
- Questions authority
- Still accepting family beliefs and values.
- Possessive of friends and jealous.
- For boys, relationships based on mutual interests.
- Peer acceptance is essential.
- Peer pressure determines style.
- Create secret codes and passwords with friends.
- Enjoy co-operative activities with friends.

Cognitive

- Learning to use good judgement.
- Cognitive language skills are good and opinions are important.
- Has more math skills, more logic, more abstract thinking and more research abilities.

- Affirmation of their work is important (specially by father)
- Encourage them to establish homework time and homework area.
- No TV or internet during homework time. (Print web research if possible.)

11 Years

Physical

- Bodily signs of puberty. (Some can be early or late.)
- Girls experience first menstrual period.(Again some can be early or late)
- Growth spurts and growth pains.
- Need to sleep and eat more.
- Body odors start occurring.(Use antibacterial soap.)

Emotional

- They experience a moodiness roller coaster.
- Risky behavior appears (Drinking, smoking, self-harm.)
- If they lack emotional and social maturity they may become victims of bullying. (Bullying can also happen without cause.)
- They need time to rest and recharge.

Social

- They start to resist physical affection of parents.
- Make family time part of their routine.
- The group identity becomes very important to them!! Leading to peer pressure.
- They explore styles (Hair, clothes, hobbies and friends)
- They start to question authority and push back on rules.
- Parents must pick their battles.(restricting only the most important things.)
- Do not compete with them remain the parent!
- Help them in decision making.(Choose activities, consider consequences, weigh options.)
- Strong enforcement of rules helps.
- Control use of social media.

Cognitive

- Better decision making skills.
- Help them to understand that choices have long term consequences.
- Make learning exciting for them.

ACTION

DISCUSS: What is the first thing that I will do to support my child/ren?

Fill in the Child Planner form at the end of chapter 9 to plan your course of action to assist your child/ren by using the items you have marked in the above list.

PRAYER 🙏

A DAILY PRAYER FOR YOUR CHILDREN:

“Father, I pray for my children, that they will grow in the Lord and in the power of God, that they will grow and be strong in the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:80; 2:40). Pour out Your Spirit on our sons and daughters so that they will prophecy and see visions, as You have promised (Acts 2:17). Let our children grow and become strong, filled with wisdom and the grace of God (Luke 2:40). Let them grow mentally and spiritually (Luke 2:52). Make them mighty in the land (Ps. 112:2). Let our children grow in favor with You and man so that they will do Your work (Luke 2:40,52). Guide them to speak Your Word with great boldness. Stretch out Your hand, Lord, to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the Name of our Lord Jesus (Acts 4:29-30). May the Holy Spirit testify accordingly with signs, various wonders and miracles, and may the gifts of the Spirit be distributed to our children according to Your will (Heb. 2:4) In Jesus' Name. Amen.”

BOOKS TO READ 📖

How to develop your child's temperament by Beverley LaHaye

Understanding your child's temperament by Beverley LaHaye

Growing kids with character 2.0 by Hettie Brittz www.evergreenparenting.co.za

His needs, her needs by Willard F. Harley

WEBSITE TO VISIT

www.verywellfamily.com

3. Enhancing Closeness **Imparting Intimacy**

Intimacy is the special connection between two people where words are not always necessary and can be conveyed through body language, touch, voice tone and eye contact.

The intimacy between husband and wife creates the environment in which intimacy can be transmitted to the children. Children thrive in an atmosphere of harmony.

Intimacy is enhanced by:

- **Being connected with the eyes**

Since our eyes communicate connection or disconnection, we need to heed the way we look at each other. By watching Mom's eyes, even small children know if Mom is connected with Dad or not.

Children need to see and sense the intimacy between their father and mother to enable them to cultivate intimacy in their own marriages.

- **Praying together**

Couples that pray together stay together. This the only factor that decreases the statistics of divorce.

- **Building close relationships**

Our reputation, identity, future/destiny, calling, joy/disappointments, needs, fulfilment, desires, dreams, blessings are shared with the other person.

- **Sharing wounds**

Being transparent unites couples.

We are attracted to each other by our strengths, but we bond through our weaknesses.

- **Entering the most intimate space, the space of pain**

By modelling transparency to our children, we help them to become transparent.

- **Getting inside the room of the feeling**

Practice “feeling”-communication. Explore the feeling without giving solutions or advice to comfort the feeling. Stay in the room of the feeling until both parties are satisfied that the feeling has been understood and acknowledged.

To train yourself in intimacy if your mother hasn't imparted it to you since birth, is not an easy task. We sometimes need to practice hard staying in the room of the feelings of our spouse.

Menopause

- Menopause can be a tough experience for some women. You need to understand what's happening in your body and share it with your husband.
- Menopausal symptoms affect about 70% of women approaching menopause. These symptoms are caused by changing hormonal levels in the female reproductive system. Many women notice early symptoms while still having a period; this can start occurring in their early 40's.
- Symptoms can last for the whole menopause transition (until mid 50's); some women may even experience them for the rest of their lives.

- The most common symptoms are: hot flushes, night sweats, irregular periods, loss of libido, vaginal dryness (causing painful sex due to the thinning of the vaginal wall) and mood swings.
- Other changes like fatigue, memory lapses, depression and anxiety can also occur. (Google for more symptoms.)
- Consult your doctor concerning hormonal and herbal treatments of symptoms.

MOTHER AND CHILD INTIMACY

Intimacy between mother and child begins at conception

- Skin-on-skin contact, breast feeding, cuddling, touching, sharing of feelings and needs. (The first 1000 days, from conception until child's second birthday.)
- This early experience in intimacy paves the way for intimacy with fathers, extended family and friends later in life.

Intimacy protects

- The young child experiences safety in an atmosphere of trust and her needs being met. It is so important that the mother nurtures this relationship of trust, transparency and intimacy with her child.
- Children must feel free to discuss any problem with their mothers, being assured their mom trusts and believes them. This is especially important in cases of abuse. "I can trust Mommy to believe me."

Defining feelings

- Mothers are generally better at defining feelings. The mother must encourage and guide those children who struggle to give words to their emotions. Boys typically tend to struggle more in this area.
- Being able to verbalize their feelings will help our children connect with others.

Mother and son intimacy:

- Due to the present day attack on male gender, it is imperative that you as mother do all you can to prevent any possibility of gender confusion in your son.
- It is vital that you intentionally encourage the bonding between your son and his father from as early as 3 years.
- Nurture your connection with your son, but at 5 years old, he must know that he is "Daddy's boy".
- By the time he is 12 years old, he must not want to be like his mother! His father must be his hero and you must do all in your power to encourage this dynamic. "The boys" go out together, sleep out in the tent in the garden together, play rough games on the carpet or grass together.
- When the interests of your son and his father differ a lot, help them find things they can do together.

ACTION

How can I improve intimacy with my husband?

How can I improve intimacy with my child?

Improving connection by understanding the physical and emotional changes that our teenagers are going through.

(As you go through this list, mark which applies to your child and what you would like to do to support your child.)

12-13 Years

Physical

- Most of the girls start with their menstrual period. Some have started with their physical sexual development. For some is it a source of pride but for others a source of embarrassment and uncertainty. (No teasing)
- Some girls have reached the optimum height while the boys look sometimes shorter and younger
- The boys experience a brain spurt growth and catch up with the growth of the girls that started at 10 years.

Social

- Rite of passage. Moving from child to group adventure phase.
- The group identity becomes very important to them!! Leading to peer pressure.
- They explore styles (Hair, clothes, hobbies and friends)
- They start to question authority and push back on rules.

Emotional

- This is usually the time that they graduate from junior school to secondary/high school. This brings a time of uncertainty and vulnerability as they need to adjust and make new friends. They find themselves now the youngest in the school in place of the leaders in the junior school.

The school might also be a much bigger school which could be daunting for them.

- With this extra stress they also have to cope with their hormonal and physical changes in their body.
- When the mother reprimands her son, it is important that she acts in a calm respectful manner. If not, she runs the risk of her son shutting down (stonewalling) or backing off. She will lose connection with him and fail to teach him how to behave in an accepted manner.

14-15 years

Physical:

- Most of the 14-year old girls have experienced their menstrual periods and some boys have experienced nocturnal emissions (wet dreams).
- Their changing bodies/ their **sexual development** can become a cause of pride or concern.
- Late developing and undisciplined eating may cause body image issues. (obesity and skin problems)

Social

- By 15 years, very aware of their sexuality and show a budding interest in sexual activities. Some may focus predominantly on their romantic interest and may become totally absorbed in it.
- Socially the TEAM-age stage is well established. All the essential team qualities should have been learnt: different social styles and different team roles and where they fit themselves within the broader social construct. Should know how to create trustworthiness and what to avoid diminishing trust.
- Equipped with the needed relational skills of good communication, conflict handling and decision- making skills.
- Sometimes indicate that the parents know nothing as they strongly **disengage from parents** and engage with their friends.
- They want to spend an enormous **amount of time** with each other in all kinds of activities that bring them pleasure (social media interaction, video games, music, sports, movies, hobbies etc.) or just to talk and spend time together.
- They now prefer to get their advice from their **friends**

Emotional

- Although their **emotional intelligence** capacity will still be limited, major emphasis should be given to this.

16-18 Years

Physical

- The physical difference between boys and girls are never more apparent than at 16 years old. The girls are ending their growth phase while the boys are often still in it.
- By 18 most of the boys have reached their full height. Physical image is very important.

Social

- They enter **deeper into platonic or romantic relationships** in search for intimacy and may engage in sexual experimentation.
- Extremely conscious of social issues like drugs and racism.
- Due to less hormonal changes, some have a smoother ride into the future with less friction with the parents, although others may grow so attached to other key relationships that this may influence them greatly.

Cognitive

- Thoughts about the future of the adult world, especially when they set out to get a driver's license, may add stress.
- They often vary between being philosophical, idealistic or downright confused about the future.

Emotional

- At 18 they are more open to seek adult advice and take up adult responsibilities and manage emotions in an acceptable manner.

What can we do to support our Team-agers in this time of turmoil?

Emotional

Teenage Girls:

- Teenage girls need a lot of emotional support due to the trauma they experience through the hormonal upheaval their bodies are going through.
- This can be very daunting and tiring for the mother who may be struggling with emotional issues of her own (menopause).
- The birth into adolescence is that of a half-girl, half-woman and like her first birth, it is a neurologically traumatic crisis.
- Although half-adult, the teenage girl is very vulnerable, emotionally and physically.
- Research shows that a good connection with your daughter between 8-13 years will help counter rebellion at 15, typically the year of the deepest mother-daughter-discomfort.

Handling sadness:

- Most girls will experience a form of sadness in the 3rd and 4th week of their menstrual cycle (PMS). This is normal.
- If the sadness persists for more than 2 months, look for a trigger: increased stress possibly caused by the death of a loved one, loss of a girlfriend/boyfriend, divorce, trauma at school or changes like moving house and school.
- Give lots of love, hugs, talks. Help her eat healthily and exercise regularly, listen to her.
- Explore any feelings of shame and blame.
- Alert others to help, e.g. Table of Support, extended family.
Get professional help if necessary

Handling anger:

- It is vital that the mother remains calm when confronted with outbursts of anger. She must stay in control and not compete with her daughter. If she cannot control her anger she must take time to cool down.
- Respect must be returned to the relationship (if needed) by reprimanding any disrespectful behavior or statement.
- If the daughter is not reprimanded, she loses respect for the mother as well as self-esteem. (The father must take over the discipline when needed.)
- The way you handle your daughter's anger will give her a point of reference for handling her anger towards herself and others.

Stress:

- Teenagers usually do have a busy schedule and are already experiencing **stress** as a result of their physical and hormonal development. Watch out for academic stress. Deal with it at home and at school. Both can creep up on them slowly and be missed if we do not look out for them.
- Encourage physical exercise for both sexes for relaxation.
- Talk to your teenage boy about his stress build-up when he is not tired. The teenage girl will usually be ready at any time for talks over coffee or a hot chocolate.

Danger signs

- Watch out for danger signs indicating high stress, e.g. sudden changes in mood, quietness and withdrawing, eating and/or sleeping problems, sudden aggression and violent behavior at school that spills over at home.
- Look out for danger signs, e.g. withdrawal from the family, a drop in academic performance, strange eating habits, cutting...
- Be aware of your son's feelings of "I do not match up to my peers" or "I do not feel or look cool." Look for signs of prolonged sadness, which could fore- run depression

Social

- Since testosterone is also responsible for competitive and boisterous behavior, it can lead to **bullying**. Any small, seemingly under-developed boy is bound to suffer at the hands of bigger boys at some time. If your boy is one of the unlucky victims, it will be good to get your husband to talk to him about what it means to be a man and that size does not matter. If your son is not coping, it might be wise to speak to the school as well as the parents of the bully concerned
- Some teenagers can be nasty by **victimizing** and shaming individuals via social platforms like Instagram or Snapchat - often with devastating results.
- Our teenagers today are exposed to intense over-stimulation due to social media.
- Limit the use of cell phones, **technology**, media and movies. Do not allow TV or internet usage in their bedrooms, as you cannot monitor what they are watching. It also isolates them from the rest of the family.

Handling fixed rebellion:

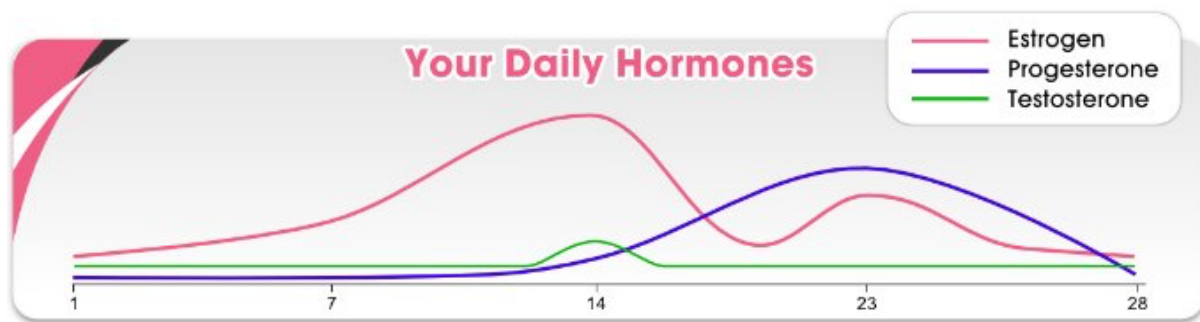
- Firstly, uphold your child in prayer, as rebellion is a serious affair. "*Cursed is anyone who despises his father and mother*". (Deut. 27:16; 1 Sam.15:23.)
- Enlist help from their Table of Support, extended family, mentor, coach or teachers.
- Stick to family rules and values at all cost with the help of the father. Your child needs that stability!
- Keep calm and change tactics sometimes. Pick your fights or negotiate, but do not compromise on Biblical values or ethics (e.g. integrity, trust, safety...)
- Spend time with your child, try their favorite past time or outing: coffee dates, walks and sport event.
- They must know that they are loved, despite their behavior.

Physical

The behavior of the teenage girl is determined by:

- Hormones and hormonal connections in the brain.
- Environment (extreme environmental stimulants like sexual abuse can rewire brain circuits, overriding genetic personality). Cortisol.
- Genetic personality is the make-up she has inherited from you and your husband.
- As mother, you must get informed about any possible physical and emotional changes in your daughter before she turns 10 years old, usually around the time adolescence starts.

The Menstrual Cycle of the Teenage Girl: An opportunity to connect.



- This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with your daughter as you explain to her what she is going through.

Understanding those Hormones:

Growth hormone: for physical development.

Estrogen: for sexual development and feeling good.

Progesterone: for sexual development, pregnancy preparation and bonding.

Testosterone: for aggression, sex drive, daring and impulsiveness. (20% less than boys.)

- Mothers must understand and know the cycle of their daughters. Women usually have a 28-day cycle, with day 1 the start of the menses. Some girls can have a longer or shorter cycle or even skip a month.
- During the first 14 days estrogen and progesterone are high. Your daughter will likely be feeling good, have lots of energy, be self-assured, impulsive and have less of an appetite (good time for healthy eating).
- She is also looking for connection and intimacy. This is a good time to have long walks together, visit the coffee shop and do shopping. A good connection and transparency with her will pave the way for her to trust you when she needs advice with relationships. When she falls in love, hopefully Mom is the first to know.
- During the last 3rd and the 4th week of her cycle (between day 14 and 28), her mood will change. Her hormone levels are dropping, and she might become moody, lethargic, lose self-esteem. Brain capacity drops and appetite for junk food increases.
- This is the time to explain why she is feeling so terrible and emotional. Have extra patience with her.
- Mark her dates in your diary, as she will tend to be more emotional and argumentative during this time. Remind her to relax more and to be extra careful regarding arguments and decision making in this time. Remember, stress will make her mood swings much worse.

Hormonal changes in the teenage boy:

- The dominant hormone in teenage boys is **testosterone**, responsible for sexual development. Not all boys develop at the same rate, some are early and others are late.
- Testosterone is also responsible for competitive, rowdy, energetic, impulsive and risky behavior – all normal in young boys.
- It is good to know that his sex drive peaks between 16 and 18 years. Ensure that your husband has spoken to him about wet dreams and masturbation. (This is included in the Fatherhood-training.)

Teenage boy in general:

- Teenage boys are generally not known for their **listening abilities**. They appear to only listen to or hear what they choose to hear. We often see this in grown men too, especially when they are watching sports on TV or catching up with the news. The wise mother will need to touch her son on the arm; make eye contact to ensure that he hears what she is telling or asking him.
- Our teenagers live in a society where a high value is placed on **outward appearance**. Teenage boys have just emerged from the pre-adolescent stage where super heroes have super bodies. Today, more than ever, a lot of attention is given to male hair styles, muscle building supplements and tattoos. Do not encourage your son in his early teens to do extensive weight training. This could be dangerous. All weight training should rather be done at a later stage and under supervision. Affirm your son and remind his father to do it too. Praise his good points and build his self-esteem.

Cognitive

The Teenage Girl

- Brain development (10 – 16 years) A growth spurt occurs in connections in the frontal lobe.
- Cerebral cortex grey matter doubles (10 – 12 years).
Able to take on new skills, insights, abstract concepts.
It is important that she is exposed to relationships, sports, the arts and advanced academic learning options as these can stick or reappear later in life (10 – 12 years).

The **brain development of the boys** has usually a growth spurt around the age of 12 years where they catch up with the girls.

Both boys and girls:

- Find a quiet time to throw in some hints about God's dream for marriage and why virginity is so special. Encourage your husband to do the same. A purity pledge event can also be planned, perhaps for a group of their friends or through the youth group at the church. This can also occur at their rite of passage event. This can be a wonderful opportunity to draw them closer through your affirmation of their qualities, family identity and family values.

- Involve them in family meetings. Give them a turn to chair the meeting and set the agenda.
- Do not let go on discipline. Teenagers need good structure and discipline. It is here where Dad plays a big role, with your support

(Fill in the Child Planner form at the end of chapter 9 to plan your course of action to assist your child/ren by using the items you have marked in the above list.)

How can I improve intimacy with my teenager?

BOOKS TO READ

The wonder of girls by Michael Gurian.

The wonder of boys by Michael Gurian.

Bringing up boys by James Dobson.

Sacred marriage by Gary Thomas.

Sacred influence by Gary Thomas.

WEBSITE TO FOLLOW

www.verygoodfamily.com

4 Developing Connectedness and Compassion

Belonging is the deepest need of any human being

“Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tim. 5:8)

God has created us to love and to be loved. Our most fundamental needs are to love and to belong. Today the mother with young children still plays the role of gelling the family together. The mother has traditionally been responsible for the maintenance of the family's and personal social networks. This tends to come naturally to her, as she often has the highest relational skills and needs. Her skill for multitasking helps her keep track of family needs, events, birthdays, immunizations, family reunions - and the grocery list!

Family ties

It is the mother that models the importance of keeping family ties strong within her own family unit. Her example will help inspire her children to do the same.

Birthdays, anniversaries and special days like Christmas must be celebrated together as a family. Special achievements of each child must be celebrated, as this grows family cohesion. Regular family meetings are important too.

Extended family

The mother should also model the importance of reaching out to her wider family, socially or when they are in need (1 Tim 5:4,8).

Monitoring social behavior:

- The mother encourages social interaction from an early age with her baby. Even in the small baby, one can see how some babies are at home with strangers and how some are very uncomfortable. It is important to help your introvert from a young age to learn how to socialize.
- Watch how your child plays with others and assist him when he needs to share his toys - which for some, is very difficult.
- Negative or overly aggressive behavior must be dealt with as soon as possible or referred to a professional if the problem persists.
- Discovering their social “fit”.

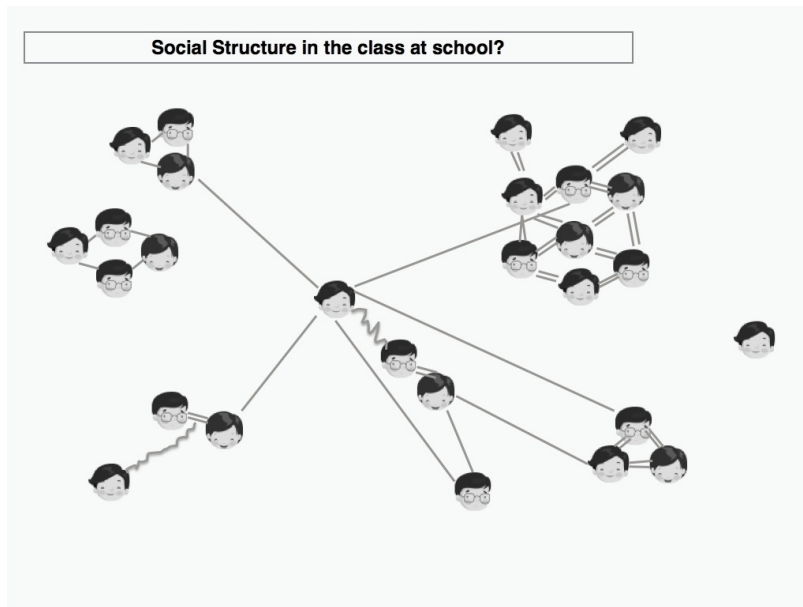
HOMEWORK

Ask your child to draw the social structure of his class at school (see diagram overleaf).

Double lines denote stronger relationships; zigzag lines denote broken relationships. Gender and names of other children, as well as the position of your own child must be indicated.

As a parent, you can learn a lot from the drawing, e.g. the perceived social position of your child/teen within the group (isolated, team member or leader).

This information can also help you develop emotional intelligence in your child, e.g. helping him recognize and manage his own and others' emotions.



Social isolation:

- If you see that your child has many friends and is connecting with others, you can relax. If your child only has one or two friends and seems isolated, you will have to investigate.
- One of the worst things that a teenager can feel is to be left out and alone.

Supporting social interaction:

- Invite their friends to your home and ensure there is enough interesting games and food available. (Get to know the friends' parents as well.)
- Invite a few of their friends for a camping weekend, attending a ball game etc.
- Invite the whole class to your child's birthday party. (Break the cliques.)
- After the friends have left, discuss relevant social interactions with your child. Coach them where necessary. Highlight good and poor interactions. Remember: affirmation is the best teacher!

Befriend their friends:

- For girls: a makeup session, sleep-over, baking...
- For boys: sport in the backyard, a fishing trip together...
- Encourage your child to not only look for friends, but to be a friend - and especially, to reach out to a lonely child in the class.
- Be an example by inviting people to your home where your children can see how you socialize and reach out to others.

Beware of the dangers of social media and technology:

- No other generation has experienced more access to media and information than the present one. We as parents must get informed, as information technology will only advance more rapidly as time progresses.
- Today, social networks are trying to fill the need of belonging. Yet, in the process many people who join them become more isolated. Children are

caught up in the need to communicate via text, which actually isolates them physically from their friends. It is not unusual seeing teenagers walking alongside one another while texting someone else!

- In an article in *TIME* (7/11/16) titled *The kids are not all right*, Susanna Schrobsdorff writes: “Teenagers are in a cauldron of stimulus they cannot get away from, or don’t want to get away from, or don’t know how to get away from. Every fight or slight is documented online for hours or days. They can be immersed in a painful emotional tangle with dozens of their classmates.”
- Some teenagers can be nasty by out-casting and targeting individuals over Instagram or Snapchat.
- In a column in *TIME* (7/11/16) titled *The View*, Markham Heid quotes Dr. David Hill, chairman of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP): “Keep babies, toddlers and young children away from screens, with the exception of video chatting with parents and loved ones, especially when they are away for extended periods of time. For school going children, parents must pay attention to content and decide what is appropriate for their children. Parents must set the example and set limits for putting down the media like during meal times and at bedtime.”
- Cellphone addiction has more to do with obsessing over the “connection experienced” than the instrument itself.
- Know what is Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat etc. which can all be accessed from a phone.
- Be aware of serious dangers like pornography, violence and anti-Christian content.
- Limit intake of aggressive (or competitive) media: If your child has a problem with aggressive behavior, stop his viewing of this type of programming. The general consensus amongst researchers on this topic is that while violent or competitive media doesn’t cause passive children to become violent, it does exacerbate latent aggressive tendencies.
- Be aware of viruses and potential pitfalls of buying over the internet.
- Be very transparent with your child concerning boundaries etc. It is better to work things out with your child, than them doing things behind your back.
- *Digital cocaine* by Brad Huddleston is an excellent read for every parent wanting to understand the dangers of internet addiction (gaming, pornography, multi-tasking etc).

ACTION

DISCUSS IN GROUPS: How can I make my home more “screen-free”?

Make a list of what you plan to do to make your home more “screen-free”:

Significant Adults in your Child's Life

- Your child is **enriched** by every significant adult he or she spends time with.
- Often the mother (with her knowledge of people) is able to pick out the best coach, school teacher or sports club.
- She must be on the look out for **mentors** for her child, even from as young as the age of 11. The mentor should be in the next life season, ideally around 5 years older.
- From 22 years, the gap can jump to 10 years. The mother must know this person, as she must be familiar with the family's **value system**.
- The value of the **Table of Support** cannot be emphasized enough! (See diagram in chapter 7.) When times are tough, a child must have a safety net of people that can offer support. If the child is isolated, the problem intensifies.

QUESTIONS ASKED BY TEENAGERS

GIRLS:

- Do my peers like me?
- Am I desirable? Do guys like me?
- Will I find a husband?
- Am I beautiful?
- Where do I fit?
- Where do I belong in my family and amongst my peers at school?

BOYS:

- What is a real man?
- When will I be considered a man?
- Have I got what it takes?

Assure your teenager of your love and support.

Affirm, affirm, affirm!

Remind your husband/father figure to affirm too.

"I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will guide you and watch over you". (Ps 32:8)

Modelling altruism/compassion:

- We as mothers generally have a natural caring instinct that leads us more intuitively towards acts of altruism and compassion.
- Caring for others must be modelled for our children. It is good to take your children with you when someone has to be cared for, or have them join you as you prepare a meal for someone in need. We should model altruism throughout our children's lifetime.

- *"You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate"* (Luke 6:36)
- We can teach our children much about love in the way we **care for our** animals, e.g. washing, walking and feeding our pets. Even wild and dangerous animals must be respected and cared for.
- Teach your children about the **preservation** of endangered species.
- We should teach our kids to be **good stewards** of the earth. Children must help with recycling and the care of hazardous material. Imprint in them the value of conservation, planting vegetables, composting and sprouting. All this will only happen if you model it!

PRAYER

PRAY IN GROUPS:

1. *"You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate."* (Luke 6:36). Pray this for your family.
2. Pray that your children will choose friends who follow Christ. Pray that they will desire to marry Christian spouses. *"Don't be teamed with those who do not love the Lord."* (2 Cor. 6:14).

BOOK TO READ

Digital cocaine by Brad Huddleston (The dangers of media addiction)

Go to www.bradhuddleston.com to order the book or for more information.

HOMEWORK

Discuss with your husband how to make your home more screen-free.

5. Creating a Space of Worship

Being the Primary Homemaker

A space of worship is a place of harmony, peace and belonging where God is present and glorified. A place where every member feels free to partake in communal worship of everyday life.

- Home is where I can be myself, where I can recharge and where I feel safe and accepted.
- Home must be a space where we all want to return to. All of us, irrespective of our age, long for a place that we can call home. It is the mother that creates this "welcome home"-feeling.

- A house can belong to one person, but a home must belong to everybody that enters it.

Home is a place:

- A place where your husband can't wait to return to after work. A place that calls him to join you and the children. A place of rest, recharge and togetherness.
- It must be a place for babies and toddlers to safely explore and enjoy.
- A place for little girls to dress up, play dolls, bake mud pies and do crafts.
- A place for boys to rough and tumble, wrestle with Dad on the carpet, collect tadpoles and grow silkworms, hamsters, snakes and rabbits.
- A place where the teenage girl can relax, feel cherished, wanted, accepted, understood and loved unconditionally.
- A place where the teenage boy can relax, empty the fridge, watch sport, invite friends for a party, feel wanted, respected and loved.

ACTION

DISCUSS: How can I create more of a “welcome home”-feeling in my home? _____

Winning the heart of our teenagers. (Taken from “The age of opportunity by Paul D Tripp.)

If the heart does not change, any behavioral changes that take place will be temporary and cosmetic, because they will not be attached to roots in the heart.

- Many parents fear the teenage years. They fear that their teenager will rebel against them.
- Parents must understand that teenagers are faced with many **desires and temptations** that can cause them to rebel:
The desire to be an individual and think for oneself,
The desire for freedom and to try new things,
The desire to test the boundaries and to control.
The desire to make one's own decisions,
The desire to be different, to fit in and to be accepted and as a result conform to their peers' expectations in place of those of their parents'.
- The teenage years must be seen rather as an **opportunity** to guide their teens through life's challenges, to interpret life correctly and to live their lives with a

moment by moment consciousness of God rather than to attempt to control the behavior of the teenager.

- To do this it is therefore vital that we as parents are aware of the things that prevent us from utilizing this opportunity.
- Paul D Tripp says that there are “idols “ that parents have that influence their response and behavior towards their teenager.

1 The Idol of Comfort. The parent reasons that they have the right to quiet harmony, peace and respect and react in anger when they do not receive it. They see their teen as a threat to their comfort and see the teen as the enemy. There is a war out there but they have misplaced the enemy.

2 The Idol of Respect. Parents attempt to enforce respect at all costs.

3 The Idol of Appreciation. Some parents expect their teenagers to show a little appreciation for all that they do and all that they have sacrificed for them. When this becomes too important for the parent it is time to have some retrospection. Is my need for gratification more important than the spiritual condition of my teenager?

4 The Idol of Success. The parent wants to show to the world that they have succeeded in parenting. When the teenager misbehaves, the parent becomes angry as they have lost their reputation as a successful parent. The parent is more concerned about their loss than the teenager’s relationship with God.

5 The Idol of Control. Parents dream of being able to control their teenagers but is this the best thing for them and is total control possible?

Tripp says that the goal of parenting is to raise children who were once totally dependent on us to be independent, mature people who, with reliance on God and proper connectedness to the Christian community, are able to stand on their own two feet.

It is not the goal of parenting to retain tight fist control over our children in an attempt to guarantee their safety and the parent’s sanity.

The goal of parenting and the door of opportunity.

- The goal is to be used of him to instill in our children an ever-maturing **self control** through the principles of the Word and to allow them to exercise ever-widening circles of choice, control and independence.
- If the **hearts** of the parents are ruled by comfort, respect, appreciation, success and control, they will view their teenagers as frustrating, disappointing irritants and will react with anger.

- No, instead the parents must see every challenge and moments of struggle as **God given doors of opportunity** to minister to their spiritual and emotional needs. Every challenge must be seen as a learning opportunity to grow and nurture their teens.
- It is a time to Jump into battle and **move towards your teenagers**. It is a time for engagement, interaction, discussion and committed relationship.
It is not a time to leave the teenager alone with his/her doubts, fears and failures.
It is a time to pursue, love, encourage, teach, forgive, confess and forgive and accept.
It can be a wonderful time with your teenager!

ACTION

DISCUSS: What idol has prevented me from empowering, encouraging and supporting my teenager and how will I react differently from now on?

The Importance of Shared Meals, Traditions and Family Time

- In Acts 2: 46-47 we read of the significance of shared meals amongst believers: *'Each day, (they) met in small groups in homes for communion and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness.'* It is apparent that having meals together was an integral part of their fellowship.
- Research by Dr. Blake Bowden of Cincinnati Children's Hospital found: When a family ate a meal together for no less than 5 times per week, the occurrence of drug addiction, depression and problems with the law amongst teenage boys was improbable. The interaction that happens during meal times is far more important than the meal itself and where the meal happens. It is the formation of family relationships that is so important for our teenagers.
- When families eat together, it can form the basis for family traditions. E.g. in our family, we have a special menu for Christmas lunch. On that day, the cousins, aunts and uncles play games like table tennis. On Christmas Eve, we have a meal, a special time of prayer, Bible reading and the opening of presents. These traditions are passed down from generation to generation.

The Faith of the Mother

“and forsake not your mother’s teaching.” (Prov. 6:20.21-23)

“... a woman who fears and reverences God shall be greatly praised” (Prov. 31:30)

- We have heard in the first part of this training of the importance of the father's walk with Christ in representing Father God.
- The faith of the mother is a validation/confirmation of the faith of the father. Mommy confirms that Daddy’s faith is real. To do this, she must have a real, daily walk of faith herself. We cannot deceive our children. They know when we are real.
- Our children must see Jesus in us. Their faith depends a lot on ours. Be a model for keeping to your discipline of quiet time and worship. As mothers, we must **pour spiritual nourishment into the souls of our children**.

The Example of Mothers and Wives

“She is a woman of strength and dignity, and has no fear of old age. When she speaks, her words are wise and kindness is the rule for everything she says. Her children stand and bless her; so does her husband. He praises her with these words: 'There are many fine women in the world, but you are the best of them all!' ” (Prov. 31:25-26,28-29)

- We as mothers are the point of reference for our daughters in how to be a wife to her husband and a mother to her child(ren) one day.
- For our sons, we are the model for their future wife.
- We must model a Godly and healthy marriage relationship for our children for them to practice themselves one day.
- Your children might not admit it or even be aware of it, but subconsciously you are setting a certain standard that will be remembered by them.

“Let your light shine before men in such a way...” (Mat.5:16)

PRAYER

“Dear Lord, I want to be the person You designed me to be! I want to display the Divine design of Your female creation. I want to reclaim the Biblical female design that has been spoiled in the name of 'liberty'. True freedom, Lord, is to love, serve and worship You. I praise You for all the spiritual riches that You have

invested in my life. Thank You, Father, for Your Word that speaks to me and teaches me how to live. Thank You, Father, for the husband that You have given me. Help me, Lord, to create a space where he wants to be near to me and the children; a special space where he feels respected, wanted and cherished and where he senses Your Presence. Father, I thank You for the children that you have gifted me with. Help me create a special place for each one of them. A place where they feel nurtured, nourished and dearly loved. Help me to be a Godly mother. Holy Spirit, come and take control of my life. Instill in me Your fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal.5:22). Bless me with strength and dignity and with no fear of the future. Season my words with wisdom and kindness so that I can be an example to my husband and children (Prov.31:25,26). But Father, give me also the energy and calling to reach out beyond my home to the orphan, the widow and the single parent so that Your Kingdom can come to our nation. In the mighty Name of Jesus, Amen.”

Single mother:

“Dear Lord, I want to be the person You designed me to be! I want to display the Divine design of Your female creation. I want to reclaim the Biblical female design that has been spoiled in the name of 'liberty'. True freedom, Lord, is to love, serve and worship You. I praise You for all the spiritual riches that You have invested in my life. Thank You, Father, for Your Word that speaks to me and teaches me how to live. Father, I thank You for the children that You have gifted me with. Help me create a special place for each one of them. A place where they feel nurtured, nourished and dearly loved. Help me to be a Godly mother. Holy Spirit, come and take control of my life. Instill in me Your fruits: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal.5:22). Bless me with strength and dignity and with no fear of the future. Season my words with wisdom and kindness so that I can be an example to my children (Prov.31:25,26). But Father, give me also the energy and calling to reach out beyond my home to others in need so that Your Kingdom can come to our nation. In the mighty Name of Jesus, Amen.”

HOMEWORK

List and pray for all things that the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to do or change in order to “build your house of worship”.

BOOKS TO READ

“The age of opportunity by Paul D Tripp.

“God, Marriage and Family” by Andreas J. Köstenberger.

Chapter 12

Fighting This Fight Together

Beyond the Borders of my House

- We will win battles, but lose the war if we only try to address the problem of fatherlessness within our own homes.
- Our time calls for substitute father, mentoring families, foster care, adoption, extended families and sport coaches who will take up the responsibility of life-coaching in society.
- We need the common will to all step beyond the borders of our comfort zone and father the fatherless!
- Passion is created in the tension between the crisis and the vision.
- We have a crisis of fatherlessness: We have the vision of a Promised land by applying the fundamental responsibilities as taught in this book. Let us therefore step passionately forth into our responsibilities.

Personal Note

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