Marriage Enrichment



Lesson Topic: Parenting

Week One Homework

The homework for Week One will help you deepen your understanding that children are a gift, heritage and blessing from God. You will also learn more about what we can do to prepare for having children.

(Please Note: even if you don’t plan on having children or you are unable to have children, this topic may be relevant to you since you may someday adopt a child or God may put you in a place of having significant influence in a child’s life!)

**Scripture Memory Verse:** “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6 ESV):

**In the Word Together**

Read and discuss the following verses with your spouse:

1. What do the following verses teach you about parenting?
* Psalm 127: 1-5
* Proverbs 17:6

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1. Timing is usually the first question a couple considers as they think about having children. Praying together about the timing for starting a family is critical. You may never really feel quite “ready” to have children and become parents! What do the following verses teach you about God’s Sovereignty and His timing in your lives?
* Genesis 12:2-4 and 21:5 (How long did Abraham “wait” for the promised child?)
* Psalm 113:9
* Phil 4:5-7

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1. Couples often wonder if financially they can afford a baby. You should be wise with your finances and plan accordingly (as you will learn when we discuss finances) but you should also balance that with your faith and trust in the Lord. What does this verse tell you about your financial concerns?
* Phil 4:19

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**Talk About It Together:**

Discuss the following questions with your spouse and write down your shared responses.

1. In Large Group, you learned that God desires to build your home with children. They are a heritage and blessing from the Lord. In what specific ways do you think that children are a blessing from the Lord to their parents?

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1. What do you as a couple think is a necessary amount of money to have saved before you would be comfortable becoming parents? What can you do now to be more financially prepared to become parents?

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1. Just as you need to be good stewards of our finances, we also need to be good stewards of your fertility and energy. What might it mean to be a “steward of your fertility and energy” and how might that impact your timing for having children?

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1. Children learn from their parent’s behavior and mimic their parents actions and words. I Corinthians 3:10-11 (ESV) says, "According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation…Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” What can you do, separately and together with your spouse, to properly lay a strong spiritual foundation in your home, even before becoming parents?

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1. Think of a godly couple you may know who have raised their children in a way that honored the Lord and talk about what you noticed. Discuss the things that you both consider important in raising God-honoring children.

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1. One of the ways that you can prepare for parenting is to be on the same page with your spouse. As you move towards “oneness” in parenting, invest time during this month to talk about the following questions/issues:
2. What do you think is the ultimate goal in raising children together?
3. What fears, if any, do you have about raising children?
4. What habits or ways of parenting would you like to encourage or discourage?
5. What kinds of discipline do you both see yourselves using?
6. What type of education would you like for your children (public, Christian school, home school)?
7. How involved do you want your extended families to be in your children’s lives?
8. What will you do to connect with your children as a couple and individually as a mother or a father?
9. How important will sports and other activities be for your children? What if it conflicts with attending church or other commitments at church?
10. Do you want your children to have a stay-at-home mom?

**Recommended Practical Ideas to Prepare for Parenting:**

* As a way of practicing to be parents, offer to babysit for another couple or consider serving at church caring for children. Talk over the experience afterwards and share your insights with each other.
* Although you may feel your schedule is very full as a newly married couple, having children will fill that schedule up even more. Start laying a pattern now to make your marriage a priority by setting aside regular time alone together. Plan a scheduled “alone” time at least twice a month and be accountable to continue doing this even after children arrive. This doesn’t have to involve spending a lot of money (even a walk together in a park or grabbing a cup of coffee would be good) but it does involve being ALONE (no family or friends!!). Think about who you might be able to depend on down the road to watch children so that you can keep this commitment going! Put some upcoming dates on your calendar now.

**Recommended Additional Resources to Read:**

* “The Duties of Parents” by J.C. Ryle
* “Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family” by Paul David Tripp
* “Shepherding a Child’s Heart” by Tedd Tripp
* “Start Your Family: Inspiration for Having Babies” by Steve & Candice Watters (Moody Publishers)
* “What the Bible Says About Parenting: Biblical Principles for Raising Godly Children” by John MacArthur

The following books were mentioned during the Large Group talk in regards to the mission of parenting being disciple making. Strive to be an expert at knowing and living out the Gospel for your children.

* “What is the Gospel” by Greg Gilbert
* “Gospel Primer” by Milton Vincent
* “Holiness” by J.C. Ryle

**Breakout Time – Please come prepared to talk about the following:**

1. Following up from your goals from last month, what have you done to protect the sexual intimacy in your marriage?

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1. What has the Lord taught you in your personal times with him this past week? What are you reading and how many days were you in the word and prayer?

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1. Was there something that you personally identified in your answer to Question 4 from the Homework as far as something you can do to properly lay a strong spiritual foundation in your home even before becoming parents?

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1. Goal for Oneness This Week: From Question #6 from the Homework: Was there any specific question/topic from the list that you discussed with your spouse that was hard to come together in Oneness? Is there something that you need to turn over to the Lord and humbly work through with your spouse to come together in oneness about this issue?

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1. What is the Lord leading you to pray about this week for your marriage specifically in the area of parenting?

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