

# Bulletin

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Happy Fourth of July!

## RECIPE FOR A GOOD MARRIAGE

BY JIM DALY

MY WIFE, JEAN, AND I APPROACH RECIPES DIFFERENTLY. JEAN HAS A degree in biochemistry and thinks in terms of precise calculations. To her, recipes are a detailed road map to be carefully followed. If the instructions call for one cup of flour, she'll measure exactly one cup. She'll even use a knife to scrape off the excess.

I, on the other hand, am a free spirit. To me, recipes aren't "a road map to follow" as much as "a few things to keep in mind." I measure ingredients . . . but not very carefully.

Despite our differences, Jean and I have learned that if we allow each other to bring our unique flair to a recipe, we usually end up with something we both enjoy.

We approach our *marriage* that way too. We're different from each other. She's an introvert. I'm an extrovert. She's a night owl. I'm a morning person. Nevertheless, we come together on this point: There is no detailed recipe for making a marriage work.

Except this: Fill up your relationship with as much *love* and *respect* as you can. When you get *those* ingredients in the correct proportions, your marriage will thrive, even if other parts of your relationship could use some adjustment.

Like with recipes, if you honor each other's differences, you'll cook up something in your marriage that you'll both enjoy.

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Tough  
Questions  
from Kids

What's so  
bad about  
cheating in  
sports?





# PLAN YOUR VACATION AND IMPROVE YOUR MARRIAGE

Most couples dread planning a summer vacation. But what if planning your time away could actually strengthen your marriage?

## TIME TO DREAM TOGETHER

You can always learn more about your husband or wife, and vacation planning is a fun opportunity to do it. Ask your spouse where he or she has always wanted to vacation. If this gold-medal destination seems impossible, what might a silver- or bronze-medal trip look like? Encourage each other to “lie on your back and look at the clouds” as the two of you dream about where you would like to go and what you would like to do.

Be candid about your excitement—or about your hesitation to commit the time, money and effort. Respect each other’s honesty and see what you can do to address issues together.

## HONORING YOUR SPOUSE

You and your spouse probably enjoy vacations for different reasons: the excitement, the getaway, the chance to reconnect, the new foods, the pretty sights, the lack of chores, visiting others or seeing new places. A summer vacation is a great opportunity to honor your husband or wife.



- If your wife likes solitude, but most of the trip is hectic, can you take the kids one evening while she enjoys a bath and a good book?
- If your husband isn’t a fan of theme parks but makes the effort, can you show him your appreciation by giving him time to get away and power down for a bit?
- If you love returning to the same place year after year, but you know your spouse would prefer a new adventure, can you find a day-trip option to honor his or her personal preferences too?
- If your spouse worries a lot about money, have you explored the benefits of an all-inclusive vacation that would remove the pain of watching credit cards swiped right and left?

After you pull safely back into your garage at home, your marriage will be stronger. Sure, the piles of laundry will be daunting, and you’ll be a bit exhausted, but you will feel a sense of victory. You worked together on a shared, specific project, keeping a united front and honoring each other’s differences. Now that’s quite a trip!

—Scott and Bethany Palmer

*School is out, and summer has begun!* In the midst of lazy days and family together time, consider fun ways you can help keep your kids' brains from losing what they've already learned. Here are a couple of educational and motivational ideas from other parents to help your children beat summer learning loss this year.

## KEEP TWEENS ACTIVE

Summer offers a welcome change of pace for families, but it's not easy to keep kids active and engaged. What to do? Structure is the key. Not a get-up-early-and-go-nonstop kind of structure, but one that provides schedules to follow, lists to mark off and projects to complete.

Before the last day of school, our family makes three lists. First, a list of fun summer activities such as library visits, swimming adventures and picnic lunches. Next, a list of chores done once or twice a year, such as washing windowsills, cleaning out closets and organizing bathroom drawers. Our last list includes projects that require thinking or giving, such as planning a vacation, redecorating a bedroom and volunteering for an activity to help those in need.

We compile all this information, then make a daily routine and a weekly project list on a printed calendar. Each kid has a copy of the calendar in his room, along with a marker to chart his progress.

—Marcy Lytle

## PREVENT THE SUMMER SLIDE IN READING

Students lose an average of one month of academic learning over the summer break, according to research from the RAND Corporation. To prevent this "summer slide," make reading a part of your family's summer fun.

**Read together:** My husband and I each choose one book in our kids' favorite series and read alongside them. Reading from their area of interest gives us a glimpse into their world and leads to great discussions.

**Make research fun:** Going on vacation? Research your destination. Challenge the kids to find one fun fact about local history or animal life and gather information on possible places to explore.

**Take advantage of library reading programs:** Many libraries have fun incentives. Our library sponsors prize giveaways and social events for tweens.

**Start a book club:** Choose a popular title, and invite your kids and their friends to read along. Organize a get-together close to summer's end that includes food, fun and discussion.

—Shannon Hale



# FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

**I'd like to model God to my children, but it's a tall order. What's your advice?**

## ANSWER:

The best way to model God to our kids is to look at how God parents His own children and then imitate what we see. The book of Hebrews offers key insights into God's parenting style. It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" (12:5-6).

God loves us and wants what's best for us. Because He cares so deeply, He disciplines us when we need it. He loves us too much to

let us continue down the wrong paths. God allows us to experience difficulties and hardship because, with His help, our problems then grab our attention and steer us back on course. Hebrews 12:5-6 perfectly illustrates how God balances the tension between loving us, His children, unconditionally, and teaching us the consequences of sin.

This, to me, is creative parenting. Yet it can be a difficult model for us, as earthly parents, to follow. It's tempting after a long day at work for us, and an equally taxing day at school for our children, to "cut them some slack" when we get home. "After all," we rationalize, "we get so little time to be

together. I don't want them to feel that all I do is bark at them." We have once again fallen prey to the false assumption that we can demonstrate our love better by giving in to our children than by holding a firm line.

Too often we assume that if we exercise our God-given authority as parents to discipline our children, they won't love us. We think love means never making them unhappy. In reality, it means doing what's best for them—even when that requires unpleasant consequences.

(Adapted from *Creative Correction* by Lisa Whelchel)

## TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

### ANSWER:

**Sometimes, it can seem as if winning a game is the most important thing in the world. But nothing is so important that we should cheat to get it, because God wants us to be honest, truthful and fair in all that we do. We should do our best, play fair and clean, and enjoy the game. That's much more important than winning or losing.**

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