

Bulletin

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The Splendor of September!

DO HER EYES SPARKLE?

BY JIM DALY

THEY SAY THE EYES ARE A WINDOW TO THE SOUL. MEN, IF THAT'S true, then what are your wife's eyes telling you? What you see in *her* eyes might very well depend on what she sees in *yours*.

When the apostle Peter admonishes husbands to love their wives in 1 Peter 3:7, he uses a poignant word for *wives* in the Greek that evokes images of delicate strength. The same word is often used to describe valuable artwork or elegant pottery. Peter encourages men to cherish their wives like they would a priceless treasure. Is *that* the image you have of your wife?

Most guys do well at cherishing their wives in the early days. They show affection and engage in heartfelt conversation. But somewhere along the way, guys give up the pursuit. Their primary focus shifts to work, hobbies or friends. And the sparkle in their wife's eyes fades.

The key to making your wife's heart come alive is to stop treating your relationship like a checklist or a stuffy rule book. A marriage thrives on desire, not obligation. Romance her. Cook her a candlelight dinner. Look her in the eye and engage her heart.

Are your wife's eyes alive and vibrant? The more you cherish your wife, the more she'll come to life. You'll see it in her eyes . . . because she'll see it in yours.

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

SEPTEMBER 21 Bulletin



**Tough
Questions
from Kids**

**Is it stealing
if a poor
person takes
food?**



FOUR WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR SPOUSE

Whether navigating a stressful season or just finding ourselves busy and distracted, my husband and I have discovered that we need some specific habits to stay emotionally close and keep romance strong. Here are some connection points that have worked best for us.

PRACTICE TOGETHERNESS

A great way to connect is by doing things together. Doing things together builds camaraderie and provides opportunities for deeper communication. Togetherness can also set the stage for romance and intimacy. Hold hands on your walk. Sit close to each other (and put away your phones) while you're watching the movie. Sleep turned toward each other. Close physical proximity can reinforce oneness in marriage.



FORGIVE FAST

Holding grudges is a great way to prolong feelings of disconnect. First Corinthians 13:5 says love “keeps no record of wrongs” (NIV). Loving like this is especially important when it comes to the petty ways we can offend each other on a daily basis.

When we keep track of the wrongs the other person has committed, that lack of forgiveness drives us apart instead of uniting us.

SMILE

Not long ago, I was challenged to intentionally smile at my husband at least once a day. When you smile you release serotonin, dopamine and endorphins—neurotransmitters that create feelings of happiness. Each time you smile, your body is sending signals of well-being to your brain. The clincher is, your spouse's brain is set to mimic your smile, and they get a big dose of feel-good signals too. The simple act of smiling at your spouse can make a big difference. And laughter is even better.

KEEP THE NEWLYWED VIBE

Remember how you felt when you first tied the knot? Back then, you may have felt like your spouse could do no wrong. While you may be a bit more realistic a few years later, feeling connected can be as simple as acting like newlyweds. Proverbs 5:18 tells men to “rejoice in the wife of your youth.” Treating your spouse as you did when you were “young and in love” increases your connection.

As we forge a deeper connection by spending time together, giving each other grace and finding delight in each other, we strengthen a bond that God will use both in our lives and in the lives of others.

—Suzanne Gosselin

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE

Today, we see many people, especially those in high-paid professional jobs, working 50 hours or more each week, leaving precious little time for their families. Here are a few ideas to help you establish an appropriate work/family balance.

WATCH THE SPEED LIMIT

The workplace values speed because speed increases productivity. Families don't thrive on speed and productivity, but rather, on love and communication.

It's important to know how to switch gears between the pace of work and home. That's what one London "speedaholic" parent learned. At first, he was excited to discover the concept of one-minute bedtime stories. "My first reaction was, *Yes! One-minute bedtime stories,*" he said. "My next thought was, *Whoa, has it really come to this?*" There is a place for speed, but we should always remember that

Jesus was *never* in a hurry—especially with children. Leave the speedy mindset at work and take time to relax at home with your family.



CALCULATE THE COST

"Opportunity cost" is the principle that whenever we spend time, money or energy on something, we lose the opportunity to spend that same time, money or energy on anything else.

A sustainable work/family balance suggests that we bias our opportunity costs in favor of the priorities that matter most, especially our families. A Seattle man was offered an international VP position in his firm. As a part of the job, he'd be required to answer his phone 24/7, 365 days a year. As he considered the promotion, he also thought about his family. Finally, with his children's violins playing in the background, he turned the job down. His balance would have been destroyed, and his time with the family would have suffered. The opportunity cost was just too high. When you make a decision at work, keep in mind the effect it will have on your home life.

CHERISH THE HOME

We all wish to have integrity in the workplace, and in an economic downturn our places of employment need invested workers. But our families are far too important—and fragile—to live on a diet of leftovers. If we are giving the least amount of time to those we value most, perhaps this is a wake-up call to slow down, to cultivate biblical contentment and to spend more time at home.

—Richard Swenson

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

It is important to keep your kids (and yourself) busy, right? Isn't the old saying "Idle hands are the devil's workshop" still appropriate?

ANSWER:

If you want children who value home and family, you must allow downtime so that your family isn't stressed at every turn. Opening your family's schedule—and *leaving* some of it open—gives your children time they need to form self-awareness and identity.

Downtime is not "free" time. When calls come asking you to volunteer, having time in your schedule doesn't mean you should feel guilty for turning them down. Your family needs unscheduled time; protect it as much as you would any

other event. That's true even if you don't have anything planned.

Needs will always arise at home—help with homework, trips to the store for school supplies, conversations on why watching a certain television show isn't healthy. Leave room and time for developing your family relationships.

Everybody needs downtime, not just toddlers. How can you tell if your child needs more downtime? Look for signs of exhaustion. If you go for a ride in the car, are they asleep before you've driven half a mile? Do they plant their face in the mashed potatoes at dinner?

Take a look at your child's schedule. Is it non-stop? It shouldn't be. Some

people advocate year-round school, for example, but I believe kids need summers off just to be kids. When I was growing up, every summer my friends and I built a raft in the creek near my house, and every summer our raft sank! None of us became an engineer (thank goodness!), but it was important for us to try. We invented games, held our own contests and organized neighborhood events. What we learned through those activities was invaluable.

Those are the kinds of things childhood should be made of, not ceaseless "programs" that try to force kids into a one-size-fits-all box.

(Adapted from *It's Your Kid, Not a Gerbil* by Kevin Leman)

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

There are many poor and hungry people in the world. But the poor were never told that they were allowed to steal food. God's people are supposed to help the poor. We should do whatever we can to help them (sending food, donating money to relief organizations) so they won't be tempted to steal food.

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