

Marriage check-up



Kid Proofing Your Marriage

Genesis 2:24

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If you have your Bibles, go to Genesis 2. We've been talking about marriage since January. We've been talking a lot about what marriage is, what it's for, and about husband and wife relationships. But this morning, I want to address what usually happens in marriage is that some additions come along. We call those additions children. So what do you do when you're married with kids? I remember when we had our first. We had little Crider and brought him home when he was a baby. We were told to baby proof our house. I didn't know what that meant and I didn't really see a reason why, because we laid him on a blanket and he just laid there. He wouldn't go anywhere, so why do we need to baby proof a house when he's not moving. A few months later, he began to rollover and crawl around, and I realized, whoa, there's a whole world that he knows about that I didn't know about. He tried to put every small thing in our house in his mouth. So we had to go on a babyproofing mission to get all the little things out of his way so he couldn't put them in his mouth. Then I noticed that he had an affection for light sockets. They are like tractor beams, and little kids want to stick their finger in it to see what happens. So we had to buy those little plastic covers and put them on the receptacles so he couldn't put his finger in it. So we were all good; the house was baby proofed. But then, he began to pull up on things. When he began to pull up on things, a whole new world of the house opened up. He would look for things on top of the next and he would try to pull those things down, so we had to go through the house and take all the breakable objects off the desk and move them where he couldn't reach them. The cabinets had to be locked up and secured. We had to constantly baby proof our home, and kid proof our home, as he got older and older.

So I was told to kid proof my house, but I was never told to kid proof my marriage. What I didn't realize is that just in the same way that I needed to protect Crider and my home from Crider. I needed to protect my marriage. The reason is because just as he was trying to get into everything, without even knowing it, he was also trying to wedge in between mommy and daddy. What often happens when we have a marriage with kids is that kids can actually, (though they are a blessing and an amazing, great thing) start to separate mommies and daddies. The focus goes off of the primary relationship of mom and dad, and goes to the secondary relationship of parent and kid. We take our eyes off of our spouse, and we only look to care for the kids. Then the love that we have as husband and wife begins to drift away. So what we want to say is that we want to kid proof our marriage so that doesn't happen.

Let's be honest...being married with kids is tough, it's difficult. I have four under the age of eight, so my morning usually starts about 3 a.m. with somebody crying. We try to figure out if Katie will go or whether I will go. Maybe Katie takes the first shift and at 5 she comes and gets me and I take the second shift from 5-7. The other kids wake up hungry. They need breakfast; they need clothes and get ready to go to school. Then we go through our day and after school, they need to be picked up. They have extra activities we take them to or drop them off to. We have to figure out who's going where and who's doing what. Then we get home and there is homework. We help them through their homework, and then it's dinnertime. We eat and try to hang out as a family and connect with God at night. Then we have baths, books, and bed. Finally, around 9 p.m., it is peaceful. But the only thing you want at that point is just to sit down on the couch and do nothing! "Don't talk to me, I just want to sit here." You are exhausted...that is kind of what parenting is like. Some of you are looking at me, rolling your eyes, and thinking *hmm...you think you have it hard, just wait until they get to be teenagers!* Then the crazy starts, right? We become taxi drivers and roommates; we high-five each other as we cross paths, texting each other saying, "I hope to see you sometime in the near future." If not, it's great, we have the kids, right?

That is kind of what parenting looks like. It can get out of control and it can get crazy. But I want to ask the question; is the way you are doing parenting what God really had in mind? Is it possible to raise kids and at the same time have a thriving marriage? Can both of those things be possible? Do you have to sacrifice your marriage in order to raise kids, or can you actually do both? Can you thrive in your marriage, while at the same time raise kids who know you love them, and who walk with the Lord? That is what we are going to talk about. Maybe you don't have kids, you aren't married, or maybe you are a single mom or dad and you might be thinking this won't relate to you. Though we are going to address specifically with husbands and wives, as a single parent, this is great information to impart to your children so when they grow up they will know how to do this properly to make sure we kid proof our homes so that our marriage thrives. If you are a grandparent, this is great wisdom to impart to your kids and for you to be enlisted to help out. If you are an empty nester, this might be good to look around and see some young couples here that you need to help out because you want to them to get their marriage right and put that number one. So if you aren't married with kids, I think it's all practical, but in different ways to your life. Then the next two weeks, we will deal specifically with singles.

In order to have a thriving marriage while raising kids, you have to know the difference between parenting and marriage. There is actually a difference in that relationship, and I think if we understand the difference it will change the way we parent, and it will change the way we communicate with our spouse.

Genesis 2:24 is a verse we have read several times during the marriage series, but I want us to read it today in the context of parenting. Think about this verse in parenting language.

Scripture

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

I want us to work back through this verse. We see "therefore." When you see a therefore, you have to look back to see what it is there for. Well,

marriage has just happened. God has created Adam, He has created Eve, and He has brought them together. There has been a marriage. So because there is a marriage, therefore, this should happen. Because Adam and Eve are getting married, something is probably going to happen; there is going to be another little Adam and another little Eve, and there will be more of them. So what do you do then? Well you just keep the little Adams and the little Eves as part of your family as part of your family until you die. No, God says that is not the vision for parenting. The vision for parenting is that a man, who has grown up under his mom and dad, will one day leave. That is the goal. So here is the goal of parenting; the goal of parenting is that your child will one day leave. So if you are a child, the goal is that one day you leave. That should be a desire of yours. So that is the goal of parenting, that one day, your little daughter or your little son will leave. That is the goal of parenting; that they leave. They will be launched out into the world. Why are they leaving you? So they can do something else with someone else. They are leaving you so they can hold fast to their wife, they can hold fast to their husband. The old King James used the word, "cleave." So parenting is about leaving and marriage is about cleaving. Parenting is an arrangement that lasts for some years where the goal is always exit. The goal is always leave. The goal is always launching them out into the world so they can do what you and your spouse have, so they can get married, they can have a one-flesh relationship. The goal of parenting is leaving, but the goal of marriage is something completely different. It's not about leaving, it's about holding tight, holding fast, cleaving, gluing, becoming more intimate, more one-flesh, moment by moment, day by day until death do you part. So it's dynamically different. I want you to see that. Parenting, you've got small kids, here is the end goal; that they leave. I know that sounds harsh, but that's the reality. You want them to leave. You want them to have a marriage like yours. You want them to contribute to the world. You want them to become functioning adults. So the goal, as you're looking at your little infant, is for them to leave. But when you look at your spouse, the goal is not for them to leave. The goal is for them to be here forever, for you to hold so tight to them, for you to love them in such a way where every moment, every day, every year, you get closer and closer together

and hold fast until death do you part. So it's a difference. Parenting to let go, parenting to release; we're married to stay together, to hold fast, and to continue that ongoing relationship. So there is a difference there.

So let's see the difference: parenting, we are letting go, releasing; marriage, we're staying together forever. That's the difference. But I think as a culture, sometimes we miss that when we do parenting. Sometimes what happens is, when we get kids, we think kids are only going to be here for a short moment of time, so I've got to hold onto them. I have to put all my time, all my resources, all of my affections to make sure I show them I love them and care for them and want them to fulfil every dream they have. So I am going to put all of my energy into them, I'm going to hold fast to them so tight that without realizing it, at the same time, you are releasing your spouse. It's the exact opposite of what is supposed to be happening. We are supposed to be parenting to release, but instead, sometimes we parent to hold on so we are actually in marriages that are releasing. We are growing apart, we are growing in distance, because we're not spending time with each other. We are not growing in affection because it's all about the kids. All of a sudden, we become taxi drivers and roommates, but not lovers, and friends, companions, and people who do life together with our kids along our sides. We tell ourselves, "It's going to be different. As soon as the kids leave, then we will pay attention to each other. Then, we will cultivate our relationship." But what usually happens in that scenario, if you are waiting to cultivate your relationship until the kids leave, when the kids leave, usually, your spouse does too. It is because you live with a spouse that you no longer know and they no longer know you, because you haven't cultivated love, you haven't spent time together, you haven't pursued each other. Now there is no love between you because you haven't treasured them.

Jesus said where your treasure is, there will be your heart also. That is what marriage is about, treasuring your spouse so much that your heart follows. When you treasure your spouse, spend time, affection, and love with them, your heart grows more and more until there is where your heart is, where you treasure is. It is about treasuring your spouse so that

your heart follows. So when your kids leave, you hold fast to your spouse because you've cherished and loved them all the way through.

That is what Jesus tells us. He told us in Mark 10:9, "What God hath joined together, let not man separate." We sometimes forget that the "man shall not separate" can actually be the kids. The kids can actually get into our marriage and put a wedge between us. It can be the kids that actually separate moms and dads. But Jesus is telling us not to let that happen. The kids are not the home; the kids are part of the home. The primary is mom and dad, the husband wife relationship. The kids are an addition, so no one can come in and separate mom and dad. So if we are going to have a marriage that's thriving while raising kids, we have to kid-proof our home. Part of that is making sure that we put our wife or husband as primary, and our kids as secondary. I know that sounds harsh. I'm a dad of four kids. I am telling you that I love my kids like crazy. I mean I love them. I'm not a big buddy guy, so I had rather spend time with my kids than go hang out with buddies. That is just me. I had rather go do hobbies with my kids. I mean I love them like crazy. I love spending time with them.

But you know there are moments where I just daydream about when my youngest gets married and moves out of my house, and it will just be me and my wife. There is a sadness there, but there's an excitement there. Like "honey, it's just me and you. You have no distractions; it's just me!" there is some excitement with that because I am raising my kids and I love my kids, but I'm building my life with my wife. It's a whole different kind of love: romance, affection, and pursuit. I want to be with her forever, and build something with her forever. I love my kids and I don't want a moment to pass by too quickly, but when they are gone, we are going to have something grand because we are going to work at it all the way through. But some of you might be thinking you will be scared to death when your kids leave, because you don't even know what you will do. You don't even know each other anymore. If that is where you are, I encourage you to prayerfully hear some of the ways that you can safeguard your marriage, kid-proof your marriage, so that you pursue each other while

trying to raise kids. I think God wants us to do both, have a thriving marriage at the same time we raising our children.

So how are we going to do that? There are three practical ways to kid-proof your marriage.

1. Make God the center of your family.

It has to start there. You have to have God as the center of your marriage for all of the other piece to fall in their proper order. So when God is center, then everything else will be in its proper order. Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and, with all your soul and with all your might." He is talking to moms and dads , and he's going to address kids right after this; he's talking to the people, he's talking to the families, and he says Israel, when you do families, make sure you get the first thing right. There is only one God. Your kids are gods, your spouses aren't gods; they are gifts. There is only one God, who needs to be preeminent in the home. Everything is derived from Him; He is the highest affection, the highest good. Spend time with Him, He comes first, everything else is defined by Him. That is God. God needs to be the center of your home, not a kid-centered marriage, not a spouse-centered marriage, but a God-centered marriage. If you have a God-centered marriage, then your spouse and the kids will find their proper place. So it starts with putting God first in your home.

2. Love your spouse more than your kids.

If you want to kid-proof your home, love your spouse more than your kids. Some of you are pushing back, thinking whoa; there can't be a difference, it's all the same. I can't love my spouse more than my kids. I will argue that for the sake of your kids you need to love your spouse more. It's actually good for your kids that you love your spouse more than them, because they draw stability from that. They want moms and dads who love each other, and they learn the world is not all about them, and they aren't the center of it. It is really good for them to know, rather than going to their first job interview thinking the whole world is about them. You need to teach them in the home that this world isn't all about them. They are

part of a family and the husband-wife relationship comes first, and they are an addition and you love them, but the spouse comes first. Song of Solomon says, "I am my beloveds and my beloveds is mine." That's a marriage statement. You can't say that to your kids. That would be a weird statement to say to your kids. This is only a marriage, one-flesh, Christ-church relationship. This is husband and wife language. I am yours; you are mine. We are forever different than everybody else because we've got something that is higher than all the other loves here on this earth. You are mine and I am yours; you are my beloved. The whole Song of Solomon is about the love that is between a husband and a wife. It is this different, unique, kind of love. It's making sure that you notice her as a wife first, and then a mother, and noticing him as a husband first, then a father. It is a primary love, friend, romance, relationship that is what comes first. I want to give four practical ways to do this. How do you actually love your spouse more than you love your kids? I promise, it is better for your marriage and it's better for your kids. They will thrive under you loving your spouse more than them.

A. Tell them. Let them in on the secret. "Little Johnny, I love you like crazy, but I love your mom more, and I love God the most. I just want you to know that." I tell all my kids that often, "Crider, I love you, but I love you mom more and I love God the most." I want him to know that if there is conflict, if there is a question of who dad is going to choose, what side is dad going to go on, it will be mommy's, not yours. It is me and her first, and you second. This is me and Katie first, and you guys are an addition to our family. We had family before you came along and we will have family when you leave. This is me and Katie together forever, and you guys are coming to join the ride. But I am telling you that I love your mom more. You need to tell your kids that you love your husband more than them, and you love God the most. That is not at all belittling your love for them. No, you love them like a father or a mother, but there is a different love when it comes to a husband and a wife. It is I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.

And, you need to tell the kids no often. We need to practice telling our kids no. I think sometimes we aren't very good at it. When you are having a

conversation with your spouse, your kids have little detectors, and they can detect that. Mom and dad are communicating. Mom and dad are having a conversation; ok tag, you go first, I'll go second, you go third, and you go fourth, "Mommy, Mommy, Dad, Dad, Mom I need this; Dad come here..." I mean, it is just disruption! Just try it. If the house is peaceful, just go over to your wife and start talking to her, and it will just be chaos in like one second! Somebody's screaming, somebody's bleeding, or somebody needs you in an emergency, right. They have little detectors, they know mom and dad are connecting; no good, go, separate, separate; that is our mission! At least my kids do that, I don't know if your kids do. We have to learn that when they come running in with "Mommy, Mommy, Daddy, Daddy," we say, "No, me and Mommy are having a conversation. You go and I will get back to you. What were you saying Katie?" Instead of always disrupting you and your spouse's conversation to tend to whatever the kids need, (oh, a Lego got broken, let's go fix it, or oh, it's your brother again, ok we will deal with that) we need to say no sometimes. We need to say, "I can't come right now; me and Mom are having a conversation. I will get to you in a minute." We need to teach our kids patience; that they wait on us. When something is happening between mom and dad, they are to sit and wait because that is an important thing that is happening. They don't have the right to barge in because they are the most important. When you do that, you are not teaching them to be a good human being either, because they will do that in all their relationships. So we teach them at home by telling them no often. "I don't have time for you right now because I am spending time with Mom. When we get done, then we'll go hang out." We tell our kids, "If you aren't bleeding, come back later. If you are bleeding, we will deal with it, but if not, it can be handled later." Usually when you go back to them, it is like, "I don't even know what I was going to say." "Ok, that is good." We had our conversation, because you don't want your spouse to feel like I am not important enough for us to have a moment; that it is always about the kids, it is always about what they need, and I am not important just to hear what I am trying to tell you. So don't miss everything because you are always trying to say yes to your kids. They can wait and you can tell them no, and it will be good for them.

B. The second thing is to show them you love their mom or their dad. Show them; be affectionate around them. Have gross moments. Gross moments are good for your kids. For instance, we were driving in the Jeep to go biking. We have Crider and Finn in the back, and I grabbed Katie's hand. I wasn't thinking about it, but I pulled her hand up and started kissing it a little bit. All of a sudden, I heard from the backseat, "Ooh gross! They are kissing, ooh!" So of course rather than stopping, we amp things up a little bit. Katie leans over and starts kissing me, and Crider and Finn in the back are just like, "I cannot believe it!" And they made their little puppet hands start kissing, "Ooh, Mommy and Daddy, Mommy and Daddy!" Of course, rather than be embarrassed, we say, "That's right," and we kiss some more. But they had this gross moment, like "I can't, ooh Mom and Dad, how are you doing that," but that is good for them. It is good for your kids to see gross moments because they need to know that affection, love, and romance doesn't just happen in these little dating, middle school relationships they are hearing about. It doesn't just happen in pop culture, in TV, radio, in songs; it actually happens in marriage. It's good in marriage, and mommy and daddy are enjoying romance together. So make some gross moments. I mean, have some boundaries, but show them. Give them hints that mom and dad are in love; that we love each other; that we are affectionate towards one another.

C. The third thing to do is to neglect your kids. Neglect them. Now what I mean by that, I don't mean totally, I don't mean always. But you need to have time in your life, regular rhythms where you neglect the kids to connect deeply to one another. You just need to do that. You need to neglect them from time to time. "Oh, but what will..." He will be fine; she will be fine, I promise. They need you to neglect them from time to time so that you can connect deeply with your spouse.

One of great things about Grace Marriage that I hear when people go through it is this idea that really encourages you to start dating one another again. And I loved after the first Grace Marriage we had, several couples came up to me and said, "Kory, we went on a date this week. We didn't even know we could still do that. It's been years and we connected, we talked, and we laughed! We're like alive! We are doing it next week

too." That's awesome! I remember Brad Rhodes, the founder of Grace Marriage, told me there was a story of a couple that decided they were actually going to go on a date once a week, or every other week. When this started happening, the child, the fifth grader, called Brad Rhodes and wanted to schedule a meeting with him and mom and dad because they needed to have a family intervention because mom and dad's date night was interfering with his life. But that is sort of the state of our parenting! We make it all about the kids and we forget there is a whole part that is about mom and dad. It is ok to neglect the kids in order to connect deeper to one another.

I don't know what this looks like to you, but I think this needs to be a practical step for you. Maybe for you it is a date night that you put on the calendar once a week, once every other week, you decide you are going on a date and drop the kids off to their grandparents. You are thinking *I can't drop them off to the grandparents, what if they...* Remember they raised you; they actually did that and you are alive! Remember that? They can handle it. You say your parents don't live around here; get a babysitter. Have a babysitter come and take two hours and go and just disconnect from the kids and don't make it about mommy and daddy, make it about husband and wife. Remember that relationship, lover, friend. Cultivate that relationship. You might think a date is just hard, it is expensive, all those things. Well, have a time. For me and Katie, what we love is after the kids go to bed, that is kind of our time. So we know around 8:00 or 8:30 when the kids are finally in bed, we can have a little bit of time of just us. We try to put the phones away and try to connect with one another for a little bit. That would be a great practice for all couples. I mean, typically, we put the kids up and then we get on our phone, right? We just zone out, and we are just sitting together as roommates, but not lovers and friends. So maybe the first step, after the kids go to bed, is to put the phone down. Whatever is on Amazon will be there tomorrow. Whatever they are saying on Facebook will be there tomorrow. Connect to one another, have a conversation, look into their eyes. Spend time with each other. Whatever it is for you, maybe date night is late night takeout after the kids go to bed. Hey, that is when we are going to do our date night. Whatever it is, that is a free option. The point is that you make a plan to neglect the kids to

spend time together. I want to encourage you to look at your year calendar and plan a weekend away, just you two. Tell the kids you are going on a weekend vacation without you. When they cry, say that's right, because I love your momma, and it's going to be good! But you need that space to just disconnect and be together and thrive together, and you won't know what that will do to the rest of your time, even with them, and with your spouse. So, regularly neglect your kids to spend deeper time with each other. Don't totally neglect them! They need you. But just at moments, an hour here, a couple of hours there, a weekend here, neglect them and say I am not available to you because I am available to your mom, I am available to your dad, because this is the number one relationship.

D. The fourth thing is to escape them. So we are going to tell them, show them, neglect them, and now we are going to escape them. What do we mean by escaping the kids? Here is what I want to suggest to you. Make your room; make your bedroom, a place of escape from the kids. It is a place that is sacred, just for you and your spouse. Make it an En Gedi. We get that from Song of Solomon 1:14. She says this to Solomon, "My beloved is to me a cluster of Henna blossoms in the vineyard of En Gedi." The first time I heard that word, Dad was preaching on it and he said that was like this oasis in the desert, this place they could escape to. When all of life is going crazy, they would escape to this place called En Gedi, and they would just have one another. So what I encourage you is to have your place of escape, to have your En Gedi. Make your bedroom a place where your kids can visit, but they do not feel welcomed. That is the idea. Now, I'm very practical. I've got four kids and two bathrooms in my house. Ok, so they have to use our room from time to time. Like Crider will go in there and take a shower, the other kids will come in and if they need to use the bathroom or something like that. But they go in, get that done, and then they get out because this is mom and dad's room. It is different; it is unique. They don't bring their Legos and set up a little fort in there. They don't come and play things. There are not toys in our bedroom. There are not clothes everywhere. It is a special place. There are not toys and screens; there are candles and flowers. It speaks when you walk in that this is different. I kind of feel awkward in here if it's not like you or

your spouse. Yeah, you should, get out, because this is our space. But you want to teach your kids; you don't play hide and seek under our bed. No, this part is off-limits from you. This is our room; you're outside. The family has time in the family places; this is mom and dad's space. You have a retreat where when you walk in, you feel like a wife, you don't feel like just a mom. When you walk in, you feel like a husband who is respected and celebrated. You don't just feel like a dad, but you feel like a lover. You feel like somebody wants to spend time with you and invest in you, and talk to you and communicate with you. Imagine, some of you are thinking, *we haven't had romance in a long time because we got kids*. Imagine if you created your bedroom as a space that spoke to each other that this is our escape, this is our place. Imagine how that would change if every night you walked into your room in a honeymoon type of experience. Wouldn't that change the way you felt and the way you wanted to interact with one another?

If you've got small kids, do everything you can to get them out of your bed. I know it seems practical when the kids go to sleep in our bed, and we just don't want to fight with the crying and the things. But if they are in your bed, then it's really hard for you two to connect. Hebrews actually tells us that the bed is an article for the marriage. There is actually a marriage bed. It says don't defile that; keep it in honor. There is this place where you should regularly return to to have fun as a married couple. But if there is always a kid in there, it's probably going to dampen things. So get the kid out. Let her cry. I love little Evie like crazy, but it's worth letting her cry a little bit versus bringing her into my bed and then pushing Katie away. That's not going to happen. I know there are seasons, like they are two weeks old, and I get it. But don't let that season become your life. Let that season happen, but then, as quickly as you can, make your room your place, a special escape just for the two of you. I think it will do wonders to your marriage.

How do you love your spouse more than your kids? Tell them, show them, neglect them, and escape them, while you love them like crazy. But this is where you show your kids that I love your mom or dad even more than I love you, because there is a whole different level to marriage, and I want

you to leave our home and do the same with your spouse. And I am going to show you how to do this by the way we love one another.

3. Do less, so you can be together more.

This is a hard thing for families to do because we don't like doing less, we like doing more. We don't like being restful; we like being busy. When you meet somebody, "How's it going?" "Man, I'm just busy." "Really, I'm busy too. I'm busier than you are." Well, I will add some stuff and be busier so I can tell you I am busier than you are, because busy is awesome. You may not sleep for a few days, but busy is right! We kind of operate like this. We go crazy, we get busier, we do more things, and then we forget that we don't have rest and connection and love with one another.

So I want to encourage in your parenting to move from Disneyland parenting to discipleship parenting. I want to compare the two. Have you ever been to Disneyland or Disneyworld? It is a great place to spend a weekend, but no longer than that. You would go crazy. The whole point of Disneyland is to go ride to ride. In between rides, it is cotton candy, ice cream; it is go, go, go, collect things, and buy things. It is all that happiness, all that fun, all about having the time of your life. We bring that into parenting, and we make parenting to be this idea of wanting my kid to have every possible opportunity, so they can chase every possible dream they could ever possibly have, or will have. So I want to put them in every possible situation they could ever want, so we just become taxi drivers and we run them around to every single thing. We add one thing on another thing on another thing, and we are busy and we never see each other. We just high five each other on the way there and say they must be happy! It's just more things and more things. Our homes become hubs of commuting rather than places of communion. There is no deep fellowship, no moms and dads getting to know their kids, and kids getting to know moms and dads, and moms and dads having time for mom and dad. We are just running like crazy and we just want to be busier and busier. What we need to do is to trade that model for the discipleship model of parenting.

What does that look like? Here is what Deuteronomy 6 says, "And these words that I command you shall be on your heart. You shall teach them

diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." So it's this vision of what parenting is ultimately for is not giving my kid every possible opportunity for every possible scenario. No, what parenting is for is to teach my kid to love God and to be able to launch out and start their own family one day. So it's this training area where we have space and time to talk about the things of God. We have space and time so they see me, and I can train my sons on how to be a daddy, and Katie can train our daughter on how to be a mom. It's this training area where time is spent together, not just going and running and doing. So I think what we need to do is sometimes do less, where we can actually connect together.

The bottom line is busyness is a lot of times the enemy of intimacy. It's really hard to be intimate with your wife and have an intimate relationship with your kids, and you really connect with them, know who they are, talk with them, if you are just busy all of the time. So what do we do? Maybe you find yourself in here saying, man, I am that family. I am Disneyland, I am just go, go, go, and I don't even know where I'm going. My schedule is slammed this afternoon. I've got four birthday parties to go to, and I don't even know what I'm going to gift yet. What are we going to do? I think what we need for some of us is just a family reset. We need to hit the family reset button and reprioritize what we are doing as a family. So if you are crazy busy and you need a reset, here is what I want to suggest you do. Here are three things that I think you should be doing in your home:

1. Worship God together.
2. Spend quality time together.
3. Enjoy rest together.

Do you remember what Jesus said? If you are weary, come to me and I'll give you rest. If you don't have rest, you might not have come to Jesus yet because He gives rest. He offers rest to His followers. So do those three things first. We are going to worship God, spend time together, and we are going to enjoy rest. And until those three things are happening, we are not doing anything else. We are doing those three. Then when you get those three down, some of you are saying hey we are doing those, ok, great;

then start adding whatever else you want, but in adding things, don't let them rob from those three things. Do add sports, add extracurricular activities, add going, add doing, but make sure they don't hamper we are worshipping God together, we are spending time together, and we are resting together. Then add all the other stuff. And once something is put on the plate that takes those three things away, take it off. There is no sport, no pursuit, no dream your little kid has that is worth sacrificing your family and your marriage, so that when they leave your house, they don't know God. Nothing is worth that. No, the opportunity is for them to know God, and to know you, and for you to love one another, and to have a marriage at the end of it. For some of us, it is that we are just so busy that we don't even know what that looks like. So we need to hit the reset button and consider doing some less things. Say no to some things, quitting some things, and marking off the calendar on some things. Tell Sally you can only do one thing, not eighteen things, and you can do that one thing well because we want to have time and we want to rest together.

So in closing, I just want to give you a picture. If you are a parent, and you have kids, maybe they are an infant, maybe they are five, fifteen, whatever it is, but I want to picture your last child at his or her wedding day. They have just gotten married and the rice has flown. They are leaving you, they are getting in a car, and they are not coming back to your house. They are going somewhere else and they are starting their own family. I want you to imagine that scene, and imagine you at that point turning to your spouse and reaching for his or her hand, taking hold of his or her hand, looking into his or her eye. What are they thinking? Are they absolutely scared to death because they don't even know you, you don't know them, and you have no idea what tomorrow is going to be? Or as you are holding hands, is it sad tears but also a little bit of excitement because your marriage is thriving and you are ready for the empty nest, you are ready for the grandparent phase because you have built your life with this person, not built your life on all these other little persons? That is a big difference. You see, some of you on that day will reach for a hand that will not be there. When the kids leave, so will they because we have neglected them for the sake of putting all that we have in our kids. So here's what we need to do.

We need to make sure that we kid-proof our marriage. Yes, we love our kids and we raise our kids, and we give them opportunities and we invest in them. We raise them to walk in the Lord, we love them so much, but we also guard ourselves so that we have a thriving marriage. At the end of it, yes, our kids know we love them like crazy, but they also know that we love their mommy or we love their daddy even more.