



Healthy Dad and Mom

Adapted from "Taking Your Family to the Next Level" series by Scott Erickson

Focus on the Family posted the following:

Nobody to our knowledge has actually counted all the studies supporting the value of married mother/father headed families. They are too numerous to count and there are few topics within the social sciences that enjoy more numerous and diverse published research documentation from the world's leading scholars than how married mothers and fathers impact their children's well-being. That said, we offer just a sampling of conclusions by various, universally recognized scholars and child-advocacy organizations on what the research says about which family form best contributes to healthy child development:

- James Q. Wilson, one of the world's brightest and most well-respected social scientists, wrote a very important article on the importance of marriage recently. He says: "Almost everyone—a few retrograde scholars excepted—agrees that children in mother-only homes suffer harmful consequences: the best studies show that these youngsters are more likely than those in [mother/father] families to be suspended from school, have emotional problems, become delinquent, suffer from abuse and take drugs."

He explains that some of the difference in these children, perhaps half, can be explained by the economic difference of living without a father. But, he explains, "The rest of the difference is explained by a mother living without a husband."

- Two leading mainstream child-advocacy organizations recently sought to understand which family form best elevated child well-being outcomes. Their conclusions found that married mothers and fathers in low conflict marriages accomplished this important task best.

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- The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), found:
"Most researchers now agree that...studies support the notion that, on average, children do best when raised by their two married biological parents... Research indicates that, on average, children who grow up in families with both their biological parents in a low-conflict marriage are better off in a number of ways than children who grow up in single- step or cohabiting-parent households."
- In addition, *Child Trends* concludes:
"An extensive body of research tells us that children do best when they grow up with both biological parents in a low-conflict marriage... Thus, it is not simply the presence of two parents, as some have assumed, but the presence of two biological parents that seem to support child development." (Emphasis in original)

The research is clear: If we are concerned about elevating the well-being and life opportunities for children, we must be concerned about the health and strength of the two-parent family.¹

We have an adversary that desires to destroy our family. It is our responsibility to provide the foundation in our homes that will produce a successful and happy home. A healthy mom and dad is essential to this type of home. Men have a responsibility to take the lead in creating a healthy home.

¹ "30 Years of Research: A Child Deserves a Mother and a Father," Focus on The Family, 2008, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/marriage/marriage/30-years-of-research> (accessed July 6, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: What is your memory of your dad and mom's relationship growing up?

C2: How did your parents handle disagreements?

C3: Challenges will come to your home that will make it very easy to blow up and destroy the future hopes of your marriage and family. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 2:21–25 (ESV) For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- From these verses, what are seven examples you learn from Jesus when facing adversity?

STRENGTH

S1: 1 Peter 3 gives us the example of Abraham and Sarah. Even people in the Bible had struggles. Take some time to write down at least five problems or struggles during their married life. After you do this, what can you deduce about life?

S2: The gift of life comes through the grace of God. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:5 (ESV)

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are two things you need in order to build your home?

S3: Some have equated submission to mean superiority. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:1 (ESV)

Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are two responsibilities men have in leading their homes?
- Do a word search on the word "submission." What did you discover?

S4: If you study Abraham and Sarah, you'll find that God gave them a great sense of contentment. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:4–7 (ESV)

1 Timothy 6:8 (ESV)

Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)

- From these verses, what do you observe about contentment?

ENDURANCE

E1: My uncle chose to have a surgical procedure recently; it was not forced upon him. He chose to go under the knife to relieve the pain and give him a life worth living. He still has a scar, but it is healing and he now has no pain. Forgiveness releases layers of hurt and heals the raw jagged edges of emotional pain. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:3 (ESV)

1 Peter 3:8–10 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are three things you identify about life and forgiveness?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate your ability to forgive yourself, your spouse, your family, and your friends. Write out a plan to improve.

E2: The power of communication is not used to its full advantage. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:8–10 (ESV)

Proverbs 18:21 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are three things you discovered about communication?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate your communication with God, your kids, your spouse, and yourself (thinking about where you are and where you want to go). Write out a plan to improve in each of the four areas.

E3: An expression of love helps your marriage go higher. Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

- From this verse, do a word search on “dwell” and “honor.”

- If you are married, from your word search, on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you dwell with and honor your wife. Write out a plan to improve.

E4: Read and answer the following.

1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

Psalms 127:1 (ESV)

- If you are married, from these verses, on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you pray with your spouse. Write out a plan to improve. Remember, begin small in your improvement plan. Someone once said, “Inch by inch it’s a cinch. Yard by yard it’s awfully hard.” If you are not married, listen to the struggles and testimonies of the married men in your group. Decide now to start your marriage praying regularly with your wife.