



# BALANCING CHILDREN WORK & INTIMACY

-DEBORAH ROSS

**"IN A THRIVING, CHRIST-CENTERED MARRIAGE, YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SPOUSE SHOULD ALWAYS COME BEFORE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILDREN!"**

God has established order to everything. After all, He is the God of order! When studying scripture as a "how to" manual on marriage, it is easy to see that God has a divine command that we all *must* heed if we want our marriages to endure the test of time, the onslaught of offense, and the pull of worldly influence.

Just as God represents order, satan comes to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). He hates families, and will stop at nothing to bring division, strife, and even divorce to your home. He slithers his way into the lifestyles of a man and his wife. So, be aware, be prepared, and be prayerful in all that you do as a couple. Do not allow the gates of hell to turn up the heat in your household.

Married couples *can* overcome all of life's twists and turns and ensure that their passion never runs cold by making their relationship their highest priority (under Christ). Contrary to the assumption of most unsuspecting married couples, staying true to the marriage vow, "until death do us part," doesn't happen automatically. It takes work... continuous work...intentional work! But, keeping a marriage alive is not a begrudging chore. Instead, it is a fulfilling journey of growing closer as, together; you work to serve one another!

Speaking of order, 1 Corinthians 11:3 says that the order of the family should be as follows: God, Christ, man, woman. As much as women hate to admit it, our role in the marriage is to be a *helper* to our husbands (Genesis 2:18). The man is intended to be the head of the household, under Christ, and has the burden

of carrying the weight of the home on his shoulders. Even the natural physical strength of a man, over the femininity of a woman, paints the picture of God's design for establishing order in the home (see: 1 Peter 3:7). Does this mean that women aren't supposed to work? Not necessarily. It does mean, however, that the predominate role of a woman in marriage should be that of an *encourager* to her husband, and a *nurturer* to her children; while the prevailing role of the man should be that of a *provider* and *spiritual leader*.

## WORK

When it comes to work, men and women, alike, all too often get caught up in a workaholic syndrome. The obligations of keeping the bills paid, the lure of a success-driven society, and the sin of wanting too many "things" can all lead to burnout in a marriage. God intends for us to have balanced lives, and while work is essential, it should never be elevated above the family. After all, you work to make a fruitful life *for* your family. What benefit is "the good life" if, in the end, the family unit is shattered - all because of the obsessive cycle of making more, spending more, and expecting more? The best way to balance your allegiance to your career is by prioritizing. Keep in mind, God is always number 1, followed by family and then career. If work begins to creep up the ladder of importance, it's imperative (for the sake of your marriage) that you reevaluate and restructure your lifestyle - immediately!

## INTIMACY

A mistake I often see young mothers making is that of becoming preoccupied with the daily duties of nurturing, cooking, shopping, and cleaning, while presuming that their husbands will "understand" their increasing neglect of affection towards him - particularly in the bedroom. I know how it is, by the end of the day, a mother is zapped. Love making then becomes relegated to the role of "one more thing to do" as opposed to the joyful finale of *intimate communion* with her man, as it was intended. There is great danger in allowing affection with your spouse to wane. Again, the most important part of your duties as a husband/wife and dad/mom (besides your complete devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ) is that of putting your marriage above all else. Romance, sex, and even date nights **MUST** be a part of your "schedule" in order to avoid the subtle drift of growing apart. Men, that means putting the remote down, turning the computer off, and making an effort to spend quality time with your wife. Each partner has an obligation to meet the need of the other when it comes to keeping the flames of passion burning brightly throughout the course of a life-time in marriage.

## CHILDREN

In a thriving, Christ-centered marriage, your relationship with your spouse should always come before your relationship with your children! While this may seem like a no brainer, it is actually a big problem with families today. Does this mean that the children are not important? Not at all. It simply means that marriage is, first and foremost, about the husband and wife honoring one another, as two souls remain one flesh under the banner of Christ Jesus. Children can be very demanding and, while we should aim to be great parents, we should never let our marriage suffer from the pressures of parenting.

In today's fast-paced culture, I am seeing more and more parents putting a significant amount of time into the extracurricular activities of their children and the pursuit of keeping up with society. While this may seem like a wonderful thing to do on the surface, an unbalanced approach to *activities outside of the home* early on, can lead to serious marital problems later. Failure to prioritize your relationships with your spouse and children can lead to a broken home. Psalm 46:10 says to "be still and know that He is God." Carve out time each day to "be still" with your family as you worship God together with the sweet aroma of a balanced lifestyle.

Furthermore, Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:20 says that "children should obey their parents in the Lord." From here, we can see that God's *divine order* for the home is for the children to come under the parents (not just the mom and not just the dad, but both parents - functioning in agreement with one another). Many well-

meaning mothers tend to elevate their children to a position of priority over their husbands. **NEVER** allow your children to come between you and your spouse. Remember, a healthy marriage ultimately makes the children happy because their confidence will be increased when they live in peace knowing that mom and dad love each other, have respect for one another, and express appropriate affection toward the other. As you and your spouse show forth a selfless, unconditional love that gives high priority to times of privacy, hand-holding, hugging, laughter, and honor of one another, your children are learning what a healthy marriage looks like and will likely aim to have a balanced marriage of their own one day, as they learn life application skills from you. This is the essence of what it truly means to train up a child in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

In closing, I remind you of the following points about "how to" enrich your marriage so that your love for one another never grows cold:

- God has an order to everything.
- Marriage takes work.
- You must be intentional about making your marriage all that God has planned.
- The devil is working hard to strategize the demise of your wedding vows.
- You must be adamant about **APPLYING** the Word of the Lord to every area of your marriage on a daily basis.

Don't be duped by the devil. Life is about *choices* and making the right decisions each and every day will add up to the sum total of the destiny of your family (see: Deuteronomy 30:19). Remember, over half of **ALL MARRIAGES** (the church is no exception) end in divorce. Shield your marriage from destruction by getting your life in order, **NOW!** KM

*Deborah Ross is a gifted Bible teacher, speaker, singer, choreographer and author. Her new book titled, Healing a Broken Marriage: Love Never Fails, is a great resource for more on "how to" have a healthy, God-centered marriage. Deborah has been married to her husband, Jay, since 1984. Together, they have two teenage sons. Deborah's passion is to know God and her calling is to share His love with the world. To find out more about her ministry go to [www.DeborahRossMinistries.org](http://www.DeborahRossMinistries.org).*

