

HEALTHY FAMILIES

It has been 12 days since Mom, Dad, Eric, Janey, and Melissa Morgan had a meal together.

No, Dad is not out of town, and no one is angry. They did not plan it this way, but they figure that is just the way life is today.

You see, Eric's bus leaves for high school at 7:05 a.m. Janey leaves for middle school at 7:40 a.m. Mom takes Melissa to elementary school at 8:45 a.m., then she's off to work. She works three-quarters time so she can be with the children—in reality, the only time she is “with” the children is in the van. She feels more like a taxi driver than a “mom.”

Janey, one of the top acrobatic and jazz dancers in her troop, has advanced dance class after school on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday until 6:00 p.m. (with an occasional Saturday morning rehearsal thrown in).

Eric's high school basketball team, off to a 2-7 start, is practicing overtime every day after school, except on days when there are games.

Melissa wants to be a dancer like Janey, so she practices with the beginner group, as soon as Janey's class is over.

Monday night is church visitation. Wednesday night there are church activities. Sunday night is church, too, of course. Almost every Friday or Saturday night at least one of the children is spending the night with a friend. And Saturday is lawn day, basketball games, dance performances...the list is endless.

This family has fallen victim to the American culture

Mom is taking a computer course on Tuesday evenings. Some of Dad's clients

insist on dinner meetings. There seem to be two or three per week.

Perhaps you recognize this family. Stretched, stressed, and losing touch with each other. This family is easy to find. It lives in your neighborhood, on your block—maybe in your house. Whether you are raising your children with your spouse, are a single parent, or have not begun a family yet, you do not want to live like the Morgans.

This family has fallen victim to the American culture. American Family Association research shows:

- ◆ Only 34 percent of America's families eat one meal together each day.
- ◆ The average father spends only eight to 10 minutes a day with his children. This includes television and meal times.
- ◆ Only 12 percent of America's families pray together.
- ◆ The average couple spends only four minutes of uninterrupted time together a day.¹

“The statistics also point out that although most adults regard family as their most satisfying aspect of life, they also regard it as their most frustrating!” writes renowned Christian researcher George Barna. “Believe me, we have a family crisis in America today.”²

But why? Is there anything wrong with the above family's activities? The children's athletic activities are healthy, aren't they? They teach discipline, commitment, how to win and lose. Dad has to do business, doesn't he? And Mom, well, after shuttling the children to and from school and teaching them all these years, she has the right to take a class so she can refine something herself, doesn't she?

And you can't get too much church, can you? So what if Mom and Dad went to visitation and left Eric at home when they hadn't spent 15 minutes with him in a week; they were doing it for God.

The truth is that there is nothing wrong with any particular element of the above family's schedule. But collectively, it adds up to a family that knows what each other does, but does not know each other. It is a mom and dad who provide physically, but do not make the time to provide emotionally and spiritually. Each of the above family members is searching for significance—Eric through basketball; Janey through dance; Melissa through trying to be like Janey; Mom through working and caring for her children; Dad through providing financially. In the midst of it all, they have lost the significance of what God designed them to be. Their effort is individual and misdirected rather than as a family and Christ-centered.

This all-too-typical family is like a pressure cooker. The instructions for operating a pressure cooker might look something like this:

- ◆ Check pressure regulator vent and pressure indicator stem and safety tube openings before opening.
- ◆ For best results fill one-half to two-thirds full. DO NOT OVERFILL!
- ◆ Indicator stem rises when cooker is under pressure.
- ◆ When fully pressurized the regulator will “hiss and rock.” This is normal and allows excessive steam to escape.³

Is your family hissing and rocking? Is it overfilled? Do you have a clue what the pressure indicators are? If mishandled, a pressure cooker will explode. If mishandled, so will your family!

This book examines how to avoid an explosion in your family by structuring it in a healthy fashion—the fashion prescribed by God—and applying its proper significance—the significance applied to it by God. The study will help you develop quality and quantity time with your family while helping you understand God’s purpose for your family. It will also help you understand how to turn that purpose into action. It is not a comprehensive guide to every subject on which it touches, but a tool that shows you how to use other tools to set your family on God’s course.

First, it will be necessary to examine your family. If it bears any semblance to the one above, you are not ready to be on mission for God. To proceed, here are a few suggestions.

Examine your family.

Is it a cohesive unit or a disjointed collection of individuals?

Is it on mission for God or unsure of its mission?

Is it flowing or fumbling? Disciplined or destructive? Purposeful or pointless?

The seven marks of a “hurried” family:

1. Can't relax
2. Can't enjoy quiet
3. Never feel satisfied
4. Absence of absolutes
5. They are suffering servants—great people, who do wonderful things for others, but are unhappy because they do good things for wrong reasons.
6. There is a storm rumbling beneath the calm.
7. They are “world-class” overachievers.⁴

If the above family resembles your family—if the above marks apply—what have you taught your children to do? Go faster and faster and see less and less of their family? It is time to reshape your family by God's design—and the good news is that He will give you the strength to do it!

Discovering real purpose and passing that purpose to your children will require making adjustments. For your family to take several steps forward, each member may have to take at least one step backward. What is good

What is a healthy family?

will have to be surrendered in favor of what is best. The “American dream” will have been reexamined under the light of God's purposes as revealed in His Word. If mother and father are working to provide the basic necessities, that is one thing. If they are working to get a bigger house, one more car, a bigger piece of the “dream,” perhaps they need a bigger home and a smaller house.

More than at any other time in history, families are asking the questions, “What is a healthy family?” and “How do we become one?” It is crucial that parents learn to unify their family around a central, godly purpose. The family is under immense stress because it has no central focus—and that central focus should be Christ.

What is a family? God's original plan is for a man and woman to marry for life and multiply and replenish the earth. Genesis 2:24 (RSV) says, “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife and they shall become one flesh.” This portrait is a lot more common today than the secular media would have us believe. However, perhaps due to circumstances beyond your control, you are not living in a classic family

structure. Too often we think of family only in the traditional sense, but that excludes many. Most communities are made up of not only traditional families, but of single-parent families, married couples with no children, blended families, and single adults. For the purpose of this book, a family is defined as “persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.”⁵

Henry Drummond, Scottish evangelist of the nineteenth century, once wrote, “The family circle is the supreme conductor of Christianity.”⁶

Indeed, it was intended to be so. Deuteronomy 6 and the whole counsel of the Word of God makes it plain. Moses said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:6-7,9, NKJV).

Clearly, God intended the family to be the most basic social unit of society. Yet, many people today cannot agree on a definition of “family.”

Phil Downer, author of *A Father's Reward*, writes, “Over and over we are told by ‘experts’ that the average young person in America has no picture, no mental or emotional image, of what a normal or healthy home is like. As a result of changing expectations, definitions of normalcy are changing as well. ‘Since kids don’t define “normal,” as a traditional two-parent family,’ the reasoning goes, ‘why keep trying to preserve it? We’ll redefine life’s basic structures in order to meet evolving expectations.’”⁷

However, we do not have that option. According to Deuteronomy 6, the family should work together, eat together, talk together, worship together, and play together. The consistent, abiding presence of the parents is inherent in the passage.

If you are a single parent, the challenge is greater, but the mandate is the same. Indeed, it is important for you to identify same-sex role models for your children. These might come from extended family, close friends, or church family.

Furthermore, it is clear from this passage that the family is to carry the message of God’s love. It says, “you shall talk of them (the words He commands us) when you... walk by the way” (Deut. 6:7, NKJV). And it says to “write

them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:9, NKJV). Even though this is an Old Testament passage, it is clearly an evangelistic one. The family is to make plain to those around them what, and in Whom, they believe.

Proverbs 22:6 (NKJV) tells us, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

***There is a crisis
between belief
and action***

This is a clear endorsement and mandate for the parents to shepherd the children. A healthy family is at the core of this verse. That the family should be on mission for God is inherent in many passages that communicate specifically the heart of God, such as Matthew 25:31-46, Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 12:9-21, and Colossians 1:27-28. To be on mission means to intentionally carry His love and His hope to your family, friends, neighbors, community, and acquaintances out of the overflow of an intimate walk with God.

Many North American families agree with the principles of the above passages. They affirm “family values.” Yet, they seem unable to live according to them. They agree that unbelievers should be introduced to Christ, yet they ignore their lost neighbors. There is a crisis between belief and action.

Says Richard Land, “The situation is so severe that there are now numerous attempts to redefine the family to fit its current dysfunctional and crisis condition.”⁸

Instead of trying to justify the problem by changing the standards, Americans can solve the problem by returning to the original blueprint of the family. In the process, they can be part of winning their loved ones, neighbors, and acquaintances to Christ. They can find the significance many are searching for in the timeless, powerful truth of Jesus Christ.

Says Land, “I can think of few more effective witnessing tools than to have a happy, intact Christian family where the husband loves the wife as Christ loved the church and where he is providing for his family as the Bible commands him to.”⁹

A healthy family is...

One that spends quantity and quality time together.

A healthy family cannot exist without time together. We must explode the myth that, “We have quality time, not quantity time.” It takes time to invest in your children, and if they see more of their dance teacher and basketball coach than they do of you, then the dance teacher and basketball coach have the greatest influences. Fathers, in particular, must be careful in this area. Barna writes, “There is no research, however, that supports the view that the quality of the time parents and their offspring spend together is an acceptable substitute for the quantity of time committed to that relationship.”¹⁰

Please note the following study cited in a recent *Focus on the Family* magazine, “Dr. Blake Bowden and his colleagues at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Center studied 527 teenagers to learn what family and lifestyle characteristics were related to mental health and adjustment. Their findings were significant.

What they found was that adolescents whose parents ate dinner with them five times per week or more were the least likely to be on drugs, to be depressed, or to be in trouble with the law. They were more likely to be doing well in school and to be surrounded by a supportive circle of friends. Surprisingly, the benefit was seen even for families that didn’t eat together at home. Those who met at fast-food restaurants had the same result. By contrast, the more poorly adjusted teens ate with their parents only three evenings per week or less.

What do these findings mean? Is there something magic about sitting down together over a meal? No and those parents who interpret the conclusions that way will be disappointed. What Bowden’s study shows is that adolescents do far better in school and in life when their parents are involved with them, when they have time for them and, specifically, when they get together almost every day for conversation and interaction.”¹¹

One purpose of this book is to help you structure your family according to God’s purposes and to help you understand how to spend quality and quantity time together.

One in which each family member is committed to the other family members individually and as a whole.

Likes, dislikes, and idiosyncrasies aside, there must be a bottom-line commitment to love and uphold each other, to be victorious together in the walk through life with Christ. Central to that is an affirming and appreciative attitude. “We have to learn to build up people instead of tearing them down,” says Christian psychiatrist and author Grace Ketterman. She believes the mutual support and encouragement will help keep individual family members from quitting.¹²

One in which the mom and dad are approximately equal in their involvement in the raising of children.

Barna writes, “By the admission of parents themselves, mothers are at least twice as likely as fathers to bear the sole responsibility for handling each of six key areas of childrearing.”¹³ There are actually “absentee dads” who live in the home. Don’t become one. If you are going it alone, persevere; ask for help when you need to. Build a support system around you. This book is full of helpful hints that, if applied, will help bring meaning and focus to your family. The principle of shared responsibility is key for healthy families. At the end of this chapter you will find suggested resources that, if studied and applied, can make shared responsibility a reality.

One in which the significance of each individual and the family unit is found in Christ.

The family may be a collection of individuals, but at the same time, it is an interdependent reality. Before we can be truly interdependent we must first be independent. For example, if mom is codependent on her children for her own significance she will not consistently do what is best for them. If she needs their approval for her own emotional health it will be impossible for her to meet their needs. She would be constantly caught between her need for their approval and her desire to do what is best for them. Two codependent people in an interdependent reality are like having two ticks and no dog.¹⁴

Healthy families are made up of healthy growing individuals who understand who they are in Christ. Much of the struggle of American families is over a search for significance, a striving for purpose. Mom, dad, and the children are going different directions as they try to find their place in life. They are looking for significance in all of the wrong places. Like the Morgans—dad seeks significance through his job, mom through the children, the children through their activities. They need to find their purpose in Christ, not in the things of the world or religious activity. That is not a putdown of activities such as sports and clubs. It is an encouragement to keep them in proper perspective. To be successful, you must have a plan.

John Maxwell defines success as a) knowing your purpose in life; b) growing to your maximum potential; c) sowing seeds that benefit others.¹⁵ The emphasis must be on relationship—first, vertically with God, then, horizontally with each other. If Jesus is who He claims to be, then developing our relationship with Him and accomplishing His purpose for our lives must be our greatest priority. There is a Christ-shaped vacuum within every human being. It is impossible to find meaning and purpose apart from Him. You experience success and significance as you grow to your potential in Christ and accomplish His purpose.

What does it mean to develop your relationship with Christ? There are six basic disciplines necessary for spiritual growth. Everything God will ever teach us He will teach us through one of these basic disciplines.

The six basic disciplines of growth to maturity in Christ are:

- ◆ Quiet time—starting your days alone with God
- ◆ Lordship
- ◆ Developing a powerful prayer life
- ◆ Personalizing God’s Word
- ◆ Christian friendship and accountability
- ◆ Developing your ministry—making disciples and using your gifts in your church

Just think—everything you have ever gleaned spiritually has come through one of these in one fashion or another. Maybe a Christian friend shared a truth, maybe you picked up a great principle through a

sermon, or maybe you read an insightful book. All of these would be an application of one of these. Healthy families are made up of healthy individuals who are growing in Christ. It begins with parents and continues as they pass their faith on to their children. It is not the purpose of this book to teach these disciplines. There are suggested resources at the end of the chapter for that purpose. Family to Family will, however, provide the solid principles you will need to pass along your faith in Christ (including the above six disciplines)—first to your children and then to others.

Let's apply John Maxwell's definition of success to the family. Healthy families are made up of individuals who have discovered their identity and purpose in Christ, are growing to their maximum potential in Him, and are sowing seeds that benefit others.

One through which the baton of faith is successfully passed to the next generation.

It starts with mom and dad. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to train our children in the way they should go, and when they are old they will not depart from that training. The verse says “should go,” not “will go” and “when he is old” not “in all his days.” These qualifiers tell us we cannot guarantee what choices our children will make. It is clear, however, that they are very likely to make the right choices with the right guidance, and the responsibility for proper guidance is the parents. Chapter Three is dedicated to a full discussion of passing the baton of faith in Christ to the next generation.

One that has healthy time together centered on God's purposes.

The purposes of Christ are clearly set forth in the Word. Perhaps it is no where more succinct than in Luke 19:10 (NKJV), where Jesus says, “The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” The Great Commission also clearly communicates His purpose: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28:18-20, RSV). A section in the next chapter deals with this in more detail.

Mom and dad are to lead the family to focus on and carry out God's purposes. Mom and dad should be active disciple makers and should lead their children to be the same. Disciples should be made "as they go" through the routines of life, always with an eye toward being Jesus to someone in need. Healthy families are on mission for God. God leads the parents, the parents lead the children, and the purposes of life are clearly stated.

A healthy family has a stated purpose, intentionally passes the baton of faith to future generations, and lives the Great Commission by being on mission in its community. It serves in and with the church in equipping itself and others to share the gospel. *Family to Family* will explore these areas and help you equip your family to live out God's purpose.

To help understand your significance in the kingdom, and specifically how mightily God can work through you, take a fresh look at 'The Seven Realities of Experiencing God,' from the work of Henry Blackaby and Claude King.¹⁶

The seven realities of experiencing God:

- ◆ God is always at work around you.
- ◆ God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
- ◆ God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
- ◆ God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
- ◆ God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
- ◆ You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
- ◆ You come to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.

Now examine the seven realities adjusted for the family:

- ◆ God is always at work around your family.
- ◆ God pursues a continuing love relationship with your family that is real and personal.
- ◆ God invites your family to become involved with Him in His work.

- ◆ God speaks to your family by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
- ◆ God's invitation for your family to work with Him always leads to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
- ◆ You must make major adjustments in your family life to join God in what He is doing.
- ◆ Your family comes to know God by experience as they obey Him and He accomplishes His work through them.

Taking it one step further, examine the adjusted seven realities with explanations:

Reality One—God is always at work around your family.

God is sovereign. Nothing you do and nothing that goes on around you surprises Him. The circumstances you are in, and the circumstances of the people around you, are opportunities for growth and ministry. Look. Listen. Pay careful attention to see how God is working.

Reality Two—God pursues a continuing love relationship with your family that is real and personal.

Having created every member of your family as special to Him, God pursues each one, seeking to raise them as a father raises a child. If you know Him, God is not some distant being, but a real person living with you and in you in the form of the Holy Spirit. If you do not know Him, He is constantly seeking to draw you to Himself by the Holy Spirit. God wants to be intimately involved in your family's life.

Reality Three—God invites your family to become involved with Him in His work.

Jesus was sensitive to His Father's will and joined Him in His work. In John 5:19 (NIV), Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does." He wants you to do the same. He

wants you to be part of the harvest, part of the ingathering of those He is drawing to Himself. Only two things will last through eternity: people (see Phil. 2:9-11) and God's Word (see Isa. 40:8). Do you want to have an eternal impact? If you do, combine those two elements. You know the Word of God, and it lives in you. You know unbelievers, and you know that if they do not surrender to Jesus Christ, they will face eternity separated from Him. God's work can be summed up by this simple statement—our purpose is to know Him and make Him known. We are to grow to maturity in Christ by deepening our love relationship with Him and then out of the overflow sharing His saving grace with others. You can influence the lives of family, friends, neighbors, and even people you have never met for eternity. What a privilege, opportunity, and responsibility!

Reality Four—God speaks to your family by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

If you pay careful attention, as mentioned above, and ask God what He is doing and what He wants you to do, needs and opportunities will become readily apparent, and you will be able to work with God in your family and in reaching your extended family, neighbors, and acquaintances.

Reality Five—God's invitation for your family to work with Him always leads to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.

God has said, "Go help your neighbor clean out their garage." God has said, "Go spend time with the elderly couple down the street." You may not like the neighbor, and you may not have any idea what to say to them. You may not have any time to give to the elderly couple. So what are you going to do? Obey or ignore? Go, and trust God for words, wisdom, and time.

Reality Six—You must make major adjustments in your family life to join God in what He is doing.

The Morgans need to make major adjustments. Like them, you will have to choose what is better over what is good. There may be less time for seemingly good things in order for you to serve the way the Lord would have you serve. However, you can certainly find some relatively useless things to omit and save time. How much television does the family watch? Sports are good, but are the children (and maybe mom or dad) more religious about ball practice than serving the Lord? Be obedient and bold about making adjustments.

*Reality Seven—Your family comes to know God by experience as you obey Him and He accomplishes His work through you.*¹⁷

You want to know what God is going to do in and through you? You will not find out until after you have obeyed. Clearly, the American family is crying out for help. It is searching for a center, searching for significance—and that significance can only be found in Christ. Your family is the only place for your children to truly learn what their real purpose is in life. It is the only place where the principles of godly life can be modeled. It is the only place where the crucial need for a relationship with Christ that can empower them to live out those principles can be modeled. Chuck Swindoll wrote, “A family is a place where principles are hammered and honed on the anvil of everyday living.”¹⁸

The place to start is with a “family mission statement,” something your family can produce together to reflect your godly heritage and its inherent purposes and principles. A clear mission statement, used as the template through which your family views life, will keep your family on track, thus reducing stress, increasing productivity (spiritually and in the world) and bonding the family around the most crucial value of Christians—ministering Jesus Christ to others.

Remember, healthy families spend quality and quantity time around God’s purposes. This is what the Morgans are not doing. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan are in danger of failing to pass the baton of faith to the next generation. We want to help you avoid the same mistakes by showing you how to purposefully spend quality and quantity time with your children.

At age 18, Dawn Jenkins is at that unique point where she can look back on all of childhood and ahead to all of adulthood. She was raised in a home where the family’s belief in Christ was clearly stated and purposefully lived out. She has been on numerous overseas mission trips

with her family and many other short-term missions in the United States.

“I’ve learned how to live my faith and share my faith,” Dawn says. Since she has had these opportunities, she can teach her children the way her parents taught her. To have seen so many people come to Christ is amazing—she would not have wanted to be raised any other way.

Steps to Making it Yours

Family Readiness Questions

There is a time for everything. You began by reading the book. Now to help gather your thoughts, review what you have read by answering the Family Readiness Questions.

1. What is the first step to a healthy family?
2. What are the seven marks of a hurried family? Circle the ones that appear true for your family.
 - * Can't _____
 - * Can't enjoy _____
 - * Never feel _____
 - * Absence of _____
 - * Are _____
 - * Is a _____ beneath the _____
 - * Are “world-class” _____
3. A healthy family is:
 - * One that spends _____ and _____ time together.
 - * One in which _____ family member is _____ to the other family members _____ and as a _____.
 - * One in which the _____ and _____ are approximately _____ in their involvement in the raising of their children.
 - * One in which the significance of each individual and the family unit is found in _____.

- * One through which the baton of _____ is successfully passed to the _____.
- * One that has _____ together centered on _____.

4. What are the seven realities for the family?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Family Applications

The second step in studying Family to Family is to discover adjustments through prayer. To help you identify areas in which God may be speaking to you, work through the Family Applications. At the end of each, ask God to reveal any adjustments He wants you to make.

1. Write out the weekly schedule for each family member. Include all activities, meals, sleep, work, school, and church. Consider using an interview format—have the children interview the parents and vice versa. Analyze how many activities are done as a family and look for ways to increase that number. Also, look at areas where your family is spending the most time. Try to eliminate one activity from each family member's list and use that extra time for additional family activities.
2. Most adults regard the family as the most satisfying and most frustrating aspect of life. Parents, list the five most satisfying areas of your family. Tell about an incident when you were frustrated. Be sure to tell about your emotions during that time.
3. Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9 aloud. What principles do you find? Talk about ways your family is living out the principles in those verses.

Discuss ways to live out those areas your family has not been doing.

4. First Peter 2:9 tells us we are His chosen and special people. Consider this as an opportunity to encourage one another. Write each family member's name on a sheet of paper and tape the paper on a door or wall. Write as many qualities under each name, other than your own, that you think makes that person special.
5. Explain why you think it is important for Jesus to be the head of your home.

Family Building Activities

The activities allow your family to experience the results of the adjustments you are making. As you select several and carry them out, talk about what God is doing in the life of your family. These activities are not an end unto themselves; they create a teachable moment.

1. Plan, prepare, and eat a meal together. Below is a suggested one-pot meal.

Beef Noodle Soup

1 pound lean ground beef

1 small onion, diced

1 package oriental noodles with beef flavoring packet

4 cups beef broth

1 cup water

1 (10 ounce) package frozen mixed vegetables

1/4 cup sliced celery

2 tablespoons soy sauce

Brown ground beef with onion; drain excess fat. Set aside. Break up noodles in large saucepan, sprinkling flavoring packet over noodles. Add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Add beef mixture. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender crisp. Makes six servings.

2. Set a time to pray together as a family. If your family already prays at mealtime, add other times such as bedtime or when facing a decision.

3. For the next two weeks, spend quality and quantity time with each child doing something that child enjoys. Each parent should do this. If there are no children in the home, each spouse should turn their attention to the other. If there are other family members in the home, such as parents, include them in the process.
4. Schedule a parents' night out. Arrange for a sitter, and have that much-needed date.
5. Play a game together. Consider a board game or puzzle. If the weather is nice, go outside and play together as a family.

Scripture

The following verses were found in the first chapter of Family to Family. For further application you could allow each family member to choose the verse or passage that meant the most to them and allow them to tell why.

Genesis 2:24

Luke 19:10

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Romans 12:9-21

Proverbs 22:6

Colossians 1:27-28

Isaiah 40:8

1 Peter 2:9

Matthew 25:31-46

Philippians 2:9-11

Matthew 28:18-20

Additional Resources:

Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God: How to Live the Full Adventure of Knowing and Doing the Will of God*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994).

Dixie Ruth Crase and Arthur H. Criscoe, *Parenting By Grace*, (Nashville: LifeWay Press, 1986).

James Dobson, *Parenting Isn't for Cowards*, (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997).

John C. Maxwell, *The Success Journey: The Process of Living Your Dreams*, (Chicago: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997).

Gary Smalley, *Making Love Last Forever*, (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1996).