

But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.'



So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. *Mark 10:6-9*

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*Sts. Anne and Joachim;
Patron saints of married couples
Feast day 26th July*

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9 Important Strategies for Raising Children in a World of Technology

by JOSHUA BECKER

"We refuse to turn off our computers, turn off our phone, log off Facebook, and just sit in silence, because in those moments we might actually have to face up to who we really are." —Jefferson Bethke

Bethke

Allison Slater Tate wrote an important article in the Washington Post: **Parenting as a Gen Xer: We're the first generation of parents in the age of iEverything.**

Allison articulates and draws attention to a unique struggle facing our generation of parents. Namely, how to raise children in an age of technology. She sums up our current challenge like this:

My generation, it seems, had the last of the truly low-tech childhoods, and now we are among the first of the truly high-tech parents...

When it comes to parenting, I find this middle place extremely uncomfortable, because I know what childhood and adolescence were like before the Internet, but all my parenting models came from that era...

Technology wins the prize for being the trickiest parenting challenge I have faced.



Parents today know the decisions we make for our kids concerning technology are important—but entirely without context. ([tweet that](#))

Our conversations on the sidelines at soccer games about these issues are never based on proven experience (*When I was a kid, my mom used to...*). Instead, it is based on guesswork and the little wisdom we have gained (*Well, this is what we have decided to do. What about you guys?*).

Allison summarizes it well, “*What we are doing is unprecedented—no study yet knows exactly what this iChildhood will look like when our children are full grown people.*”

There are no proven answers to the questions we are asking. That’s what makes this so difficult. Well, that, and the fact that even the questions are changing at an alarming rate.

But this is a conversation we should be having. Not because we will all choose to parent the same, but because there is wisdom in numbers. And the more intentionality we apply to our par-

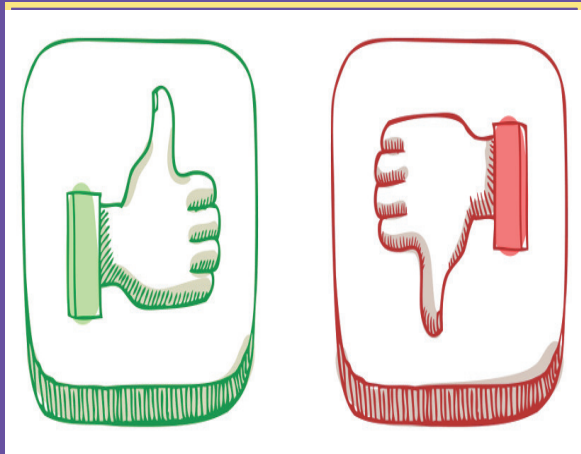


enting the better.

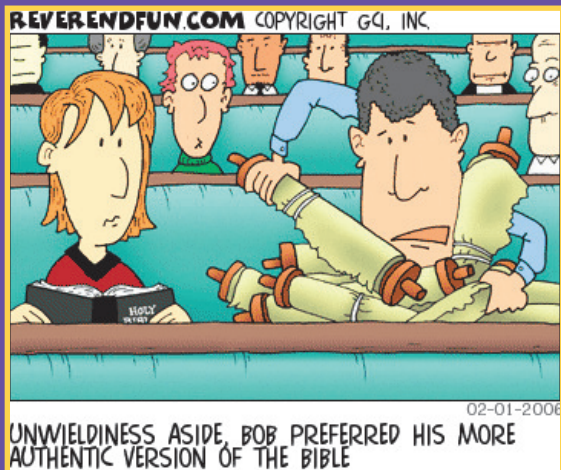
I would like to start. My children are 12 and 8.

Here are 9 important strategies we have sought to implement raising children in an age of technology:

1. Technology is not discouraged in our home. Technology, it appears, is going to be



around for quite awhile. Our kids will need the skills in the future—they already do in the present. Parenting is not about shielding our children from the tools of the world, but equipping them to use those tools properly. We should be active and intentional in teaching them how to use technology effectively and to its fullest potential. In practical terms, this means both of my children received iPods on their 7th birthday. And they will receive phones on their 13th.



2. Moderation is encouraged and modelled. While we know very little about the future of technology and how it might look, we do have ample study on the effects of screen time: Studies have shown that excessive media use can lead to attention problems, school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity. Most recently, The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends television and other entertainment media should be avoided entirely for infants and children under age 2. For older kids, “To help them make wise media choices, parents should monitor their media diet for both duration and content.” We have adopted

a similar philosophy to the one mentioned by Allison, “We make the children sit in public places when they are on devices or laptops, we



look over shoulders, we check text message histories and set parental controls. We worry about their cyber footprints.”

3. Age restrictions on technology are an appropriate guideline. The minimum age for Facebook / Instagram is 13 years old. We are not allowing our kids to have accounts on those networks (or others) before the minimum age limit is

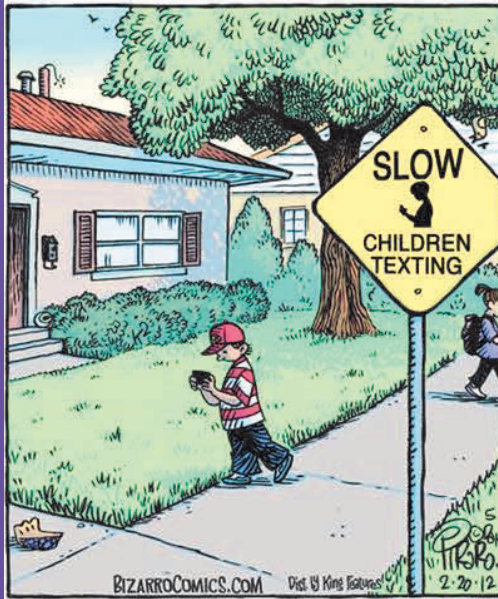
reached. While some kids under the age of 13 may be mature enough to use the networks wisely, there is a bigger issue at play—honesty. When we allow our children to misrepresent their age/identity solely for the purpose of gaining access, we set a dangerous precedent.

4. Technology is changing the way we relate to one another, but face-to-face conversation is still important in the present (and will likely be important in the future).

Technology is permanently changing the way we communicate—whether it is for the better or not remains to be seen. Older generations will argue technology is destroying conversation, younger generations will argue technology is enhancing it. Only time will tell. But either way, our children will forever live in a world where their immediate elders (parents) respect and expect verbal conversation. Future generations may value it less. But in the meantime, for our children to be successful in communicating with older generations, they must be able to communicate both online and in-person. We should create safe opportunities where they can learn.

5. Technology increases opportunity for distraction.

From leaving present conversations, procrastinating important work, or losing the ability to self-



reflect, technology represents an ever-present temptation to leave difficult places. Those who will succeed in the future will be the ones who learn to overcome this temptation.

6. Technology can be used for consumption or creation. Choose creation whenever possible. This is, perhaps, one of the most important distinctions concerning technology that we can teach our children. We can play video games... or we can create them. We can browse Facebook... or we can create places and communities that serve a purpose. There is a place in our world for technological consumption—but as an approach to life, creation trumps consumption every day. Help your children know the difference.

7. Your self-worth can not be calculated by likes and shares and retweets. The praise of others is a fickle thing upon which to measure our worth. It is a foolish, ever-changing target. It often negatively impacts the decisions we make and the life we choose to live, but it never fully satisfies our hearts or our souls. It is important for our children to understand their self-worth must be found elsewhere. And it is equally important for us as adults to learn the same.

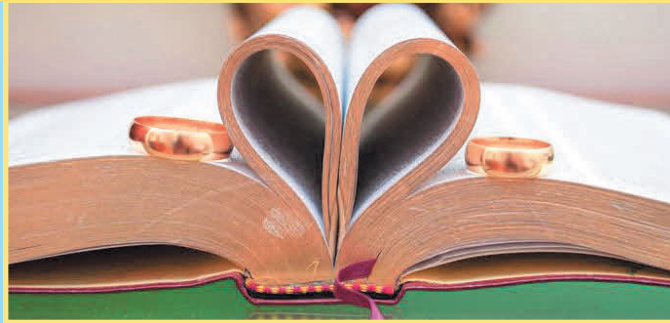
8. You can't believe everything you see on the Internet. The Internet could use more fact checkers—though I am not overly concerned about this. My elementary-aged children already debate whether Wikipedia is a reliable source for school projects. Far more damaging, in my opinion, are

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Refresh Spiritual Intimacy in Your Marriage

Most couples not only do not have a plan to grow together spiritually; they don't even talk about it. Not long ago, we surveyed subscribers to our *Good Advice Parent Newsletter* in



godliness" (I Timothy 4:7). As you learn to give your relationship to God and start praying for each other daily, you'll be creating a powerful discipline and habit in your home. Pray for your

various areas of marital satisfaction. I wasn't surprised that the area we found couples least satisfied was that that of spiritual intimacy. One spouse noted, "We both have a strong Christian background but don't really discuss and share openly with each other." I've found that too often, spirituality intimacy in marriage is a back-burner topic at best.

If you are one of the many husbands and wives who crave deeper spiritual intimacy with your spouse, but aren't sure where to start or what actions to take, let me suggest some tips for you in this area:

1. Don't Expect Immediate Change

Developing spiritual intimacy is best accomplished through "baby steps". It is very rare for a relationship to move from lacking spirituality to strong growth overnight. It takes nurturing and pruning over time to have a beautiful garden; in the same way, it takes time and careful cultivation to grow toward spiritual intimacy. So, a good place to start is by *planting the seeds* of spiritual growth.

2. Pray For Your Spouse

This is a simple suggestion and one that is relatively easy to begin, yet one that many couples overlook. Understand that I'm not talking about hours of prayer here, but simply a daily time to pray for your spouse and your relationship. Paul's advice to Timothy was to "discipline yourself for the purpose of

spouse's needs and seek God's will for how you can serve your spouse. Even this one simple act of daily prayer for your spouse will make a difference.

3. Pray Together

If your spouse is open to it, pray together daily. If your spouse is not very spiritu-



ally motivated, then keep prayer very short and do it at a meal or another time that seems less intimidating. I know one couple who started praying together every day with the wife simply saying, "God, thank you for our food. Thank you for the children. Thank you so much for Jack. Help us to be a God-honouring couple and family. Amen."

One day, after months of that prayer, Jack said, "Let me pray, too." He said, "God, I'm not much of a pray-er but I agree with Janet, and thanks for Janet's heart for you. Amen, again." After a while the kids got involved too. After a year Jack and Janet were feeling more comfortable praying together.

I believe the saying is true: "Couples who pray together, stay together."

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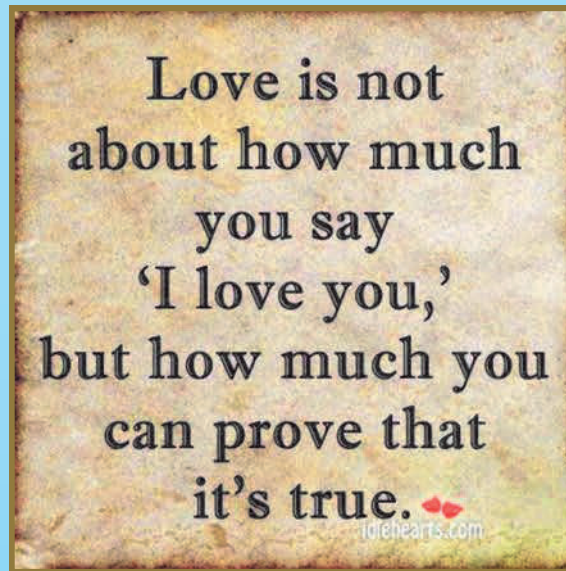
4. Worship Together Regularly

A natural part of growing together spiritually is *worshipping together*. Unfortunately, some couples don't have the benefit of worshipping together. Perhaps one works or just won't go to church. This is an area to keep on your prayer list; look for ways to find meaning together when you can.

I know of a husband who agreed to go to church with his wife once a month. Instead of nagging or condemning about the other three weeks, she made a big deal out of that one morning a month by serving fun food and turning it into a pleasurable event. Within the year he was going most Sundays. Today, after many years, he is a leader in their church.

5. Develop Regular Spiritual Growth Time Together

It isn't easy to discipline yourselves as a couple to spend regular time together focusing on your spirituality. Even though Cathy and I speak and write on this subject, we have struggled throughout our years of marriage in this area. We have tried reading books together and doing Bible study booklets. We have listened to CDs and watched videos together on spiritual growth. We have tried to have a daily time and a weekly time to focus on our spiritual growth. Like so many others, it hasn't always



worked for us.

We've always meant well, but no one thing worked for us long-term. Finally, we found something that works for us. We call it our *Weekly Time*. It's rather simple, and, and for some it may be too short, but it has worked for us. The important issue is to find something that works for both you

and your spouse. It may take some time of experimenting before you find what suits you both. Don't get frustrated. Keep trying.

6. Develop Healthy, Affirming Relationships with Other Couples

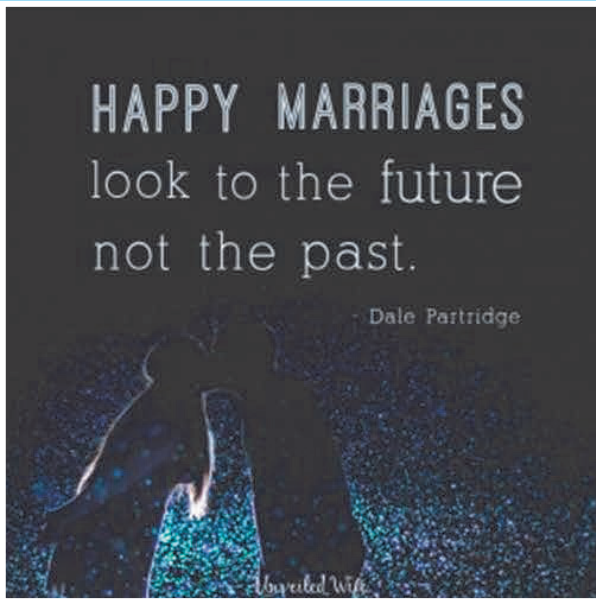
Cathy and I had very few role models when we first got married. We didn't know many couples we wanted to imitate in our own marriage. One day we were talking about the need to find mentors for our marriage, and a couple from our church came to mind. They had successfully raised three children and had been married for a number of years. We asked if we could come by and ask them some questions about building a God-honouring marriage.

If we would have said, "Will you mentor us?" they might have said, "No, we don't see ourselves as mentors." Fortunately, we didn't give them the option to turn us down. We simply asked if we could get together. The meal time and conversation was so pleasant and helpful that we asked if we could get together again sometime. Today, this couple would probably say they have been mentors to us, but it didn't start that way in their minds.

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A home with a loving and loyal husband and wife is the supreme setting in which children can be reared in love and righteousness and in which the spiritual and physical needs of children can be met.

~David A. Bednar~



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We also believe strongly in peer relationships. Cathy and I were in a couples' group for several years, and even though each session wasn't on marriage, it seemed like whatever we were studying in that group came back to our marriages and families. I learned much from how other couples approached their relationships.

7. Develop a Plan

When a couple is living with the same set of blueprints, they do so much better. As you begin to grow stronger spiritually as a couple, you'll want to create your own. The plan has to work for you and for your situation. I know couples who have taken a five-hour solo/Sabbath time regularly to rest, pray, read inspirational literature, hike, and the come back together to talk about their experience. Another couple I know plans two marriage-focused retreats together a year. Sometimes they go away and have read books together, listened to audio programs, or followed a Bible study booklet. At other times, they attend a marriage retreat or conference with other couples. Part of your plan might include reading one spiritu-

ally-focused book a year, and then set aside time to discuss the book as a couple. Or, you might choose to read one book a year on a marriage topic. The choices are almost limitless. Although, I've said it before, let me say it again, your task is to find what works for you both as a couple.

Spiritual growth and intimacy is like anything else. It takes time and commitment. It is more about training than trying, and just like the Scripture says, you will reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7-8). Don't short change yourself or your spouse by not focusing on spiritual intimacy. At the end of your life you won't be focused on your IRA retirement plan, the kind of house you live in, or what your bank account looks like. You will be interested in a right relationship with God and a right relationship with your loved ones. Why not start focusing on the really important things sooner rather than later?

<http://www1.cbn.com/marriage/refresh-spiritual-intimacy-in-your-marriage>



Happiness cannot be traveled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude.
~Denis Waitley~



Love texts your husband/wife needs from



You probably stay in constant communication with your spouse through texting about the various activities you are doing. They reply to let you know that he/she will be home at 5 pm from work and would like you to pick up the children from football/music/ lessons. This is fine, but how often do you send each other life giving texts? How often do you tell your spouse that you love them and are grateful for their hard work?

There is no requirement to what these texts have to say, but here are some ideas to help boost your spouse's self-esteem and remind him/her how blessed you are to have them forever.

You are AMAZING. Just thought you should know.

adapted from <https://familyshare.com/25121/marriage/32->

I miss you!

Have a great day at work -- can't wait till you get home!

I like you. I like you a LOT.



I'm here for you.

You are the best father mother ever.

Perfect night to snuggle. You & Me 8 pm.

I love you. Just thought you should know.



I will always love you.

I am so blessed to call you mine.

I trust you with all my heart.



You inspire me every day.

Thank you for taking care of __. You're so handy!

You make me want to be a better person.

Thank you for just being you.

Still laughing at your joke from last night.

Thank you for working hard to provide for our family.

I'm praying for you.

XOXOXOX

Hey, I need your advice.

I am so proud of everything you have accomplished.

Just wanted you to know that you are on my mind today.

You are the best thing that has ever happened to me.



Recipe for a Happy Marriage

Combine two caring hearts. Melt into one. Add a lot of love. Mix well with respect, and trust. Add gentleness, laughter, faith, hope, and joy. Pour in much understanding (Don't forget patience). Sprinkle with kisses add, a dash of hugs Bake for a life time

Yield: One Happy Couple

Author: Unknown

A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No man can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.
~Thomas Merton~

4 reasons why a family vacation is important

Don't let money and time hold your family back from enjoying a well-deserved vacation.

I always created excuses for not taking a family vacation. Either there was too much work to be completed or there wasn't enough money. When I started to feel mentally and physically exhausted from the everyday routine, I came to the realization that I needed to get away from it all. I took the advice of my family and took a much needed vacation with them. The vacation was rejuvenating and I returned stress free.

Here are four reasons vacations are significant in family life.

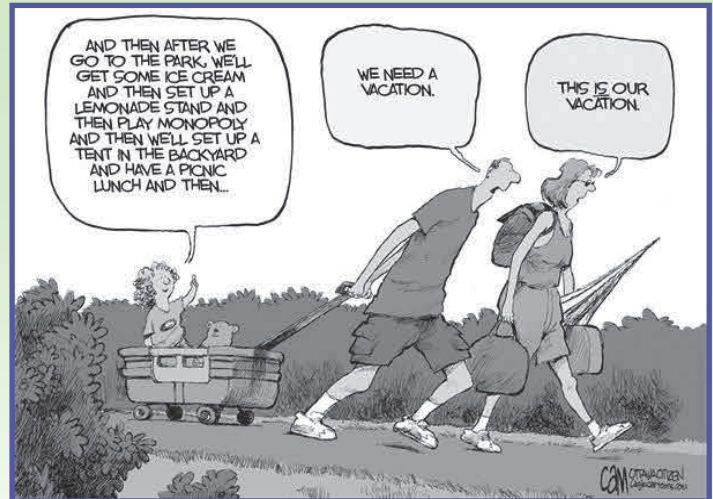
1. Vacations mean spending quality time with your family

Parents and children are consistently on the go. There is work, school, after school programs, sports and other activities. There may be very little time to sit down and have a conversation with your children and vice-versa. You have the weekend, but the weekend may not be enough to catch up on things happening in your lives. Vacations will pull a family together and reinforce the fact that quality time is essential.

2. Taking a vacation allows you and your family to lay back and relax

Parents and children face a lot of things on a day to day basis. Children have a load of homework to do and parents work long hours to provide for their families. When a parent comes home, they help their children with homework, cook, clean and prepare the household for the next day. Not to mention, if the parents bring work home, they must fit that into their schedule as well.

A family vacation will definitely put the daily routine aside for just a little while and allow you to kick back and relax. Whether you go away or stay home, enjoy your vacation to the fullest. Do things you would not



normally do with your family on a normal schedule. Vacations are meant to have fun without any worries.

3. Taking a family vacation will create fond memories

Years from now you could open up an album or view a video of your vacation and relive the wonderful memories once again. Memories are to be cherished and remembered for as long as you live.

4. When you take a vacation, you will experience new things

Whether you and your family take a vacation out of state, or around the corner, there is no doubt you all will learn different things. For example, you may have a bus tour which can educate you on history along with other interesting information..

Don't let opportunities to take a family vacation slip away. Vacations are healthy. You may not have the financial ability to take luxurious vacations. However, taking a vacation locally is a great way for you and your family to get away from the usual routine. You and your family will benefit from a well-earned break. And when it is time to return to your normal schedule, you all will have a clear mind and stress free start.

From: <https://familyshare.com/2984/travel/4-reasons-why-a-family-vacation-is-important>

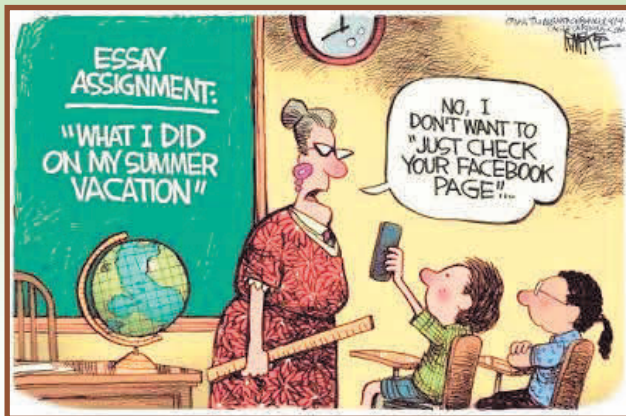
the profiles we create representing ourselves online. We post our most glorious moments online, but hide the most painful. We build a facade of happiness, success, and an image of having it all together. But inside, we are as lost and broken as the next person. Our online selves need more authenticity. And our children need to know the danger of comparing themselves to the rose-colored profiles created on social media.

9. Technology serves a purpose. It should solve problems. Purchasing technology purely for the sake of owning technology is a fool's gold—and has run countless others into great debt. When it comes to buying (or using) technology, I want my children to be routinely asking the question, "What problem does it solve?" Because technology should make our lives easier and more efficient. And if a new technology is not solving an existing problem, it is only adding to them.



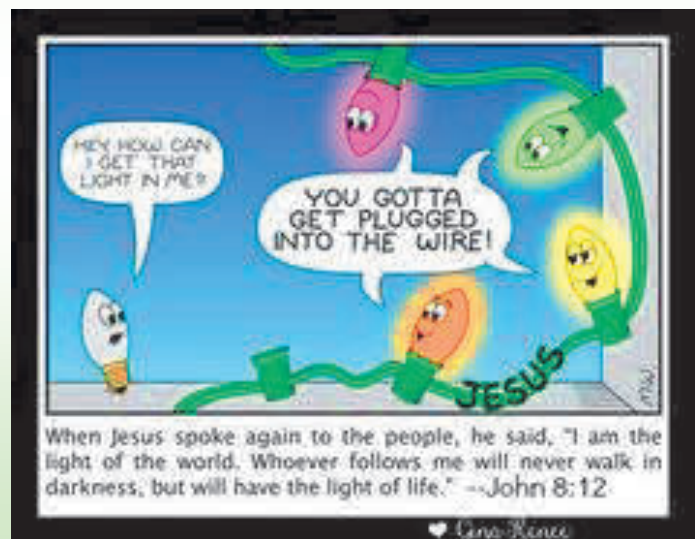
Parenting requires a healthy balance of humility and fierce resolve. Are there any important strategies you have implemented with your children that you think are important to add?

Adapted from: <http://www.becomingminimalist.com/ikids/>



The institution of marriage works better when there's a spiritual connection. If you're marrying just for the sake of the woman, then you may lose interest in each other very soon. When we marry in the interest of the Holy Spirit with the intention of serving God and humanity, then it gives a much larger perspective.
~A. R. Rahman~

I want my life and my marriage to look less like the world and more like Christ.
Marquis Clarke



Marriage is not just spiritual communion, it is also remembering to take out the trash.
~Joyce Brothers~



FIGHT FOR YOUR MARRIAGE
 LIKE EVERYTHING IS AT STAKE BECAUSE IT IS.

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STEAMBOAT

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



WHY SHOULD I CARRY ON? NOBODY EVER SEES ME DOWN HERE! IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE GOT AN IMPORTANT JOB LIKE THE CAPTAIN! WHAT'S THE USE?

THE LORD'S WORK

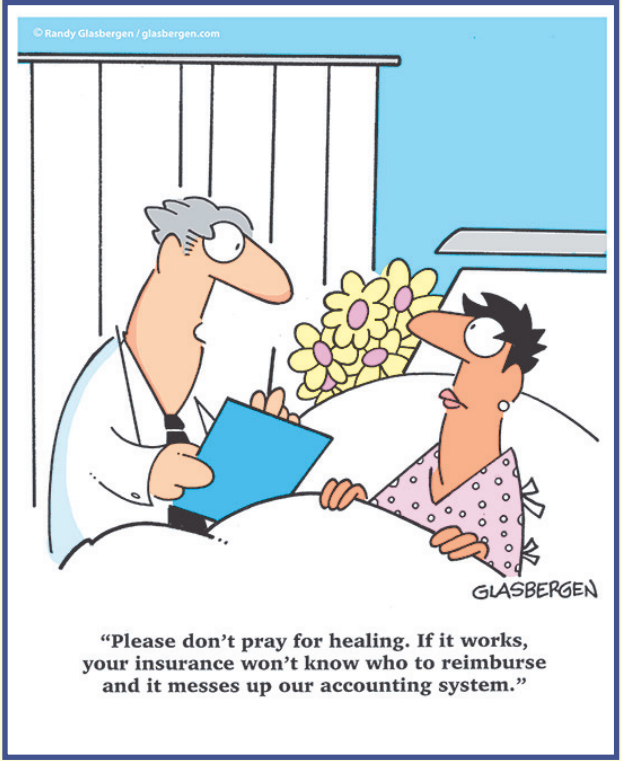


WHY ARE WE SLOWING DOWN?

S.S. CHURCH

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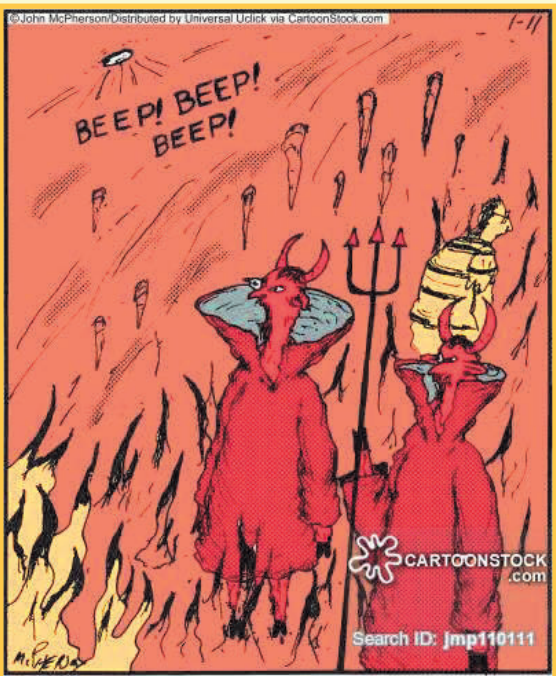
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.
 - 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 KJV



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"Please don't pray for healing. If it works, your insurance won't know who to reimburse and it messes up our accounting system."



BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

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"Oh, for Pete's sake! Not the smoke alarm again!"

Marriage is a thousand little things. It's giving up your right to be right in the heat of an argument. It's forgiving another when they let you down. It's loving someone enough to step down so they can shine. It's friendship. It's being a cheerleader and trusted confidant. It's a place of forgiveness that welcomes one home, and arms they can run to in the midst of a storm. It's grace. It's giving of yourself tirelessly down paths you'd never imagine to travel. Through sickness and pain, poverty and loss, it's carrying the weight of another. It's being the smile they see in the morning, and the body they hold close at night. It's pure love. It's standing together in the face of adversity. It's riding alongside each other in a battle that threatens to tear down your marriage and seeks to grab hold of your faith. It's strength under pressure. It's endless compassion. It's love.

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