

7 Things Husbands Should Stop Doing

Recently, I blogged about things that husbands should never say to wives and things that wives should never say to husbands. They were follow-ups to some very popular posts in recent years on 10 things and 10 more things that wives and husbands (plus 10 more for husbands too) want to hear from each other.

As I looked at writing this post, I came across a good article posted by our friends at FamilyLife, “40 Things Husbands Should Stop Doing.” I picked these seven from the list and added some of my own thoughts:

1. Stop dishonoring your wife by criticizing her in front of your children or in public. You may think you’re being clever or funny, but it’s not helpful to your marriage or honorable to your wife to criticize her, especially in front of others. Your kids need to see you modeling how to be supportive and complimentary, not critical, of your wife.

2. Stop comparing your wife to other women. Saying something like, “Why can’t you be more like Karen?” is demeaning and devaluing to your wife. She is created with immeasurable value and worth. Cherish and honor your wife for who she is, not for what she does or doesn’t do.

3. When your wife tells you about a problem she’s having, don’t immediately try to solve it. She may just need you to listen to her. It’s in our nature as men to want to fix things. So when my wife, Susan, tells me about something, instead of jumping in to fix it, I often ask her something like, “Do you want me just to listen or do you want my input on how to deal with it?”

4. Stop trying to control your wife. This one has been a

struggle for me, especially in our early years in our marriage. I wanted Susan to be more like me ... to think, behave and do things just like me. But when I saw her becoming more like me, I didn't always like it. So I've learned to let go of the reins and let Susan be the woman, wife and mother God created her to be.

5. Stop being passive when it comes to disciplining and training your kids. Parenting is a team effort and is not just mom's job. Be actively involved with your wife in disciplining your children and in training them up to walk in truth and love.

6. Don't be alone with any woman who is not your wife or related to you. I've always had a personal policy not to travel with, have lunch or meet with any other woman alone. To do otherwise would only invite temptation into my life.

7. Stop feeding your sexual desires from any source other than your wife. Whether it's flirting with other woman or dabbling with pornography, avoid anything that could take your mind, heart or body away from your wife. Treat your sexual relationship with your spouse as something to be protected, not just enjoyed.

What are some other things you think husbands should stop doing? Sound off, graciously, in the comments section below.

Coming Friday: 7 Things Wives Should Stop Doing

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .

Study: How Exercise Reverses Effects of Aging

Exercise not only makes you feel better—boosting mental and physical fitness—but it also makes older people resemble much younger people physiologically, according to a new study.

The new findings on the beneficial effects of exercise on aging, by researchers at King's College London, suggest that conventional notions about the inevitability of physical decline as we grow older may be incorrect. In fact, how well we age is, to a large degree, up to us, the researchers said, as *The New York Times* reports.

Many scientific studies have shown that many bodily and cellular processes decline as we age. But the new research, published in *The Journal of Physiology*, aimed to track the health of older people who remain physically active to determine if exercise can slow, halt or even reverse those age-related processes.

“We wanted to understand what happens to the functioning of our bodies as we get older if we take the best-case scenario,” said Stephen Harridge, senior author of the study.

The scientists studied 85 men and 41 women—aged 55 to 79—who bicycle regularly, all of whom had a high degree of fitness. The volunteers ran through a gauntlet of physical and cognitive tests measuring endurance capacity, muscular mass and strength, pedaling power, metabolic health, balance, memory function, bone density and reflexes.

The researchers then compared the results of cyclists in the study to standard benchmarks of supposedly normal aging. The results indicated the cyclists did not appear to show their age and on almost all measures their physical functioning was much closer to those of young adults than others their own

age.

Even the oldest cyclists had younger people's levels of balance, reflexes, metabolic health and memory ability.

"If you gave this dataset to a clinician and asked him to predict the age" of one of the cyclists based on his or her test results, Harridge said, "it would be impossible." On paper, they all look young.

The study shows that "being physically active makes your body function on the inside more like a young person's," he added.

For the original article, visit .

Are You Willing to Live for Your Children?

My friend Phil took his 12-year-old son, Mark, to fish for salmon in Alaska. They hired a seaplane and a couple of guides and flew to a pristine, secluded bay.

After a day fishing upstream, they returned to find their seaplane high and dry. The tides fluctuated 23 feet in that particular bay, and the pontoons rested on a bed of gravel. Since they couldn't fly out till morning, they settled in for the night and enjoyed some of their catch for dinner. Then they slept in the plane.

In the morning the seaplane was adrift, so they promptly cranked the engine and started to take off. Too late, they discovered a piece of gravel had punctured one of the pontoons, filled it with water, and the plane capsized. No safety equipment could be found on board—no life vests, no

flares, nothing. The plane gurgled and submerged into the blackness of the icy morning sea.

Fortunately, they all had waders, which they inflated. The frigid Alaskan water chilled their breath. They all began to swim for shore, but the riptide countered every stroke. The two men alongside Phil and Mark were strong swimmers and they both made shore, one just catching the tip of land as the tides pulled them out of the bay toward the open sea.

Their two companions last saw Phil and Mark as disappearing dots on the horizon, swept arm in arm out to sea. The Coast Guard reported they probably lasted no more than an hour in the freezing waters—hypothermia would chill the body functions and they would go to sleep. Mark, with a smaller body mass, would fall asleep first in his father's arms. Phil, a strong swimmer himself, could have made the shoreline too, but that would have meant abandoning his son. Their bodies were never found.

What father wouldn't be willing to die for his son? If we are willing to go so far as to die for our children, why is it that we often don't seem willing to live as a godly example for them?

Until every church disciples every man ...

Excerpted from *The Man in the Mirror, 25th Anniversary Edition*.

Patrick Morley is the president of *Man in the Mirror*.

Why Do Women Cheat?

One of my favorite movies, particularly this time of year, is *When Harry Met Sally*. There are so many famous lines and funny moments. In one scene, Billy Crystal's character, Harry, is at a football game with his friend Jess talking about how he and his wife are separating. Among a cheering crowd doing the wave, he tells his friend the humiliatingly sad story of his wife deciding to move out and leave him. He describes his wife as saying she wasn't sure she wanted to be married anymore.

It was not personal; she had just become unsure about the institution of marriage. When a moving company immediately shows up to move her out, he knew something was up. He eventually finds out that she left him for another man. That's when his friend Jess responds, "Marriages don't break up on account of infidelity. It's just a symptom that something else is wrong."

There are always things below the surface that cause people to cheat. NOTHING ever justifies cheating, but there are reasons it happens. There's a big difference between the two. Knowing the reasons gives our marriages a better chance at not falling into this unfortunate end.

Disconnected Relationship With Christ

See the post from Monday. It's the same advice.

Disconnection From Spouse

More than anything, women are fulfilled in a relationship from the emotional connection. When they feel like their husband no longer listens to them, hears them or understands them, they feel alienated and alone. The only thing that relieves the pain of loneliness is connection. If it does not come through their husband, the temptation to relieve the pain somewhere

else is born.

Win Early: While there are some women who cheat while regarding their husbands as "the perfect guy," the chances are significantly reduced when there is a connection. Listen to her and communicate as much as possible.

Boredom

Everything has gotten comfortable. The monotony of the same thing day in and day out leads to her being bored with her life and marital dynamic. When everyone is tired, it can be hard to create romance and experience new things. Women long for the excitement of being pursued and feeling attractive. Some go searching for it and some have their head turned in a moment of weakness.

Win Early: Switch things up and try new things together. Let her know how passionate you are about her and never stop pursuing.

Revenge

This is simple. The husband cheats and the wife sets out to get him back by doing the same. Women that engage in revenge affairs rarely end up feeling better. Normally increased emptiness follows.

Win Early: Stop yourself immediately if you are doing, or even thinking about, something you wouldn't like your wife doing.

Unmet Expectations

They have needs from their husband that are left unfulfilled: sexual, emotional support or time together. The list can go on and on. Disappointment and sometimes bitterness sets in so they go looking somewhere else to meet the need.

Win Early: Communicate openly about expectations. Meet expectations where you can, but there should also be give-and-

take. Some of her needs may need to be sacrificed, and yours as well. A spouse can never fill the needs of another completely. That's where forgiveness and grace are so important.

Abuse

Deeply embedded wounds resulting from past abuse include a low self-esteem and dissatisfaction in sexual relationships. Oddly enough, validation is sought out through promiscuity and attention from men. This may even happen when the husband gives his wife significant validation and attention. It is just not enough to heal the wound.

Win Early: Validation is good, but it is treating the symptom. Both of you need to see a counselor regularly.

For a view of the other side of the coin, see Monday's post titled, "Why Do Men Cheat?"

Sound Off: Has your wife ever expressed any of the traits above?

Huddle up with your wife and ask, "What is your greatest need?"

© 2015 All Pro Dad. All Rights Reserved. Family First, All Pro Dad, iMOM, and Family Minute with Mark Merrill are registered trademarks. Used with permission.

For the original article, visit .

This Is as Dangerous to Your Heart as Smoking

Anger. It's an emotion we all feel from time to time. Like stress or fear, anger—at work, home or on the road—is a common experience of modern-day life. But how you manage it could determine how susceptible you are to heart disease and other health problems.

So says Joseph Shrand, M.D., a Harvard Medical School psychiatrist and author whose latest book *Outsmarting Anger: 7 Strategies for Defusing Our Most Dangerous Emotion*—argues that managing anger may be as important to your heart health as giving up tobacco, eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise. In an interview on Newsmax TV's *Meet The Doctors*, Dr. Shrand unpacks what he describes as an “emotional survival kit” he's developed for doing so.

“[Anger] is normal in everyone, it is a survival emotion,” says Dr. Shrand, a former child actor on the Boston-based PBS kids' television program *Zoom*. “Anger is the fight branch of fight-flight. So we get angry when we think somebody is imposing on us. Anger, if you really think about it, is an emotion designed to change the behavior of somebody else. We get angry when we want somebody to do something different—[to] start doing something or stop doing something.”

Many medical studies have found people who shout, yell and rage are more likely to suffer heart problems than those who can stay calm when angry. Scientists don't know exactly why, but anger and hostility activate the so-called “fight or flight response.” That, in turn, boosts levels of stress hormones—including adrenaline and cortisol—that speed up your heart rate and increase your blood pressure.

A recent analysis of 44 studies published in the *Journal of*

the American College of Cardiology found, for instance, that people who have a hard time controlling their anger are more likely to have heart problems than those who manage their emotions in healthier ways. The researchers also found anger does more harm to men's hearts than women's.

Dr. Shrand says the keys to defusing our most dangerous emotion are recognizing why we are angry, maintaining calm and working toward a solution to the problem that has provoked it. He has developed a seven-step method for doing so:

No. 1: Recognize rage. The first step in defusing anger is to recognize it for what it is—turning your emotions into intellectual thoughts in the process. “Recognition is a thinking function, where anger is a feeling,” Dr. Shrand notes. “As soon as you begin to recognize you’re angry you are more in control of it. And when you recognize it you realize I want to see something different.”

No. 2: Determine why you’re angry. Are you envious or suspicious of another person? Understanding what has provoked your anger can help you defuse it. “We get envious if we think somebody has something more than us; we get suspicious if we think they’re trying to take something from us,” he explains.

No. 3: See anger as a result of a threat. Knowing this can help neutralize your anger because you understand its origins, Dr. Shrand says.

No. 4: Project peace. Try to stay calm when you feel rage building, and don’t allow yourself to be pulled into arguments or shouting matches.

No. 5: Engage empathy. If another person’s words or actions have provoked your anger, try to understand that individual’s perspective, even if you don’t agree with it. “Human beings want to feel valued by other human beings and empathy is [about] sending a message—I’m interested in you,” he says.

No. 6: Acknowledge differences. Accepting that another person's perspective is different from yours is not the same thing as agreeing with the other person, but doing so can help you manage anger over disagreements. "Communicate clearly, say, 'Look I can see you're angry ... I'm interested in why you are angry,'" he explains.

No. 7: Trade thanks. Resolving interpersonal conflicts that spark anger can be as simple as saying thank you. "Think about this: 90 percent of the time in our culture when somebody says thank you, the other person says you're welcome," he says. "Now that's interesting, that means I don't see you as a threat, I'm not envious, I'm not suspicious."

"You've projected peace, you've engaged empathy, you've communicated, you've traded thanks—these are the seven steps."

For the original article, visit [this link](#).

Why Do Men Cheat?

In my opinion, the best movie about Vietnam is *We Were Soldiers* starring Mel Gibson. He plays lieutenant general Hal Moore who commanded the first major battle of that war known as the Battle of Ia Drang.

Surrounded and facing overwhelming odds, Moore and his soldiers withstood the onslaught for a week. One of the things Moore credits as a reason for the success was the love and devotion the soldiers had for one another. However, equally as important, was Moore's consistent studying of the battlefield and knowledge of his enemy.

He knew their strategies and the angles they would take to

attack. This enabled him to position his forces in places that gave the greatest chance of victory.

In marriage, it is important to have love and devotion to one another. However, it is also equally important to know the temptations and pitfalls that attack marriage. One of the biggest enemies of marriage is infidelity. Knowing this enemy inside and out will help us remain faithful. Tomorrow, we will discuss why women cheat. Today we answer the question, "Why Do Men Cheat?"

Note: These are reasons, not justifications. Cheating is never justifiable under any circumstances.

Unconnected Relationship With Christ

If you are a believer, this goes without saying. If you are even tempted to cheat, run to your Bible and get engrossed in the Word.

Unfulfilled Emotional Needs

This seems to be the top reason. Most men who cheat consistently have expressed feeling disconnected from their wives. Men and women were both created for relationships. The need for emotional connection is innate in all of us, man or woman. However, physical affection and sex is an important way for men to feel emotionally connected with their wives. When that isn't happening, it is easy for men to become withdrawn. When husbands emotionally drift from their wives, other connections will act like gravity.

Win Early: Work tirelessly to connect with your wife. When you feel yourself drifting, do whatever it takes to keep your feet secured in your marriage. Go out on dates, talk, find something new to experience together. Never stop, ever.

The Thrill, Insecurity and Ego

There are many men that simply love the excitement of the

chase. The feeling of meeting a challenge and winning her over. It makes them feel powerful and attractive. This feeling is particularly enticing when a man feels neglected by his wife. A neglected man will feel rejected and insecure with a bruised ego. As a result, they go hunting to regain the sense of power and self-confidence they have lost.

Win Early: True power cannot be attained in the affirmation of others. The greatest and most challenging test for any man is to romance and pursue the same woman for a lifetime. Wake up every day and ask the question: "How can I win my wife today?"

Distraction

Being a husband and father is stressful. A man may love his wife, but there are now obligations to fulfill. The single life was carefree, but also lonely. They would rather not lose their wife but want a distraction from the pressure that comes with responsibility. They are looking for a quick return to the carefree days with the security of a spouse intact.

Win Early: Stay in the game. Stop the temptation the moment the thought enters your mind, rather than cradling it. When you find yourself looking for distractions, do the opposite. Embrace your responsibilities or you may lose them.

Sexual Addiction

There are women that have this problem, but mainly men. The exact cause is unknown but can involve both a chemical and/or psychological reason. These men consistently engage in sexual behavior (including viewing porn or participating in chat rooms) that brings negative outcomes. Despite the negative effects in their lives, they do not stop.

Win Early: Get treatment immediately. This can be overcome with pastoral counseling or support groups—perhaps both.

Sound Off: How do you remain faithful to your wife?

Huddle up with your wife and ask, "How can we avoid these pitfalls?"

Coming Tuesday: Why Do Women Cheat?

© 2014 All Pro Dad. All Rights Reserved. Family First, All Pro Dad, iMOM, and Family Minute with Mark Merrill are registered trademarks. Used with permission.

For the original article, visit .

Run Your Race: Remembering What's Good for Your Body

We've all done stupid things—things that starkly opposed our better judgment, things that may have been fun and exciting at the time—but in the end simply weren't worth it. And most have us have even done stupid things at the gym, like me recently.

It was a cold and dreary day, not unlike the settings of many an Edgar Allan Poe story. Anyway, I don't know what the temperature was exactly, but to this summer-loving, snow-admiring-but-avoiding Texas girl, it felt like negative infinity. And the workout of the day at our CrossFit gym contained just under a mile of running.

"I'm cold-natured and a big baby when it comes to wintry weather. I will just row inside where it's warm instead of running in the drizzle and wind," reasoned wise Diana.

"But no one else is rowing inside; no one else has any complaints. Better suck it up, buttercup," argued stubborn, stup—ahem—less wise Diana.

You can probably guess which voice was overruled. Yes indeed: that of Wise Diana. Rather than listen to reason, I chose to subject myself to the elements and run like Eric Little in *Chariots of Fire* (not pacing myself by taking it easier than normal was the second dumbest thing I did during that workout).

Consequently, I have had to replace coffee with copious amounts of herbal tea and apple cider-infused water. I have also been blowing my nose so often that it now resembles Rudolph's, taking a week's worth of vitamins A, C and D each day, and sniffing Peppermint oil like there's no tomorrow.

And I've been unable to exercise with the rest of my CrossFit and Yoga peeps because, given the aforementioned runny nose situation, many movements, such as burpees, push-ups, and downward-facing dogs, are just downright messy. Instead of doing fun workouts with a fun group, I've been doing dumbbell and barbell work all by my lonesome in a dark, dank dungeon (OK, so I've still been in the general vicinity of everyone else, but in my head I'm confined inside a very un-fun isolation chamber).

Perhaps I'm being hard on myself, but I think I need to be. It can be very easy for us to throw caution to the wind when we're faced with a challenge that others are diving headlong into, a challenge that to our peers may not seem that difficult at all (in fact, no one else seemed hesitant to run outside on Friday—one fellow athlete even wore shorts and a t-shirt).

Just because we *want* to attempt something doesn't mean we *should*. In ignoring my inner voice of reason, I violated a well-known, oft-preached exercise commandment:

"Thou shalt listen to thine body."

"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (Prov. 28:26).

The next time I'm faced with a never-before-attempted challenge at the gym (running in super cold temps was for me!), I plan to ask myself the questions below, and I encourage you to do the same. Whether it's lifting heavier weights, facing an advanced movement that once seemed impossible or simply exercising for the first time in decades, I believe they will be helpful, and at the very least save you from the sniffles and a coffee-less couple of days!

1. What has prevented me from doing this before?
2. Have I been gradually working toward this so that I am well prepared to try today?
3. What are the advantages of doing this today?
4. What are the disadvantages?
5. Would I encourage someone else in a similar position to do this?
6. Have I asked a professional for their opinion on whether I should do this?
7. Have I prayed about it?

Regarding No. 7, I do believe that even our workouts should be prayed over. First Corinthians 10:31 tells us that "Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God."

Lifting weights, running marathons, doing CrossFit, Yoga, Pilates, etc. should all be taken before the Lord in prayer as we ask Him to grant us wisdom on how best to train and fuel our bodies, including when to take it back a notch and rest. Failing to quiet ourselves before our Father and seek His counsel can set us up for all sorts of ailments, both physical and spiritual.

Physically, we can become run down, depressed or sick like I currently am. And spiritually, we run the risk of letting exercise, food, what have you, become an idol in our lives. Any time you feel that you absolutely cannot and will not be satisfied until you go to the gym, tackle that weight, eat

that treat, or deprive yourself of a meal, ask yourself this eighth question:

Have I placed (fill in the blank) before God and made it an idol in my life?

If the answer is yes, know that the Lord longs to hear from you and is more than able to help you reprioritize your life with Christ at the top, reorganize your actions with prayer at the center, and refresh your soul with godly wisdom flowing through it.

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, and I will deliver him and honor him” (Psalms 91:15).

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of *Creation House's Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman's Guide to Total Fitness* and her latest book, *Perfect Fit: Weekly Wisdom and Workouts for Women of Faith and Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [www.dianataylor.com](#), and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Twitter.

For the original article, visit [www.dianataylor.com](#).

What Is the No. 1 Threat to Marriages?

Every young sports fan dreams of being a professional athlete—the physique, fame and fortune. Unfortunately, when we pick up the sports page or log on to the net, we see on a regular basis that not all athletes are as strong at home as they are on the field.

That's because there's one more thing that often accompanies professional athletic success: Adoring women.

Sex scandals have taken down some of the most amazing athletes and their marriages. Sitting atop of their game, many athletes don't know how to deal with the adoration of women, and fall to a lack of self-control and short-term memory loss. Then *poof*—their marriage is in shambles, reputation tainted, costly divorce proceedings, and the media hyenas eat up the infidelity stories until there is nothing left on the bone.

You might be surprised to know, however, I don't think the No. 1 threat to marriage is infidelity. Of course, cheating can certainly cause divorce and make it extremely difficult to recover a healthy marriage. And yes, I agree women can be highly tempting, but they are merely accomplices—because the hunger for power, money, fame and success can also consume a man and wreck a marriage.

I think the No. 1 threat to marriage is *ourselves*.

You are a target and under constant attack. Your character and integrity are vulnerable, especially if you're not aware of the battle going on in your life—the spiritual battle to destroy you or deliver you.

In Ephesians 6:10, the apostle Paul writes that God's man needs to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." If you don't suit up for the real battle being waged for control of your energy and expression don't expect to win it.

So how does a man of God protect against the No. 1 threat to marriage? Be a hero at home. Here how:

1. Power up. Paul writes to “be strong in the Lord,” which means to seek God, know God and obey His word. There’s power in knowing Scripture and doing His will.

2. Protect your spiritual self. Paul says to put on “the full armor of God,” describing it and our weapons in Ephesians 6:14-17.

3. Pray on all occasions. In verse 18, Paul says to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” Even in the midst of temptation, we should pray.

4. Partner up. I believe God’s men need accountability from other men who can honestly discuss the challenges they face and offer loving guidance.

5. Join the program. We need to have the mindset that we are in a “character-development program.” With that focus, knowing God is interested in molding us to His image, we should look at tests and temptations through the corrective lens of God’s love and plan for our lives. We need to emulate the ultimate model, who is always faithful and keeps His promises—God.

6. Pump up with practice. Practice making good decisions in your daily walk with God to pump up your spiritual muscles and avoid your carnal weaknesses. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible says we should be “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” That takes practice.

I’m not saying marriage is easy. It takes work, communication, courageous love and perseverance. But if we work on ourselves as much as we work on the marriage, there will be great earthly and heavenly reward.

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him,” says James 1:12.

Struggling with your marriage, or know someone who is? Click

here for material by Kenny that will encourage and equip you to be her Hero at Home.

Kenny Luck is the president and founder of Every Man Ministries. As the former men's pastor at Saddleback Church in California and current leadership pastor at Crossline Community Church, Kenny has found the proven way to improve men's ministries around the world. *Sleeping Giant* is this blueprint, and gives men the tools they need to lead and understand their own men's ministry. Watch Kenny's teachings at [www.sleepinggiant.com](#) and start your men's group today!

For the original article, visit [www.sleepinggiant.com](#).

'A Merry Heart Doeth Good Like a Medicine'

If you want to keep your heart healthy, try being optimistic.

An 11-year study of more than 5,100 adults between the ages of 45 and 84 found that optimistic people more than double the odds of having ideal cardiovascular health, compared to those who are more pessimistic.

"This association remains significant, even after adjusting for socio-demographic characteristics and poor mental health," lead author Rosalba Hernandez, a professor of social work at the University of Illinois, said.

Researchers also found that optimists had significantly better blood sugar and total cholesterol levels.

So, staying optimistic can not only help you emotionally, it can make a genuine difference in your physical health as well.

For the original article, visit .

7 Tips to Avoid Making Disastrous Family Decisions

In 2015 your family will very likely face some big decisions. Some decisions you'll see coming and others will need to be made without warning.

These big decisions can put a lot of stress on a marriage and family. Should you stay in your current job or chase a new one or keep looking for that job that seems so elusive? Should you stay in your church? What school should your kids be in? Is this the right house? Should you stay or move? Do you need to upsize or downsize your car?

Healthy decisions tend to be the ones that are made with your spouse involved in the process.

With that in mind, here are seven tips to avoid making disastrous family decisions:

1. Consult God in prayer. That should be a given for any believer. In my blog *The Key to a Close-Knit Family*, I talked about how important it is for a family to pray together and to worship together. Praying together as a family about a big decision will help you to be in one accord and to rely on God for His wisdom.

2. No big decision should be made without the full input and consideration of both spouses. When we make decisions without our spouse's input, we are communicating, "I don't value or need your opinion and perspective. I've got this."

Author Dr. Greg Smalley shared in this post about the importance of working with your spouse to achieve wise decision-making together. One of his points is to create “pros and cons” lists together.

3. Don't be afraid to say, “I don't know, but I'm going to research that.” Sometimes we are reluctant to admit that we don't know it all. When it comes to making healthy decisions for your marriage and family, it's better to be humble enough to admit you don't know something than to fake it. And don't assume that a hard question from your spouse is a personal attack. Be willing to hear those questions and then find some answers.

4. Seek wise counsel. Needing to solve a financial decision? Trying to figure out a career choice issue? Why not find people who are wise and knowledgeable about those issues and get their counsel? Don't just do a quick Internet search and assume you've got all the facts.

5. Talk to the kids, especially if they are older. While our kids do not necessarily get a “vote” on decisions, you might be well served to give them a “voice” and hear what they have to say. They will then feel part of the process and may even have some good input.

6. Don't be too hasty to discount your “gut feeling” about things. What many call “gut feelings” may be promptings from God to do or not do something. So we should heed those promptings as part of the decision-making process.

7. Bring the heart and the mind together. It's not uncommon for each one of us to either lean towards emotional decision-making or intellectual decision-making. There is great value in both of those perspectives. Don't discount or discredit one over the other.

What are some other tips you have learned that help you make good decisions?

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .