

Maturity: Your Wife Still Has It

Don't you just love buying birthday cards—or any type of card, for that matter?

In my early days of marriage, I use to stand in the card aisle and just stare at the mass of cute quotes, long speeches and odd pictures. Why do I need to spend \$5 on a card when she already knows I love her? Do all males have this issue or is it simply me? Remember, I said *early* marriage.

I finally learned the reason it was important to get a card for my wife was because she liked to receive them. It all goes back to the love languages. I also learned I didn't always have to get the tender card with fancy writing and hearts plastered all over it. I could keep it simple and to the point. Just the way a man likes it. Right?

My wife recently celebrated the first anniversary of her 29th birthday. As some of you can probably relate, this life milestone is not always the most pleasant for some people. I personally don't think I'll have a problem with the 30-year mark, but I could be wrong. But I could tell she definitely struggled with it.

How do I handle this? How do I let my beautiful wife know that age means nothing to me and that I still want her like crazy? The answer God sent me was in a card.

I put on my special card-reader glasses, took a lot of deep breaths, and began my journey down the card aisle.

Do you have any advice on how to find the perfect card for your spouse, or have you found a great alternative in your marriage?

Not this one, not that one. This one looks good, but that one has way too much glitter. This one says a lot of stuff but never gets to the point. That one has way too many hearts.

Walk up and down the aisles. Look in other random sections. Read a few strange cards that have nothing to do with my wife, but the crazy dog wearing glasses drew me in. Don't act like you don't know what I'm talking about. On and on and on. Finally I found the perfect card. What did it say?

The front had a husband peeking around the corner of a wall, checking out his wife. It said, "Happy birthday to my wife who still has it." The inside said, "From your husband who still wants it."

The card was perfect, and I was able to get out of the store finally. It was simple, but it put out the message that I wanted my wife to hear. Even though she felt older and bad about herself, I loved her even more! The card was a hit, and it made for a great night!

Husbands, we have to do a better job of supporting our wives and letting them know they still have it and we still want it. Find ways to start doing it right now!

The best part is still to come.

A couple of days after her birthday, we were still talking about the card. Then I mentioned how cool it would be to have T-shirts that said something similar to the card. This was the inspiration I needed to finally open up Manturity Apparel. And you can now get the shirts, featured in the photo for the article, for you and your spouse.

I have to admit that I love these shirts, and I think you and your spouse will love them too. My wife and I have worn them a few times and get some great responses. Show off your marriage and get a pair of these shirts! Visit the shop.

What are some ways you let your spouse know that he or she still has it and you still want it?

Maturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Maturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

How to Disarm the Profanity Sting

When Terry Bradshaw recently released an expletive beginning with an "f" and rhyming with *yuck*, little did he know his microphone was on and airing live on national television via a Fox Sports broadcast.

Oops.

Fox Sports apologized to Terry and viewers "who unfortunately heard the comments." Ever do that? Apologize for your "French"? Or let a swear word slip and gulp it down with red-faced humble pie?

I imagine we have all let a word fly that would embarrass our mothers. Unfortunately, foul language is common nomenclature among many men. There's a reason it's called foul. Because after it's been exposed, it stinks. It spoils the air.

But you might be thinking, "What's the big deal?" Well, a lot,

actually.

Words Reflect the Heart

In Matthew 15:18, the Bible says, "But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them." And in Luke 6:45: "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

Words Are Powerful

They can spoil or save. They can hurt or heal. Words are important. In fact, God says before time, He was *the Word*. His name is a word, and He says one day "all knees shall bow at the name of Jesus" in Philippians 2:9-11.

God even warns in the Ten Commandments not use the name of God in vain—perhaps the origin of foul language, where it says in Exodus 20:7, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

Words Reveal the Truth

Men will posture up with profanity and a scowl on their face to appear tough, manly and intimidating and to establish their place in the pecking order. But often this is a facade, covering up truth on the inside—a heart that's been hurt, a boy seeking respect, a man fearing failure.

Whenever I hear profanity, I don't get offended or scared. I empathize for the man. The bigger the mouth, the bigger the insecurity.

Jesus was famous for hanging out with the "wrong crowd." They felt comfortable with Jesus because He didn't cringe at their words and behaviors. He was more interested in their hearts.

Here's what Jesus taught me about handling F-bomb flingers:

1. Fear less. Don't let them bug you. Language is an instrument to create control or the perception of control. When a man turns up the volume on foul language, I realize he can't control people in a good way, so he has to control people in a bad way. Men who swear are men seeking attention, often seeking help.

2. Ask more. Instead of shrinking in fear, try to push the macho veil away. Ask questions to discover the "why" behind the machismo. I want to be like Jesus and try to get to the heart of the matter. There's a story behind bad language. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care, right? Have compassion and recognize there's more to the story.

If God's man is on the right path, becoming more like Jesus every day, then your words will reflect a heart full of compassion, grace, love and hope. In Matthew 12:35, the Bible says, "A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him."

So don't fear the F-bomb. Disarm it the way Jesus did.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

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

3 Ways to Get to the Root of Anger

“Why are you so angry?” my son asked me after I had a tough day and took it out on him.

It would have been easy to disregard his comment and disregard my anger, but it made me think instead. It can be easy to push aside our anger without any real effort to get to the root of it. However, I think it’s time we take my son’s advice and ask ourselves, “Why are you so angry?”

In his book *Mad About Us: Moving From Anger to Intimacy With Your Spouse*, Dr. Gary Oliver writes on the effects of ignoring your anger. He compared bouts of anger to a flashing warning light coming on in our cars. When we see that blinking red light, we work to solve it in order to avoid bigger problems with our car in the future.

In the same way, we cannot ignore small amounts of anger here and there in our lives, or it too will lead to bigger problems. In his book, Dr. Oliver points out, “Over the years, we’ve discovered that whenever we ignore or bury an emotion, it is buried alive. At some time and in some way, that ignored or buried emotion will express itself—physically, psychologically, or spiritually.” By addressing our anger as it comes, we will be able to stop this strong emotion from building up.

Here are three ways to help answer the question, “Why are you so angry?”

1. **Face it.** Don’t avoid the red warning light out of fear. The most important thing is to first face the fact that we all struggle with anger. As humans, we naturally react emotionally to distressing situations.

2. Find it. Next, after facing it, we must find the root of the anger that is lodged deep within us. Common roots of anger include fear, pain and frustration. For example, some people become angry as a fearful reaction to uncertainty, to fear of losing a job or to fear of failure. Others become angry when they are hurt in relationships or are caused pain by close friends. When it comes to me, the root of my anger is often found in all the little frustrations I've let build up within me.

3. Figure it out. Once we've found the root of our anger, we will be able to figure out how to deal with it in a healthier way.

- **Deal with fear.** Sometimes the best way to face our fears is to write them out. By taking the time to examine what you're deeply afraid of on a piece of paper, you will be able to rationalize your thoughts. In the future, this may help keep fears from building up into anger.
- **Deal with pain.** If you're trapped and experiencing pain, go talk to the person who caused you pain right now. Whether the hurt is a result of a misunderstanding or an intentional attack, you won't be able to move forward until you discuss your pain with the person who hurt you. Only when confession and forgiveness are present will you be able to let go of your anger.
- **Deal with frustration.** While we can't always choose what happens to us, we *can* choose how to respond. So in response to frustrating moments, choose to dwell on the positive. Also, frustration is sometimes the result of unmet expectations. Make sure your expectations are realistic, and show grace if they are not fulfilled.

I'd like to leave you with Dr. Gary Oliver's words: "One of the many potentially positive aspects of anger is that it can serve as a very powerful and effective warning system. Healthy anger can help us identify problems and needs and provide us with the energy to do something about them."

When was the last time you were angry, and how did you deal with it? Please share by leaving a comment below.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit [.](#)

Never Discipline Whom You've Not Disciplined

Have you ever broken a rule that you didn't know was a rule?

You may have had this happen to you as a boy. Your curiosity and sense of adventure gets you into a mess. Then you get into terrible trouble because you didn't know that it was wrong, or dumb, or foolish.

A few years ago, I became frustrated at one of my children because they did something so obviously foolish that I couldn't believe they did it. I wanted to explode in my anger, but the Spirit began to instruct me saying, "Neil, did you ever instruct your child about this? When did you teach them a principle concerning this? Never discipline whom you've not disciplined."

I learned that I had a responsibility to teach my children. This is not something that I can pawn off to others and expect the results that I want. I can't shrug off this duty. Yes, I can employ a school and entrust them to be raised in a church but it is my calling to train them in the way they are to go.

Did you know that Abraham was chosen to be in covenant with God because of his teaching ability? That's right, God chose him because, "he will direct his children and his household

after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised to do.”

God actually assigned His covenant blessing to Abraham because he could be trusted to teach.

Children are insatiable learners. If we as parents do not teach them they will get their wisdom from someone else. Unfortunately, they often will go to the unknowing for knowledge. The knowledge that children learn from the world or from their friends is often the knowledge of good and evil. It can be sinful and wicked. You don't want to relegate your responsibility to others.

Notice, that Abraham's teaching would ensure God's promises. God said, “I will bring about for Abraham what I have promised to do.”

If you want to ensure that your child does not depart from the way of God, you must teach them. Here is the simple, three-step strategy I use to teach:

Precept

A precept is an established authority. It is immovable, eternal, foundational truth. When you read the Word of God, look for precepts. When you start with a precept, your teaching is based upon foundational truth and authority. It isn't because you say so but because it is established. An example of a precept is, “Do not muzzle the ox while he is treading out the grain.” This is an agrarian and ethical treatment rule to allow an ox to graze while he is working.

Principle

A principle is the universal truth and application of a precept. This principle should direct my behavior, belief system, and conduct. Our example of, “do not muzzle the ox

while he is treading out the grain” helps us understand that we should employ ethical treatment of an animal that is under our care or in labor of use.

Practice

Practice is taking the precept, converting it to a principle, and applying it to my life. I may not have an ox, so is this precept irrelevant to me? It would seem not, but in fact, the Apostle Paul used this example to teach that ministers of the gospel should receive their financial salaries from ministering the gospel.

We are created with a deep desire to learn and receive knowledge. We should always be looking to expand our mind, to learn, to think. As men, we don't want to participate in useless exercises based on theory. We want to know what works. Call it street smarts or common sense, but men want practical, real-life applications. Your children are no different. They need real-world knowledge, too. Your children need to know how to make and invest money. They need to know what to do if the car breaks down or they have an accident.

Practically speaking, I teach my children as we go in life—when we're driving, playing golf, eating, etc. Don't try to over-structure your teaching time with them. Do it as you do life together.

***FivestarMan** was founded in 2008 by **Neil Kennedy**. Kennedy has passionately promoted God's Word for 25-plus years of ministry. He is known for practically applying biblical principles that elevate people to a new level of living. As a business, church, ministry and life consultant, Kennedy has helped others strategize the necessary steps to reach their full potential.*

For the original article, visit .

5 Ways a Man Can Build Resolution

About three years ago, I was finally put in charge of running my own work. I had been with the same construction company for about four years and had stayed an assistant up until this point. With this particular project under the gun to finish, I was appointed a higher position of responsibility. It was time to take action.

Being an assistant has its perks, but also it's setbacks. In some ways I am protected from the overall responsibility. I don't have to make very large decisions and, if I do, I can always fall back to the big man in charge. In a sense, I have a protection bubble around me.

As much as I like my safety bubble, it has its setbacks. These setbacks come in the form of always having to take direction from others, backing down when I am nervous about decisions and ultimately scared to ever pull the trigger. My "background" resolution is that I don't have what it takes to run my own work. This is a problem.

After running my own work for about a month and still taking the abuse of those around me, I decided it was time to establish some resolutions. If they want to put me in charge, not only do I need to trust myself, but everyone else needs to learn how to trust me. I need to stand up for myself.

Here were some of my resolutions:

- I do have what it takes.
- I can make good decisions.
- I will stand up for myself around others.

- I will admit when I am wrong.
- I will take responsibility for my work and for my actions.

These resolutions made a huge difference in the way I went about working at that project and with the people working around me. And to be honest, I still use these resolutions at my work among some other ones that I have added. I was able to recognize the situation and take action against it.

So what resolutions are you holding back in your own life? What are some areas at your work that need attention? What are some areas with your marriage or family that need attention? What are some areas in your spiritual life that need resolutions? Like I said at the beginning, don't wait for a holiday or for someone else to point out something to you. Start working on this today.

Here are 5 ways you can start building resolutions:

1. Recognize where you are in one of these areas.
2. Decide where you want to go or be in one of these areas.
3. Establish the terms of your resolution.
4. Stick to the terms of your resolution (Read about Hardihood).
5. Accept responsibility for your actions.

So, again, what resolutions are you holding back? Assess the five points above and start taking action today!

Let's get into some of the resolutions in your life. Share some of the areas in your life in the comments below. Let's be a community of building each other up!

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marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Manturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

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Are You Fighting the Good Fight?

The Navy shipyard, Sandy Hook, Columbine—the mere mention of these names opens files in our minds about seemingly senseless shootings, deaths, perhaps vulnerability. Along with these, recent news of Syrian President Assad unleashing chemical warfare on unsuspecting populations and the anniversary of 9/11 remind us of moments in time when the world stops to ask “Why?”

While these events fuel national news reports and investigators pursue answers, inevitably the tsunami of discussions will revert to worldly explanations and political agendas. It amazes me that when a massacre occurs, we tend to try to contain the culture with the politics of peace, federal funding for education or counseling or economic plans for poverty.

Cultural men don't want to rely on spiritual answers. There's no room for the “morality play” in their game because those answers force us to look in the mirror.

Instead of talking about gun control, maybe we should be talking about “guy control” or how to help the average man

avoid going evil. All men are vulnerable to getting hijacked by worldly systems of thinking, which can cause them to inflict evil.

Here's the bottom line: We are in a fight for our faith. In 1 Timothy 6:12, we are instructed to "fight the good fight of faith." So put on your spiritual boxing gloves, lace up your shoes of peace and step into the ring—which is right outside your door.

Nevertheless, temptations arise. Bad thoughts happen, even to God's men. So how do you fight the good fight of faith, especially when you are tempted to do something bad, even evil?

1. Turn to God. David, the writer of many of the psalms in the Bible, called God his "refuge" and "strong tower" and "shepherd." God is our strength in times of trouble and an oasis in chaos. His Spirit counsels. His love soothes. His grace serves. God knows you, the situation and the enemy better than anyone. Turning to him isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of strength.

2. Turn to the body of Christ. Have evil thoughts? Temptations? Confessing them depletes their power. There's power in confession and even more power among other men of God. Look at James 5:16, where it says, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

The Bible also explains that God's men are a part of a bigger unit called the "body of Christ." We each serve a role, and when evil tempts us, we can seek other men in the body who can share from the benefit of their spiritual gifts. The fact is, the body is of no use if you're not connected. The enemy seeks to destroy "like a lion," the Bible says. This tells me that the enemy wants you to be isolated before attacking.

3. Turn fear into faith. Fear can drive men crazy or build

faith in God's plan. Whenever there's worry or fear, there's a hiccup in faith. Jesus said in Matthew 28:11, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." He also said, and you might want to memorize this one, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Here's another scripture that should be tattooed on your brain and put the ring in your fight for faith. From Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

The fact is, the very nature of God is love and family. He's our father with open arms and answers. If we stay connected to God, within a thriving community of Christ followers and exercise faith, then we can look forward to a good fight of faith.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

For the original article, visit .

Kids Say This Is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad

As is often the case, the most profound truths are pretty simple.

Every year we conduct essay contests in different areas of the country, where thousands of children write about “What my father means to me.” We always get priceless stories and comments, expressed as only kids can. The entire experience is truly heartwarming.

But today I want to pass on a challenge from these essays. Reading them, our staff couldn't help noticing a common theme.

Typically, the kids describe some of the fun things they do with their dad, or how he demonstrates his love and dedication. Then, toward the end, they'll add something like this: “If there's one thing I wish was different with my dad, it would be that we spend more time together.” Or they'll say, “I wish I could do more things with him.”

Now, these kids love their dads. And maybe we can say some of this is based on unrealistic hopes, like a child saying, “I wish I could live at Disneyland,” or, “I'd like to have ice cream for dinner every day.” Sometimes kids say those things.

But, if we're honest, dads, most of us would have to admit that we could give our kids more of our time. I know I could.

We play a huge role in their lives, and the more time we spend with them, the more they benefit from our loving, coaching and modeling—using teachable moments, affirming their character, building a strong relationship, passing on our values and our faith ... all the great things that fathers do.

Clark Smith, one of our bloggers and a good friend of the

Center, provided this word picture: "Fathering is a pasture fenced with time. The size of the fence determines the size of the relationship. Increase your parenting time even a little and the relationship grows greatly. Nip a foot or two out of the fence and watch the pasture shrink."

That's another way of saying that time is a basic need for any good relationship. The amount of great activities and conversations and memories you share is directly related to how much time you spend together. Time with your children may or may not have immediate rewards for you, but you're building a legacy that will likely last for generations, minute-by-minute and hour-by-hour.

Please don't let this be a guilt trip. But couldn't we all pledge to be more aware of the time we're devoting to our children and make that a higher priority?

Build time with your kids into your schedule so it doesn't get squeezed out when other things come along. Plan those daddy-daughter dates and outings with your son. Get into routines that naturally bring you together over and over. They need your undivided attention.

Also, be intentional about one-on-one time with your kids. Schedule regular time alone with each one. Treat him to frozen yogurt, practice volleyball with her, or just go for a walk. Mix in a daddy-daughter date or an overnight trip every now and then. Carve out blocks of time regularly, and then make sure you're focused on your child and nothing else.

Dad, make sure that if your child ever writes something about you, his or her essay doesn't include the words, "I wish my dad could have spent more time with me."

What creative (or routine) ways do you use to make sure you're getting time with your children? Please help other dads by sharing your ideas either below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Do your children ever ask, “Daddy, can we ...?” Or, “Dad, do you want to ...?” Savor those opportunities, and make the most of them.
- Make the most of mealtimes, bedtimes, doing dishes, raking leaves or those minutes riding in the car with your kids. Have some stories, jokes or other interesting things to contribute to the time together.
- Invest some time to *watch* your child during a practice or rehearsal. (Your presence really does make a difference.) Afterward, ask questions about some things you noticed.
- If you can't be with your child every day, send short texts or emails with words of encouragement or updates on what's happening, or what you're looking forward to doing with him soon.
- Sit with your child and let her talk about her day, without any interruptions, for five or ten minutes. Just listen. Then be ready to share if she asks about your day.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes that every child needs a dad they can count on, and uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: [“Yes! I want tips on how to be a great dad who lives out loving, coaching and modeling for my children.”](#)

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

Patrick Morley: How God Makes Men

When I travel and meet strangers, someone will often say, “You work with men. That must really be hard.”

My response is always the same. “You’ve got the wrong guy! I have the best job in the world. Every day we see men coming to Christ and growing as disciples. God is powerfully at work in men’s lives!”

With that said, we need to do a reality check. Men today are under severe attack. A counter-Christian pop culture ridicules men in general and Christian men in particular. The battle line against biblical manhood is clearly drawn and fiercely contested. As a result, legions of men struggle to sustain what they started and finish the race ...

Most men I talk with feel like there’s “another” man coiled up inside of them who desperately wants to get out. How about you?

- Maybe your faith is being **tested** to the breaking point.
- Maybe you’ve been down so long you feel like God has **abandoned** you.
- Maybe you thought God was going to use you, but now you feel like you’ve been **sidelined**.
- Maybe you feel **inadequate** for your roles in life.
- Maybe you’re in a **tough situation** and see no way out.
- Maybe you are not genuinely **content** with who you are and what you do.
- Maybe you feel like **giving up**.
- Maybe you find it difficult to let go of the **cares** of this world.

Can you relate? If so, I’ve got some really great news for you. It’s all wrapped up in the one sentence that best

describes my own life: Because God is good, your life will not turn out like you planned.

That's because God has a better plan—a much better plan. God's plan is made up of strikingly relevant, time-tested lessons written down and preserved for us in the Bible. It pulsates with stories about men who released and sustained the passion of their faith. And you can too.

However, it's shocking how many of these life-changing principles are gathering dust. It's as though we're afraid to tell men, "Following Christ is harder than it looks and takes longer than expected. But God does have a plan, and it comes packed with real answers and genuine hope."

In *How God Makes Men*, I want to share with you the most powerful principles about biblical manhood from 10 of the most well known of those men. In each of their epic stories, we can see the hand of God at work—shaping them, leading them, making them into the men He always planned for them to become. That "always planned for them to become" is for you too. And it's one of the main features we'll be exploring together.

How did God mold and mobilize these men? What were the obstacles they faced? What held them back? How did God get them uncoiled? And what was their part? As we spend time listening to their lives, we will come face to face with the gritty truth that can release and sustain the passion of our faith too. When added together, they're not just ten amazing stories but one big story—yours!

Here's the promise of *How God Makes Men*. And it's a huge one. If you will absorb and embrace the timeless principles offered by these ten men, you can get past the shallow, cultural Christianity that wants to gut your manhood and get to—or back to—a more biblical Christianity.

If you will let these ten men mentor you, then, like them, you will become the man God created you to be. *You* will release

the power of God in every direction and detail of your life. *You* will know how to sustain the passion of your faith. And *you* will be well on the way to writing your own epic story. Why? Because God is way too good to let our lives merely turn out like we planned!

You always knew that one day you would be called upon to take your place on the battlefield, right? This is that call. Together, we can turn this around. This is a battle we can win. We cannot, we must not, and by God's grace we will not fail.

*The preceding is an excerpt from **Patrick Morley's** new book, How God Makes Men. For more information and links to purchase, go to [or you can order the book here.](#)*

***Morley** is the founder and CEO of Man in the Mirror. After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded Man in the Mirror, a nonprofit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the best-selling author of The Man in the Mirror, No Man Left Behind, Dad in the Mirror, and A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines.*

Chapter Overviews

1. Abraham: The Principle of Believing God Anyway

Never has a man been tested more than Abraham. From Abraham, we learn that God makes men by showing us how we can believe Him anyway in the face of what seem like impossible circumstances.

2. Joseph: The Principle of a Greater Good

Never has a man been more mistreated than Joseph. From Joseph we learn that God makes men by orchestrating even the toughest circumstances of our lives for a greater good.

3. Moses: The Principle of Personal Transformation

Never has a man felt more abandoned than Moses. From Moses we learn that God makes men by taking us through a humbling process that fundamentally changes the way we think.

4. Gideon: The Principle of the Unexpected Leader

Never has a man felt less qualified than Gideon. From Gideon we learn that God makes men by turning our weakness into strength in such a striking way that only He can get the glory.

5. David: The Principle of Correction

Never has a man sinned more egregiously than David. From David we learn that God makes men by doing whatever it takes to correct and restore us when we go astray.

6. Solomon: The Principle of Success That Matters

Never has a man tried harder to find happiness without God than Solomon. From Solomon we learn that God makes men by making it impossible for us to find lasting happiness in any pursuit apart from Him.

7. Nehemiah: The Principle of a Passionate Calling

Never has a man felt more passionate about taking action than Nehemiah. From Nehemiah we learn that God makes men by turning what breaks our hearts into a passionate calling to help redeem some broken part of His world.

8. Job: The Principle of Suffering for No Apparent Reason

Never has a man suffered more than Job. From Job we learn that God makes men by allowing us to gain through suffering what can be gained no other way.

9. Peter: The Principle of Making Disciples

Never has a man known more about making disciples than Peter. From Peter we learn that God makes men by a process of

calling, equipping, and sending us so we can call, equip, and send others.

10. Paul: The Principle of a Surrendered Life

Never has a man been more passionate about following and serving Christ than Paul. Finally, from Paul we learn that God makes men by forging us into humble servants who are increasingly surrendered to the lordship of Jesus.

And that's how God makes men!

Mark Merrill: 4 Reasons Why Our Empty Nest Isn't Empty

Susan and I knew there would come a day. That day has now come.

Our five children have grown up. They are no longer living in our home full-time. Because we knew that day would arrive, we were intentional about how we raised our kids. While we were privileged to spend loads of time with them and energy and emotion on them, we made sure our entire universe did not revolve around them. We made sure we focused on our marriage during those 23 years as well.

Sure, there were seasons in raising our kids when Susan and I didn't give our marriage all the nurturing it needed, but overall, we worked to maintain things like dates nights, little trips away for just the two of us and relationships with a few other couples.

Even so, emotions overwhelmed me when each of our kids left the nest. I didn't just cry when our youngest child left; I

cried each time one of our kids left home. Yet our nest is not empty. Here are a few reasons why.

1. We have each other. Because of our intentionality in focusing on our marriage, Susan and I are enjoying roosting in the nest together. Rather than looking at each other like strangers due to a neglected marriage, we are able to look at each other with a smile and excitement for our future together. Now date nights aren't just happening once every week or two; they are happening a few times a week. Now we are able to do more activities like bike riding, walking, working and traveling together. Now we can dream more together. Now we can pursue our "bucket lists" together.

2. We connect with our children often. As I look at our fall schedule, it seems like we'll see one of our kids just about every other weekend. We're going to see them or they're coming to see us. On top of that, Susan and I text and talk with them just about every day. FaceTime and Instagram are fun ways to stay connected as well.

3. We are reconnecting with friends. As our children moved through their teen years, Susan and I made it a point not to schedule much on the weekends with others. We wanted to be available to our kids. If they didn't go out, we hung out at home or did something with them. If they did go out, we were here when they got home to chat about their evening or to just say goodnight. Oh, sure, we did things with friends, but we didn't stay in touch that much with a number of friends we enjoying being with. So now we are starting to catch up on some of those relationships.

4. We are serving others more. When our kids were in the home full-time, our time was occupied with them. Yes, we went on missions trips with them and sought some opportunities to serve others, but now there is even greater opportunity to do little things for people in need.

Susan and I are thankful that our empty nest really isn't empty. It's different, but it's not empty. And we're grateful to be in the nest together.

What are you doing to prepare for that day when your children leave your nest? If they already have, how are you handling it?

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

10 Ways to Save Money on Date Night

You realize date night is an important part of your relationship, and you want to make sure it consistently happens—but your budget may be saying something totally different. What do you do? All Pro Dad has you covered.

Here are 10 ways to save on your date night:

1. Look for online discounts. Many restaurants and establishments offer coupons online that aren't offered in the store. Take a look online, and you may find some deals.

2. Be the chef. In our family, my wife does most (OK, almost all) of the cooking. So not only will it be cost effective to cook at home, but it can give you an opportunity to cater to your wife.

3. Go out early or late. My wife and I have taken advantage of half-priced appetizers at Applebee's on several occasions. Some restaurants offer 1/2 price and discounted prices on off hours.

4. Utilize your memberships. If you have kids, you may have annual passes to museums, zoos, parks and attractions. I don't think any of those agreements require you to bring your kids. So don't. Play games and have fun with something you already paid for.

5. Trade babysitting with another couple. The inflation rate of babysitters' fees outpaces the national average. It can be pricey with multiple kids. An alternative may be to trade babysitting duties and date nights with another couple. Your kids get a play date, and you get a date with no babysitting fees.

6. Visit your neighborhood coffee shop. Our oldest is old enough and mature enough to leave at home with her brothers for a quick date. A nearby Starbucks comes in handy when we just need to slip away for 30 minutes or so.

7. Put the kids to bed on time or even early. When you're able to get your kids in bed at a good time, you can have an hour or two of at-home date time ... which just happens to be free! Establish a timely bedtime routine and habit of maximizing the time after the kids are in bed.

8. Create a date night fund. Set aside money to be used specifically for dates. Watch for deals, sales and offers on things you can do for date night, and buy them when the price is best for you. Load up on discounted dates, and enjoy them when you are ready.

9. Pack lunches and meet on break. When you pack lunches for the kids, pack lunches for you and your wife. Agree to meet up for lunch at a spot in the middle of your places of work. Eat, talk, and get away from work both mentally and physically for that hour.

10. Get up early and work out. Exercising with your spouse is a fun and beneficial way to spend time. I like to start my day with it. If you both wake up early, you may be able work out

before the kids wake up. It's time together that is fun but also helps you in other ways.

All Pro Dad is Family First's innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the fathers with their children and, as a byproduct, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include daily emails, blogs, Top 10 lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From , fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media communities on **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube** and **Instagram**.