



*STRAIGHT*

*TALK*

*for the*

*CHRISTIAN HOME*

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## **SEMINAR OUTLINE**

<b>Saturday PM</b>	<i>Building Blocks for the Solid Christian Marriage</i>
<b>Sunday SS</b>	<i>Marriage &amp; Other Commitments: When We Struggle with Balance</i>
<b>Sunday AM</b>	<i>The Art of Love: Displaying Affection</i>
<b>Sunday PM</b>	<i>Growing Kids God's Way</i>

*Taken from Full Seminar Notes*

### **STRAIGHT TALK FOR THE CHRISTIAN HOME**

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### **TOPICS INCLUDED IN FULL SEMINAR**

- *Building Blocks for the Solid Christian Marriage* (What are the necessary elements that contribute to a lasting and satisfying Christian marriage?)
- *Marriage & Other Commitments: When We Struggle with Balance* (The necessity of giving priority to one's spouse, in the midst of numerous legitimate priorities)
- *Growing Kids God's Way* (A Biblical example of how *not* to do it, and some practical counsel)
- *Unequally Yoked* (Why is this important? What if there's a shortage of Christians who could be viewed as potential mates?)
- *Who's in Charge?* (Male leadership: Is it gender discrimination or God-ordained? A definition of Christian leadership in contrast to abusive domination)
- *The Act of Submission* (Is submission relevant for today's wives? A definition of Christian submission in contrast to abject subservience)
- *The Art of Love: Displaying Affection* (An exposition of Ephesians 5, emphasizing Christ's love for the church as our perfect example – with reference to Galatians 5, recommending Spirit-control as a perfect guide to showing love to each other)
- *Abortion: Is it Ever Right?* (A careful definition of the terms and the issues involved, leading to a solid, Biblical conclusion about this controversial subject)
- *The Greatest of These* (An exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, defining love Biblically and including practical applications to marriage)
- *Paul on Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage* (An exposition of 1 Corinthians 7, leading to some solid and Biblical conclusions about this sensitive subject)
- *Marriage: The Fact, the Act & the Fracture of It* (A study of the honorable state of marriage and the marriage relationship, based on Hebrews 13:4, and our tendency to destroy what God has established)
- *Samson: The Birth & Death of a Vision* (A study of Samson's life from the standpoint of a mourning parent, based on Judges 13-16)
- *The Papa & the Prodigal* (A study of how to handle a prodigal child, based on an exposition of Luke 15:11-32)

## **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE SOLID CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE**

### ***INTRO***

Compare Gen. 1:25-31 and Gen. 2:19-25. Here is the creation of Adam and Eve – “not Adam and Steve.” About the rest of His creation, God says, “It’s good...It’s good...It’s good.” Now he says, “It’s *very* good!” Then he assigns the couple to “dominate” the earth. Together they would fulfill the assignment God intended for mankind.

### ***ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR A LASTING AND SATISFYING MARRIAGE***

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 1:26-28 – “Have dominion...Subdue”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 1:28 – “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 2:18-20 – “Help meet” (“suitable companion,” “right kind of helper”)

Gen. 2:21-22 – “Brought her unto the man”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 2:23 – “Bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh”

Song of Sol. 2:16 – “My beloved is mine, and I am his”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 2:24a – “Leave”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 2:24b – “Cleave”

Prov. 31:27 – “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness”

Eph. 5:25-31 – “Love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”  
(the husband is to love his wife sacrificially, always giving for the sake of her well-being)

Tit. 2:4-5 – “Teach the young women to...”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 2:24c – “One flesh”

Gen. 4:1 – “Knew his wife”

Prov. 5:18 – “Rejoice with the wife of thy youth...”

Prov. 5:19 – “Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love”  
(The ESV English-Hebrew Reverse Interlinear Old Testament reads, “Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love”)

Song of Sol. 3:1-4 – “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go until I had brought him into...the chamber”

Song of Sol. 3:5 – “Stir not up or awaken...love until he [it] pleases” (until the right time) – see same phrase repeated in 2:7 and 8:4

Song of Sol. 7:1-6 – “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights” – compare list of compliments in 4:1-6!

- \_\_\_\_\_ (“innocence,” outward focus, little awareness of self)

Gen. 2:25 – “Naked...not ashamed” (compare 3:6-13)

Gal. 5:26 – “Let us not be desirous of vainglory”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 3:16 – “Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”

Eph. 5:21 – “Submitting yourselves one to another”

Eph. 5:22-24 – “Submit yourselves unto your own husbands...as the church is subject unto Christ”

1 Pet. 3:1 – “Be in subjection to your own husbands”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Jn. 13:34-35 – “Love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another...By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples” (application to marriage?)

Eph. 5:25-27 – “Love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”

Eph. 5:28-30 – “Love their wives as their own bodies...even as the Lord the church”

Eph. 5:31 – “For *this cause* shall a man...”

Eph. 5:33 – “Love his wife even as himself”

Tit. 2:4 – “Teach the young women...to love their husbands”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Is. 43:1-4 – “Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee”

Prov. 31:10, 25, 27-28 – “Her price is far above rubies...Strength and honour are her clothing...He praiseth her”

Eph. 5:33 – “Reverence her husband”

1 Pet. 3:7 – “Dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life

- \_\_\_\_\_

Prov. 20:6 – “A faithful man who can find?”

1 Cor. 4:2 – “Required...that a man be found faithful”

Eph. 6:9 – “Let us not be weary in well doing...faint not”

- \_\_\_\_\_

Gal. 5:22-25 – Every fruit of the Spirit could be considered a building block for a successful Christian marriage, one that will last, one that will bring great satisfaction to both....

**CONCLUSIONS / APPLICATIONS**

I'm going to say a shocking thing: Every one of our marriages is at risk....

“No, not ours!” you say? Of course, nobody ever believes they will be one of the divorce statistics. Some people continue to deny the reality of a deteriorating marriage longer than others, until the shocking day when one’s spouse announces, “This just isn’t working for me. I don’t love you anymore. I’m going to get a divorce.” And the unthinkable happens.

Those who call themselves Christians seem as likely to divorce as non-Christians today. If you don’t safeguard your marriage by strengthening and maintaining your relationship, your marriage too could be at risk.

Why would we in ministry think we might be exempt from a broken marriage? List some reasons that might be offered:

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A “WAKE-UP” CALL – Illustrations from life experience:

Marriages already ruptured:

- Charles
- Andy
- Craig

Marriages at risk:

- Della – self-absorbed and depressed
- Angela – lazy and selfish
- Biff – dominating and inconsiderate
- Jackie – little sexual interest
- George – tangled up in private adultery through pornography
- Dick – goes his own way in the home
- Lonnie – driven by ministry, little interest in family activities

How are you doing, husband? How are you doing, wife?

Are the building blocks we have discussed above present to any significant degree in your marriage? If so, is it mostly because of your *spouse* that they are present? What are *you* contributing to the success of your marriage so that it will last?

Maybe you need to do some business with the Lord.... Then maybe you need to say something today to your spouse.... You can strengthen the building blocks that will allow your ministry marriage to go the distance!

Eccl. 9:9 – “Live joyfully [Enjoy life] with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity...for that is thy portion in this life.”

**MARRIAGE & OTHER COMMITMENTS: WHEN WE STRUGGLE WITH BALANCE**

***INTRO***

Do *we* struggle with balancing marriage and other legitimate commitments? Of course. We *all* do!

Our lives include many relationships and responsibilities that are good, meaningful, and potentially very satisfying. Inevitably, people will identify some of these things as having a certain level of priority in their lives.

What are some of the things that are sometimes labeled as “priorities” in this life?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

We all have accepted certain commitments that vie for attention in our lives. The question is how we will manage the interrelationship between those various significant responsibilities we face.

If we do *not* struggle to balance the significant relationships and responsibilities in our lives, we run the risk of over-emphasizing one commitment to the neglect of others.

***BALANCED OR DRIVEN?***

Is anyone ever accused of being too *balanced*? No, balanced is a good thing. The accusation we often hear is that a person is *driven*.

A person who is focused on one priority to the \_\_\_\_\_ of other legitimate commitments is sometimes called *driven*. This means that he has allowed one aspect of his life to dominate him to the point that there is no balance – everything in his life tips in one direction. His life may be characterized by unmet goals, tension, and a lack of contentment.

A person who is *balanced* has a proper perspective on life. Every good thing in his life is given appropriate time and attention in relationship to the others. Those who observe him are likely to be impressed with the stability, productivity, and peace which characterize his life.

God’s will does not lead a person to focus attention on one priority while neglecting his other relationships and responsibilities. The balanced person does not succeed in some aspects of his life, only to fail in others. He has things under \_\_\_\_\_ – somehow he manages each of his responsibilities reasonably well (within the limits of his strengths and weaknesses).

***A COMMON PROBLEM FOR THOSE WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT SERVING GOD***

It is common for people who are serious about serving God to find themselves in a position where they struggle to strike a proper \_\_\_\_\_ between their life of service for God and their personal life.

**A LIFE-LONG STRUGGLE TO GET IT RIGHT**

The struggle to strike the right balance between marriage and other legitimate commitments is an \_\_\_\_\_ challenge that will continue all our lives. Nobody gets it right all the time. Don't expect perfection – of yourself *or* of your spouse. But your spouse *does* have the right to expect to receive a very high ranking in your list of priorities. No matter what “urgent” demands you are facing in your life due to other priorities, your spouse must be confident of your love and attention – confident that your inattention or neglect is only temporary and will not continue long-term.

**WARNING SIGNS: HOW TO TELL IF THINGS ARE OUT OF BALANCE**

1. Strained \_\_\_\_\_
2. Neglected \_\_\_\_\_
3. Distressed \_\_\_\_\_

**THE TWO UNBALANCED EXTREMES:**

1. *The unlikely possibility* – \_\_\_\_\_ *takes precedence, other priorities suffer*

Reasons why this might happen:

- Sense of \_\_\_\_\_ about neglecting marriage
- Lack of \_\_\_\_\_ about other priorities
- \_\_\_\_\_ in regard to other responsibilities
- Focuses on marriage to \_\_\_\_\_ problems outside home
- Worships, idolizes, \_\_\_\_\_ spouse
- More concerned about \_\_\_\_\_ wife than pleasing others
- Extreme or dominating family problems that \_\_\_\_\_ attention
- Has been \_\_\_\_\_ family should come first
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What happens in this case:

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Illustration(s):

- From Scripture
- From life experience

2. *The usual scenario* – \_\_\_\_\_ *take precedence, marriage suffers*

Reasons why this might happen:

- \_\_\_\_\_ to other legitimate interests and priorities
- \_\_\_\_\_, passionate about all that he does
- Genuine interest, \_\_\_\_\_ for people
- Strong \_\_\_\_\_, sees work to be done, does it
- Ignorant or \_\_\_\_\_ about spouse's needs
- Focuses on outside interests to \_\_\_\_\_ marriage problems
- Sense of guilt or \_\_\_\_\_ about something he should do
- Desire to \_\_\_\_\_ better for family
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What happens in this case:

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Illustration(s):

- From Scripture
- From life experience

### ***CONCLUSIONS / APPLICATIONS***

1. Let's settle something before we go further. Who should have first \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives – God or family? Different ways of looking at this:

- From the standpoint of who came before the other in time (Gen. 1-2)
- From the standpoint of who is foundational for the creation, sustenance, and well-being of the other (Ac. 17:22-28; Col. 1:16-17)
- From the standpoint of who is to be loved supremely above all others (Deut. 6:5, etc.; Lk. 14:26)
- From the standpoint of who is to be feared, honored, and served by the other (Ps. 34:8-11; Col. 1:18)
- From the standpoint of who will judge the other (2 Cor. 5:10)

2. Yet this does not excuse the neglect of the marriage. Even when we're talking about our commitment to God, it's not a matter of "one *or* the other" – God *or* the family. We must honor our commitments to \_\_\_\_\_.

- While God is clearly to have first priority, the Bible is clear about our responsibilities to the family.
  - “Cleave” to your marriage partner (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31). This surely means to make your way through life joined together, in genuine unity.
  - Since we are taught in Scripture to love and honor God, and *also* to love and honor our marriage partner, the two cannot be viewed as incompatible. It must be possible to fulfill our commitments to both at the same time, in balance. Marriage cannot be viewed as *competitive* to our commitment to God, but *complimentary* to it....
  - We must not love and serve God on one side but ignore our commitments and obligations to our spouse on the other.
3. When the conflicting priority is not God but another legitimate relationship or responsibility, it must be determined what the greatest priority is at that \_\_\_\_\_. Everybody understands that certain obligations and emergencies do sometimes interfere with family commitments, so we must not be unfair in our expectations. So a proper balance may allow for “neglecting” the wife and family *occasionally* and *temporarily*. (Make sure they understand what is happening and why!) But the balance must then swing back toward the family, to focus more attention on them for a time, in order to restore the relationship as necessary and assure the family members of your love and care.
  4. The \_\_\_\_\_ is usually the one hurt when there is not a proper balance between marriage and other commitments, because typically it is the husband who is most deeply involved in commitments outside the home.
  5. Sacrificial love will keep us sensitive to our spouse’s emotional state, social needs, etc. Aware of those needs, we will seek to make the necessary \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives to meet those needs.
  6. We have spoken about the building blocks that contribute to a loving, lasting marriage. We can conclude that another of those building blocks might be giving your marriage the priority it deserves, making your spouse feel that your marriage is so important to you that you will not allow \_\_\_\_\_ (even ministry) to damage it.
  7. Other conclusions or applications:

## **THE ART OF LOVE: DISPLAYING AFFECTION**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

Example from another culture: The evident failure of husbands to demonstrate love for their wives

Discussion: Do husbands display affection to their wives in your country?

### ***DEFINITION OF “LOVE”***

According to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Eleventh Edition, Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003:

- Strong affection for another arising out of kinship or \_\_\_\_\_ ties (maternal *love* for a child)
- Attraction based on \_\_\_\_\_ desire (affection and tenderness felt by lovers)
- Affection based on admiration, benevolence, or \_\_\_\_\_ interests (*love* for...old schoolmates)

Comparison to three concepts of love in the New Testament: *agape, philia, eros*....

### ***SOME SCRIPTURES RELATED TO LOVE BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE***

- Genesis 24:67
- Genesis 29:18-20, 30,
- 1 Samuel 1:5
- Esther 2:17
- Hosea 3:1

### ***EPHESIANS 5:25-32: HOW A HUSBAND SHOULD LOVE HIS WIFE***

“Husbands, love your wives” (vv. 25–33). Notice in this passage that Paul has much more to say to the Christian husbands than to the wives. And the standard he set for them very \_\_\_\_\_: Love your wives “even as Christ also loved the church.” What a huge challenge! Paul was lifting married love to the highest level possible, for in the Christian home he saw a visible illustration of the relationship between Christ and the church.

God established marriage for many reasons:

- \_\_\_\_\_ purpose. In marriage we find the kind of companionship and togetherness that we crave. “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18).
- \_\_\_\_\_ purpose. In marriage we continue the human race by bearing children (Gen. 1:28).
- \_\_\_\_\_ purpose. In marriage man and woman fulfill the normal sexual desires given them by God (1 Cor. 7:1–3).
- \_\_\_\_\_ purpose. In marriage the husband and wife experience together the love of Christ and the privilege of submitting to Christ for the accomplishment of His purposes together (Eph. 5:22-33).

We start by looking at the context. In Ephesians 5:23, we begin to understand the role of the husband toward his wife: his example is Christ Himself, who is “the head of the church” and “the Savior of the body” . . . .

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ love 5:25
  - a. The command to the husband 5:25a
  - b. The example for the husband 5:25b
    - 1) The example identified
    - 2) The love demonstrated

Christ gave Himself for the church; so the husband, in love, gives himself for his wife. Jacob loved Rachel so much that he worked fourteen long years to win her – he was willing to do whatever he had to do. True Christian love “does not seek her own” (1 Cor. 13:5) – it is not selfish.

2. A \_\_\_\_\_ love 5:26-27
  - a. The stated purpose 5:26
    - 1) The goal of the relationship 5:26a
    - 2) The means of the cleansing 5:26b
  - b. The intended result 5:27
    - 1) A personal presentation 5:27a
    - 2) A glorious church 5:27b
    - 3) An unblemished bride 5:27c

The word *sanctify* means “to set apart.” In the marriage ceremony, the husband chooses to set himself apart to belong to the wife, and the wife likewise chooses to set herself apart to belong to the husband. Nothing should be done to interfere with this special arrangement designed by God. Christ is in the process of cleansing His church through the ministry of His Word (John 15:3; 17:17). In the same way, the love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her (and him) so that both are becoming more like Christ. This is that spiritual dimension to their relationship. This is to be the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying. The marriage experience is one of constant growth when Christ is the Lord of the home. Love always enlarges and enriches, while selfishness does just the opposite.

3. A \_\_\_\_\_ love 5:28-30
  - a. The command 5:28a
  - b. The principle 5:28b
  - c. The explanation 5:29a
  - d. The example 5:29b-30
    - 1) The Lord’s action toward the church 5:29b
    - 2) The Lord’s relationship to the church 5:30

The physical relationship between husband and wife is intended to bring mutual sexual fulfillment and great personal enjoyment (see 1 Cor. 7:3–5). The husband is not to “use” his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is to demonstrate toward her the kind of gentle and selfless love that puts her needs first. In return, his own needs will be met. There is mutual benefit when the husband loves his wife with a selfless and sacrificial love.

From The Bible Exposition Commentary, by Warren W. Wiersbe, Victor Books, 1996, c1989, Eph 5:28-30:

In the marriage relationship, the husband and wife become “one flesh.” Therefore, whatever each does to the other, he does to himself or herself. It is a mutually satisfying experience. . . . Just as love is the circulatory system of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16), so love is the nourishment of the home. How many people have confessed, “I am starved for love.” There should be no starvation for love in the Christian home, for the husband and wife should so love each other that their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are met. If both are submitted to the Lord, and to each other, they will be so satisfied that they will not be tempted to look anywhere else for fulfillment.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATIONS**

- Put Christ in the \_\_\_\_\_ of your relationship. Give Him the priority.
- Husbands, keep your eyes on Christ’s \_\_\_\_\_ of sacrifice for the church. That’s how we are to love our wives. That doesn’t necessarily mean dying for her. But it does mean a *willingness* to die for her if necessary for her well-being.

- In all things, “give yourself up” for the sake of your wife. (This phrase comes from a book entitled The Redemption of Love, by Carrie A. Miles, Brazos Press, 2006, pages 98-99.) Jesus gave Himself up for the church – He “emptied” himself, that is, gave up His own will, in order to reconcile mankind to God (Phil. 2:7). Paul tells husbands to give themselves up for their wives: to \_\_\_\_\_ their desire to have their own way, their desire to place their own needs first. We must value our wives’ needs and desires more than our own.

In the same book, on page 99, Carrie Miles says,

No romantic abstraction, the directive to give oneself up goes to the heart of the postfall male imperative to be the one whose will is obeyed, the one served, and the one whose needs and wishes drive all household activities.

- Men, it seems to me that it is much \_\_\_\_\_ to continue in our selfishness to care for our own needs and desires first and ignore our wives, than to dedicate ourselves to care lovingly for them.
- In your culture, men may be expected to show themselves to be “macho” – to dominate and abuse women, even the one you claim to love. On the contrary, I say it takes a REAL MAN to go \_\_\_\_\_ the flow of cultural expectations, to demonstrate a loving heart and a servant spirit toward your wife. “Any dead fish can float downstream; it takes a *live* fish to swim upstream!”
- Husbands, commit yourself to provide security, love, satisfaction, joy, peace and well-being for the beautiful woman God gave you to be your wife. That’s \_\_\_\_\_ masculinity – the role God intended for you as a man!
- Does it make you a man or a mouse if you demonstrate a sensitive, caring, and loving spirit toward your wife? Does it make you a man or a mouse if you demonstrate your affection to her? I say it takes a \_\_\_\_\_ to treat her the way she deserves to be treated. The question is, Are you man enough to do it? If you demonstrate your affection to her in appropriate ways in front of others, she will know you love her and want everybody to know it! I guarantee you that if you set aside the cultural expectations and treat your wife with honor, love, gentleness – *and affection* – you will bring out the real woman in her in response!

## GROWING KIDS GOD'S WAY

### **INTRO**

This will not be a thorough study of all that the Scriptures teach about nurturing a child God's way, but a simple study of one Biblical example and a presentation of some practical counsel....

As we said previously, it is common for people to find themselves in a position where they struggle to strike a proper balance between their obligations to the family and their many other legitimate obligations. We have spoken briefly about the problem of balancing marriage and other commitments. We face the same problem as we consider our commitment toward our children.

We as Christian parents understand the seriousness of this responsibility of caring for and nurturing the children God has entrusted to us. We *all* feel the weight of this obligation. We *all* (but especially those of us who are "driven" and who are therefore by definition unbalanced) will struggle with this issue of \_\_\_\_\_.

We feel a sense of duty toward other commitments outside the home that could take all of our time and energy. On the other hand we also want to be good parents to our children – and we feel guilty when we don't succeed at meeting this obligation in a satisfactory way.

### **A LONG-TERM STRUGGLE TO GET IT RIGHT**

The struggle to strike the right balance between children and other commitments is a \_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_ challenge. We all make mistakes. Nobody gets it right all the time. It is unrealistic to expect perfection – of your children *or* of yourselves as parents. In most cases, your children will prove to be very forgiving of your parenting mistakes.

But your children *do* have the right to expect you to be there for them – to love them, protect them, provide for them, and comfort them. No matter what "urgent" demands you are facing in your life outside the home, your children must be confident of your love and attention – confident that your inattention or neglect is only temporary and will not continue long-term.

### **ILLUSTRATIONS TO CONSIDER**

- From Scripture
  - A. The sins of the \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Sam. 2
    - 1. Ignorance 2:12
    - 2. Indulgence 2:13-16
    - 3. Irreverence 2:17

4. Impurity 2:22

5. Insubordination 2:23-25

B. The failures of the \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Sam. 1-2

1. Insensitivity 1:9-14

2. Unfaithfulness 2:12 (see also 3:1, 7)

3. Permissiveness 2:13-17, 22

4. Inactivity 2:23-25

5. Despising God 2:29-30

- From life experience

### ***WARNING SIGNS: HOW TO TELL IF YOU NEED TO MAKE SOME ADJUSTMENTS***

1. Strained \_\_\_\_\_
2. Neglected \_\_\_\_\_
3. Distressed \_\_\_\_\_

### ***CONCLUSIONS / APPLICATIONS***

1. “Failure is not a person – it’s an \_\_\_\_\_” (Rev. Maynard Belt). If you have failed, recognize this as a past event, confess it and accept God’s forgiveness. If you are failing today, confess it, accept God’s forgiveness, and make any necessary adjustments.
2. Your children are your primary Christian service assignment. A pastor’s children are his primary congregation. You have the \_\_\_\_\_ of influencing their young lives in a foundational way for about 20 years, at the time when they are the most easily influenced.
3. It’s wonderful to win and disciple people through your witness and Christian service. But what a \_\_\_\_\_ it would be at the same time to fail to impact your own children significantly for Christ because you had no time or energy for them!

4. Every child needs to be assured of certain basic things (at least to some degree) from the adults in their lives. What would you judge those basics to be?

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5. “Discipline” (or control of the children) must be:

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6. Quantity time vs. quality time with the children...

7. How are you doing at providing the basics needed by children (as discussed above)? Children are remarkably resilient, and forgiving of parental failures, but to \_\_\_\_\_ they need our involvement in their lives by providing those basics.

8. We are aware, and deeply regret, that many children don’t have two loving and dedicated parents to raise them. I would guess that 50% of American children are now raised in single-parent or split-family homes. For one reason or another, the biological father is absent from the homes where half of American children are raised. (I would guess that the figure is not far from accurate in most countries around the world.)

*Yet in Christian families (even ministry families) – figuratively – the percentage is probably nearly as high, for the fathers are noticeably \_\_\_\_\_ from the lives of their children.*

9. Reminder: Although your role will change somewhat through the years, “Your children will \_\_\_\_\_ be your children.”