# **SOCIAL – MARRIAGE/PARENTING**

## SLIDE 1

 Intro slide

## SLIDE 2

 Is this you? Let’s hope not.

## SLIDE 3

 [Do NOT advance the slides yet.]

I apologize up front that the majority of my talk will be directed towards the men. However, there are plenty of nuggets for the women too.

What are your priorities? As men, especially Royal Rangers men, it is easy to get off track. We get passionate about this ministry that we have been called into. [Show the incorrect order]

Yes, this order is wrong! But oh, how easy is it to get off track. “God called me into this ministry and it takes priority over my work and my family.” Once again WRONG! You have to guard against giving more time to Rangers than you do to your family. In my Rangers career, I have used a lot of PTO (paid time off) for training events, camp outs, Camporama, and so on, but this has been balanced with making sure I don't let it over shadow my first love—my wife & children. Taking vacations, going out to breakfast or dinner, watching a movie together, playing ball are ways to balance that time.

## SLIDE 4

 Here is the correct order.

[show order]

Your relationship with God should always be number 1.

Next, your relationship with your wife and children should come only second to God. We can go through the other items, but Priority No. 2 is what I’m here to talk about during this session.

## SLIDE 5

You made a covenant with God and your wife to love, cherish, and protect her until death do you part.

A covenant is not like a contract that can be broken; marriage is a bond, or covenant, for life. Both parties freely enter into this binding agreement.

## SLIDE 6

 Some might say….

## SLIDE 7

Dr. Dobson says, “If marriage is going to reach its potential, it will require an all-out investment by both husband and wife.”

## SLIDE 8

Prioritizing what's [important](http://www.inc.com/bill-carmody/tony-robbins-success-without-fulfillment-is-the-ultimate-failure.html) is challenging in today's world. The split focus required to maintain a career and a home, not to mention a Facebook feed, can feel overwhelming.

Enter the science of what to prioritize when.

For over 75 years, Harvard's [Grant and Glueck study](http://www.adultdevelopmentstudy.org/grantandglueckstudy) has tracked the physical and emotional well-being of two populations: 456 poor men growing up in Boston from 1939 to 2014 (the Grant Study) and 268 male graduates from Harvard's classes of 1939-1944 (the Glueck study).

Due to the length of the research period, this has required multiple generations of researchers. Since before WWII, they've diligently analyzed blood samples, conducted brain scans (once they became available), and pored over self-reported surveys, as well as actual interactions with these men, to compile the findings.

The conclusion? According to Robert Waldinger, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, one thing surpasses all the rest in terms of importance: "The clearest message that we get from this 75-year study is this: **Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period."**

Not how much is in your 401(k). Not how many conferences you spoke at or keynoted. Not how many blog posts you wrote or how many followers you had or how many tech companies you worked for or how much power you wielded there or how much you vested at each.

No, the biggest predictor of your happiness and fulfillment overall in life is, basically, love.

Specifically, the study demonstrates that having someone to rely on helps your nervous system relax, helps your brain stay healthier for longer, and reduces both emotional as well as physical pain.

The data is also very clear that those who feel lonely are more likely to see their physical health decline earlier and die younger.

"It's not just the number of friends you have, and it's not whether or not you're in a committed relationship," says Waldinger. "It's the quality of your close relationships that matters."

What that means is this: It doesn't matter whether you have a huge group of friends and go out every weekend or if you're in a "perfect" romantic relationship (as if those exist). It's the *quality* of the relationships--how much vulnerability and depth exists within them; how safe you feel sharing with one another; the extent to which you can relax and be seen for who you truly are, and truly see another.

According to George Vaillant, the Harvard psychiatrist who directed the study from 1972 to 2004, there are two foundational elements to this: "One is love. The other is finding a way of coping with life that does not push love away."

Thus, if you've found love (in the form of a relationship, let's say) but you undergo a trauma like losing a job, losing a parent, or losing a child, and you don't deal with that trauma, you could end up "coping" in a way that pushes love away.

This is a very good reminder to prioritize not only connection but your own capacity to process emotions and stress. If you're struggling, get a good therapist, join a support group, invest in a workshop, get a grief counselor, and take personal growth seriously so you are available for connection.

Because the data is clear that, in the end, you could have all the money you've ever wanted, a successful career, and be in good physical health, but without loving relationships, you won't be happy.

The next time you're scrolling through Facebook instead of being present at the table with your significant other, or you're considering staying late at the office instead of getting together with your close friend, or you catch yourself working on a Saturday instead of going to the farmer's market with your sister, consider making a different choice.

"Relationships are messy and they're complicated," acknowledges Waldinger. But he's adamant in his research-backed assessment: **"The good life is built with good relationships.”**

Taken from: http://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/want-a-life-of-fulfillment-a-75-year-harvard-study-says-to-prioritize-this-one-t.html

## SLIDE 9

The answer is . . .

So you’ve made a covenant with your spouse for life. Now, if you want to live longer, then work on making your relationship better.

Does she long to see you after you have been away on a Rangers event, or does she dread the mess you will be piling up in the entry. Does she look across a crowded room and is thankful you are hers, or is she thinking how can I get rid of him?

We live in a society of “it’s not my fault.” Well I’m here to tell you, that in many areas yes, it is. Marriage and parenting are work. You have to invest yourself into your marriage; it is not all about you.

## SLIDE 10

 **[hold on advancing the slide]**

Allow me to read: Ephesians 5: 22-33 NIV

**22** Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

**23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

**24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

**25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

**26** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

**27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

**28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

**29** After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—

**30** for we are members of his body.

**31** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”

**32**This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

**33**However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

What do we get out of this – TWO main points:

1. Husband love your wife.
2. Wife respect your husband.

Interestingly, it doesn’t say vice versa. Men, your wife deserves to be LOVED—to be cherished, to be protected, to love and care for her as if she is your own body. Women are instructed to respect their husbands. It does not say women are required to love their husbands. When respect is given in an appropriate way, the husband will truly feel loved.

## SLIDE 11

What are ways that you can make your wife feel loved?

For some a regular date night. Does it have to cost a lot? Nope! If not having that discretionary cash is an issue, then do something that the two of you enjoy doing TOGETHER. A mid evening walk that allows you to each catch up on the other’s day or even week.

For many years, my wife and I bought season tickets to Little Theater Off Broadway. It was a small community theater that sat 104 (yes I counted) that was all volunteer actors. We saw musicals, comedies, dramas; you name it. We’d go to dinner, attend the theater, and share a hot fudge brownie sundae. Then I would take the long way home. It was our time together and she felt loved.

At your table you have a tri-fold for AG Marriage Encounter. This tri-fold provides some basic information and can be used as a means to register for an upcoming weekend. Or you can go online and see where and when all of the weekends are scheduled. My wife, Christine, and I have been presenters for AGME since fall of 1995 and are currently the National Board President Couple. I say that all to say this – AGME weekend is a fantastic gift to give your spouse. You don’t have to be in trouble to attend. Chris and I wanted to attend because friends of our at church had been and all spoke so highly of their experience. During our weekend, we both felt lead to become a part of this vital ministry to marriages. If you have questions – please feel free to find me and ask away.

## SLIDE 12

So, you have your marriage in order. What about your relationship with your children?

I don’t think you have to read every child rearing book that hits the shelf or attend every seminar on the same topic. These can all be good in their own place and time, but you as parents need to be what my pastor normally says during a baby dedication, “Be consistently adequate.” You may think this sounds a little lame, but after raising 5 grown children and still having one at home, we realized we couldn’t be the super parents.

## SLIDE 13

 VIDEO

Let’s watch this brief video…

[After the video] Obviously, the video depicts a father and son relationship. But this same video applies to mother-daughter, father-daughter, and mother-son. They are watching you mom and dad.

They want to be with you, to be a part of their lives.

DO NOT let your ministry with Royal Rangers damage that relationship. If you let RR get between you and your relationship with your wife or kids, STOP! Re-evaluate what you are doing and correct the situation. Many of you have heard of **William Ashley "Billy" Sunday** (November 19, 1862 – November 6, 1935) was an American athlete who, after being a popular [outfielder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outfielder) in baseball's [National League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_League) during the 1880s, became the most celebrated and influential American [evangelist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelism) during the first two decades of the 20th century. While Billy and Helen were out conducting revivals, their three sons were out doing everything Billy was preaching against. He and Helen were following their calling but at what cost. Did they let their ministry get in between them and their parenting?

## SLIDE 14

This one may sound like it’s calling dads out, but Paul has also just told children to obey their parents in the Lord (Ep 6:1). But why is Paul giving parenting advice?

When we zoom out and look at the book of Ephesians as a whole, we see Paul telling the church at Ephesus how to walk in a manner worthy of their calling (4:1). He later encourages them to follow Christ’s example of walking in love (5:2).

Paul addresses friendships, marriage, and work relationships in this part of the letter, and in the middle of it all, he takes time to talk to fathers and children. This is how parents and kids will walk in love with one another in Christ. Children obey parents. Parents don’t exasperate the kids.

But there’s another nugget in here. Paul tells kids to obey their parents in the Lord, but how will they know what the Lord wants? The parents should be teaching them. Paul says that parents shouldn’t just foster loving relationships but that they should be raising kids in the ways of the Lord.

As for the “we shouldn’t just foster loving relationships” comment, at one time or another, I have told each of our children “I have been called to be your dad not your friend.” In other words, discipline is part of my marching orders.

## SLIDE 15

This is a sister verse to the one we looked at in Ephesians. Here, Paul tells us why it’s important for parents not to provoke their kid—they will discourage them.

But what does Paul mean by provoke?

In this sense “provoke” means to challenge or to irritate. An example would be the so-called “helicopter mom,” who “hovers” over her kids at all times. Another example would be the father who is never satisfied with his son’s performance in school, sports, work, etc.

Our second oldest son is naturally bright; he is just plain smart. He would say to us after a report card arrived, “You will only be happy if I get all A’s.” To which we always responded, “No we don’t require all A’s; we just require you to try your best.” (Yes, there were times we knew he was less than motivated.) All A’s would have been no problem for him, but we as parents must strike a balance between encouraging our children to do better versus nagging them to a point where they quit trying.

This verse should be taken seriously. When Paul says, “discouraged,” he literally means “to lose heart.” Training children is important, but it needs to be done in a way that does not cause them to lose heart.

My wife and I have a saying, “Is this a hill to die on?” or “In a hundred years, will this matter?” You must choose wisely.

So just before we go to the discussion portion of this session. I’d ask you to pray for the Lord to reveal to you this weekend an area where you can improve your relationship with your spouse and children.

## SLIDE 16

Table Talk Topics