

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Mark 10:7-8 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ‘and the two shall become one flesh’; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh.”

Quote: For most parents, the balance of “letting go” and offering helpful advice is a challenge.

Once adult children launch out on their own, preparation is over and they must put into action what they have been taught. Two things are vital for parents to remember. 1) Their training cannot address every single thing that life may one day throw at their adult children. 2) They must address any concerns with their adult children in the context of remembering their own mistakes. Failure to do so is a double standard, and causes resentment.

It gets even more challenging when adult children enter married life that is faced with opposition and filled with opportunities. There are many aspects of our culture that work against having a healthy marriage. For young couples who truly bring the Bible to bear on their marriage, opportunities for ministry abound. They can shine like beacons of hope in a world where wrecked marriages abound among their peers.

There is another critical aspect of God’s blueprint for the Christian home. It involves the parents of a married “child.” They, too, are faced with some areas to which they should pay careful attention. God commands that a man LEAVE his father and mother and CLEAVE to his wife. Parents must help them obey that command by “letting go!” If they do not, then they become a stumbling block that will foster bitterness and discord. They may even cause their married children to “pull away” from them! They should be concerned that their married children grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord and bring it to bear on their own families. How? They can pray for them, model growth in their own “adjusted role,” offer advice when asked, and let them “find their way” as a couple. Parents who “push” married children to do things a certain way either presume that their way is best, or that there were some things that they themselves

should have done differently. Wise encouragements and warnings about married life can be helpful, but should not come across as mandates! It takes God the Holy Spirit to enable newlyweds to bring the Word of God to bear upon their roles in their own families. And, by the way, there are two set of parents interacting with this couple, and the way that they did things might be quite different from each other.

Parents must realize that their married “child” and his/her spouse may adjust some of their own values now that they are on their own—the two become one by blending their backgrounds. This involves selfless compromise in non-essential areas. In coming to grips with this truth, parents must give them the liberty to do so unless there is a violation of God’s Word that they are compelled to share with them out of love.

Family: Parents and Married “Children”

All of the things that we have considered are magnified when married children live in close proximity to one or both sets of parents. They can feel like they are the rag in the middle of a tug-of-war rope with people whom they love on opposite ends pulling for all that they are worth. Parents must be careful not to monopolize time that should be shared with in-laws, and realize that the couple needs space to do “their thing” without either set of parents “camping out” or “tagging along.” They must be willing to give up some things for the sake of their son/daughter’s family.

Life gets more challenging when grandchildren enter the picture! Many parents would do some things differently if they had the chance to raise their kids over again? (I write that with *my own* shortcomings as a dad in mind.) Parents should not try a “do-over” through grandchildren that God may give to them. Their own kids will remember parental imperfections, and “meddling” will likely foster “messiness” in their relationship with them. I offer the above as one who continues to become the dad/Papa that I will one day be. None of us ever “arrives” when it comes to growth!

1 Gen.2:24; Mark 10:6-8; Eph.5:31