

replaced by the reality of “who would be a good person to help take care of my child?” It is often someone who has been through life’s difficulties similar to your own.

As your children advance in age, the need for a stable family will become increasingly apparent. When important church, school, sports and family events occur, it is a great blessing for a child to be with a committed mother and father (even if not their own) rather than having one parent here and another there. A child experiences even greater difficulty when a parent is with a different boyfriend/girlfriend at each event.

This importance of a consistent family is greater still when graduations, weddings and births of grandchildren occur. It can make the difference between seeing one’s grandchildren as often as one wants, and seldom or not at all.

Exactly what you need to do now varies greatly. There are too many life situations and too many possible solutions to cover even a majority of cases here. But, every child needs his/her parent’s determination to build a stable, two-parent family. That is the only way it will come to pass. The next thing everyone needs is prayer. You can be confident that God will hear you when you are seeking to do the very best thing for a child. The Golden Rule (Lev 19:18) for parenting means that you are the kind of good parent that you wish you had. This is within God’s will and something he as promised to answer:

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him (1 John 5:14).

This will mean ending relationships that will not lead to a good marriage. It means leaving friends and activities that do not encourage this worthy goal and seeking out new friends and circum-

stances where finding the right spouse is much more likely. It means seeking out successful two-parent families for friends and role models. It means living a life that has meaning, for you and your family forever.

May God bless you in this!

Does Marriage Cost too Much?

If you share a relationship with someone you hope to spend the rest of your life with, do not put off marriage because it is “too expensive”! **This writer has personally experienced marriages that cost \$0.00.** That is right! State marriage license fees vary from \$4 to \$90, with \$30 being typical, but judges or clerks can sometimes waive the fee if you cannot afford it. Judges, ministers or elders (who need not be ordained) will also often sign the papers for no charge.

How does one afford rings, hall rentals, food, drinks, decorations and all the other trappings of weddings? First of all, these are not required for a marriage (Genesis 24:64-67). The future of your children is much more important! But the Bible shows that marriage celebrations are good things (John 2:1-11; Revelation 19:6-9).

The principle to use is “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). You can ask someone with a large home or ask a church or other organization for the use of their building. You can ask friends to supply food and decorations. There is no legal or biblical requirement to have rings—they can wait till later. But your children need a stable family. Now!

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whodad01

Who Is My Daddy?



This article is for the struggling moms and dads of young children. Whether you are single or in a troubled marriage, this article contains important information that, when you reach your latter years, you will wish someone had told you now!

Newborn babies adapt wonderfully. They can be cared for by one parent here, another parent there, grand-parents, other relatives, daycare facilities, etc. They do not ask who is taking care of them or why. As long as they are loved, fed, warm and dry, they are usually happy. But when

continued inside...

they are three to five years old, a lot changes!

I once asked a friend, who had separated and was in the process of divorce, how his four-year-old child would be affected by this marital difficulty. His answer was that he and his wife had worked separate shifts for years, and that he was used to being cared for separately by his parents, so he probably would not notice any difference. My friend was hoping for the best.

We spent several hours together that day, playing with this delightful young child. Later, my wife and I told him we were leaving. He asked, “Is she leaving with you?” “Are you going with her?” While his questions did not go beyond that, it was obvious that he knew his family was not working the way our family worked. He was slightly troubled by it—and there was no doubt in my mind that he would soon figure out what “divorced” meant.

This writer has heard other people, speaking of the effect of divorce on their children, say: “How are they going to know?” or “They may think its better.” or “We don’t have to talk about it.” That is so temporary! **As children grow up, certainly by school age, they understand and want to know the answers to the questions: “Who is my daddy?”, “Who is my mommy?” and “What kind of family do I have?”**

You, as a parent, need to do whatever you can right now to make the answers to those questions as good as possible. They will be an essential part of your children’s existence for their entire lives—and will have significant influence on their children and generations that follow. Yes, even when parents diligently try to hide the problems of a child’s early years, children grow up and often hire investigators or geneticists to find out the truth.

Do not simply worry! We cannot change the past. Move on! Present family difficulties are

usually a combination of our mistakes and the mistakes of others. But it is good to recognize our mistakes so we do not repeat them and so we can repent of them. Once that is done, they are over as far as God is concerned.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-9).

We can change what is happening now, so that we can make a massive change in the future—especially if your children are still young. What needs to be done will vary from person to person, but the central purpose is the same for everyone:

Provide a stable, two-parent family for my children!

Accomplishing that goal will be more significant than anything else you ever do in life. It will give you satisfaction in a way that nothing else will. It will endear your children to you as no amount of money or time will do.

In order to do this, you may have to dismiss a lot of other, less worthy short term goals—or put them off until your children are grown.. The fun times with your friends, fancy clothes, nights out, sports, dancing, road trips, parties, career goals and even dreams of the ultimate spouse you once imagined will have to take a back seat.

If you are married, or have the possibility of marrying your child’s (or one of your children’s) other parent, what will it take to establish a good marriage? Does this other person want to be a good parent? Does he or she know what that means? Can you talk to them about it? Would they read this article or other helpful things?

Of course you have differences and difficulties—probably huge ones. But they are small in

comparison to the difficulties your children will face when they begin to ask “Who is my daddy?” or “Who is my mommy?” Forgiving, reconciling, making peace and patiently waiting for change may be the most difficult thing you can imagine yourself doing today. But it is also probably the most important thing you could do today. Even so, there are situations where both parents of a child cannot be effectively married: Imprisonment, severe substance abuse, prostitution, violence, complete irresponsibility and other severe sins.

When a marriage of the natural parents is not workable, the next best thing for a child is to be raised by one natural parent in a good marriage. This does not come easily, either. When one has a child from an irresponsible or abusive relationship that terminates, there is a tendency to enter another relationship just like it. Our society has too many men who have no intent of being good fathers, but who can charm the pretty women. It has too many women who can “get a guy” but cannot keep him. The opposite extremes are the men and women who are “turned off” by such failed relationships, and who have largely determined that they must raise their children by themselves. Neither one is the best.

Singles with young children need to be **serious about looking for a spouse that will be a good parent.** This is true even for those (mostly dads) who do not have custody right now—if something goes wrong with your child’s present arrangements, the other parent needs to be ready. Building a loving, stable marriage for your child often means not looking for the glamorous, rich man or the beautiful captivating woman. It means looking for Mr. or Miss “Acceptable”, not Mr. or Miss “Astounding”. This is not to say that anyone should marry someone that they do not love or do not know very well, but it means that dreams of the perfect marriage need to be