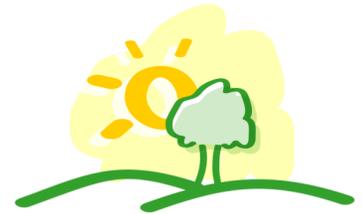


The Family Friend



A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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24 Blessings of Marrying a Godly Spouse

My dad performed the wedding ceremony for Kathy and me at the Manchester church of Christ in Georgia on May 22, 1992, which, as I've been reminded, was also the last show for Johnny Carson on The Tonight Show. It was also the day Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia joined the United Nations. But, all in all, it was a quiet, ordinary day in the world. For me, it was anything but ordinary! It was day one of a life that has been full of surprises, enjoyments, discoveries, and a full array of experiences. Certainly, there have been some lows but also many more highs. It has, in so many ways, been full of blessings. Anyone who marries a faithful Christian can anticipate so many blessings. Consider just a few:

1. A companion who loves your soul.
2. A mate who puts God above you.
3. A spouse who will influence your children to love God.
4. One who is bearing the fruit of the Spirit to live life with.
5. One who stays connect-

ed to God faithfully, in Bible study and prayer.

6. One with whom your most important activities revolve around Christ.

7. A partner who gladly embraces her God-given role and place.

8. A mate who holds you accountable to the role and place you should fill.

9. One who is not chasing the world's ideals, not being led by its values and expectations.

10. A companion with whom your conversations constantly involve the spiritual.

11. One who knows what good clean fun looks and feels like.

12. One whose orientation is to serve and not to be served.

13. A spouse who creates trust and confidence that sustains you even when you are apart.

14. A consort who loves the body of Christ, the church, and who is interested in its members.

15. One whose greatest beauty (and attractiveness) is to be found beneath the surface.

16. A partner who will treat you with respect and dignity, not demeaning you or running you down.

17. One who is more focused on pursuing your happiness than passively waiting for

you to cause theirs.

18. A spouse with whom your most fulfilling moments are spent serving your Lord.

19. One who looks for opportunities to reach your neighbors and other associations for Christ.

20. A mate whose emotions are most stirred by spiritual things.

21. A lover who is exciting and alluring because of her faith and not in spite of such.

22. One who forms goals with you, short-term and long-term, that point toward eternity and lead toward heaven.

23. A help-meet you become more desirous of growing older with every day you are growing older.

24. A partner you like more the more you know her because she's being transformed more into the image of Christ each day.

What an enjoyable exercise, literally counting the blessings of a life lived with a faithful Christian mate. Please do not interpret this as a suggestion that marriage is trouble-free, challenge-free, conflict-free, and pain-free. It is none of these, but persevering through the troubles, challenges, conflicts, and pain can be one of the forces that strengthen our marriages. Let us build marriages that cause us to celebrate our anniversaries.

saries, having a deeper appreciation for the person God gave us to walk through this veil of tears with-a person with whom we can find enormous nuggets of fulfillment and genuine joy in even life's darkest episodes. Have you let your mate know how much they mean to you? If not, why not stop whatever you are doing and tell them. Even better, show them! They are one of your choicest blessings!

—Neal Pollard

“In Hard Times, Hold on to God”

Recently, I had a very scary moment. I was waiting for my wife to return from a visit with our daughter in Africa. Her Emirates flight from Dubai was supposed to arrive at JFK a few minutes after 2 PM. When I didn't hear anything by 3 PM, I checked online and saw that the new estimated arrival was 3:45 PM. The activities of the next few hours took me and my attention away from my computer and phone.

At 7 PM, when I still had not heard from my wife, and when I finally had the time and opportunity to check on things, I did a general Google search of the airline and city she was flying from. That's when the scary moment hit and my heart skipped a beat. My eyes landed on a story at the top of the google search page that read, “Passenger attacks crew on Emirates flight from Dubai - 12 hours ago.” My mind raced, “Oh, no...that's why I haven't heard from her.” Fearing the worst, I clicked on the article. I was much relieved to discover that the incident took place the day before my wife was traveling. The story of why they were

delayed is almost as long as it took for her to get home. Needless to say, I was very thankful that my wife returned to me safely.

Honestly, I don't know what I would have done if something had happened to my wife! Thankfully, I didn't have to find out. But that is not always the case. Scary moments sometimes turn into tragic incidents that alter life permanently. This past year, our family has experienced a number of life-altering episodes.

For starters, my wife and I received that call in the middle of the night that no parent wants to receive. The call came from our college age daughter who was traveling for a Spring Break Mission Trip. With shock and fear in her voice, she reported to us that a tractor-trailer failed to stop at an accident scene on a dark, cold Kentucky interstate highway. It smashed into them from behind and came to a stop on top of their car. Her boyfriend and another friend were trapped in the wreck and she was afraid for their lives. Dreadfully, our daughter's boyfriend died at the scene. The other friend needed surgery, but later recovered fully. Our daughter walked away from the accident with minor physical injuries, but with a wounded heart of grief and loss, and an uncertain future. What she and we have gone through, pales in comparison with what her boyfriend's family has had to endure.

Sadly, later in the year my wife and I both experienced the sudden death of a sibling. Her brother was about to turn 60 and my sister had just turned 50. On top of all that, my mom is experiencing the devastating effects of dementia, which came clearly into focus at the passing of my sister.

As hard as all these things have been and continue to be, our

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God is sufficient and gracious. God does not promise that we will be kept from suffering and loss. Rather, God promises to be with us and to bring good from our trouble and pain.

I want to point our attention to the words of faith recently shared by NBA coach Monty Williams at his wife's funeral. Ingrid Williams died from injuries sustained when an SUV going 92 mph crossed the center line and struck her vehicle head-on.

Williams said: “Psalms 73:1 says, ‘God is good.’ And 1 John 4:16 says, ‘God is love.’ During times like this, it's easy to forget that, because what we've gone through is pretty tough, and it's hard, and we want an answer. We don't always get that answer when we want it, but we can't lose sight of the fact that God loves us, and that's what my wife and that's what I, however badly, exhibit on a daily basis. But God does love us...Romans 8:28 says, ‘And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.’ All of this will work out. As hard as this is for me and my family and for you, this will work out. I know this because I've seen this in my life... This will work out. Doesn't mean it's not hard. Doesn't mean it's not painful. Doesn't mean we're don't have tough times and we're gonna have tough times. But what we need is the Lord, and that's what my wife tried to exhibit every single day.”

-David Owens
Liverpool, New York