

In All Things With Prayer and Supplication

by Mickey and Pat Magee

June 17 – 20, 2005, was a pivotal time for our marriage as well as our future ministry. We had a heart for marriages, especially for those that are “blended”, and wanted to learn how to be effective Marriage Enrichment Leaders. So on that long weekend, along with four other couples, we attended GTO Family Ministries “Tier One” Training Weekend.

The weekend was informative and rewarding, helping to prepare us for ministry as we learned to teach together- as a couple - God’s principles for marriage. *But on a personal level we were significantly impacted by the presentation entitled “Connecting to the Power Source.”* It not only changed the way we pray and read our Bible, it changed our lives!

Before that weekend, we each pursued prayer and Bible reading individually... in our own way and our own timeframe. Now we were being challenged to pursue these activities **AS A COUPLE**, at the same time, beginning on the same page and with a similar intention. This was a new concept for us and we embraced it, giving birth to two new ways to build our relationship with Jesus Christ **AS A COUPLE**.

Just two days later, on June 22nd, we entered our 28th year as a married couple and the parents of a blended family that counts eight children among its membership. Our youngest was rapidly approaching her junior year in college while the oldest was still familiarizing himself with his 38th year and the 7th year of his own marriage. As we looked back at all our years of marriage, we were grateful for the Lord’s merciful care and continual encouragement, which carried us

through difficult times. Life as a blended family was not only difficult; at times it was downright unbearable and discouraging. Perhaps Sandi Patty describes those times best in her book, *Life in the Blender*, when she writes, “A blended family is a continual work in progress.”¹

We could only wish we had known about Prayer and Bible Reading as a Couple in those early years. There is no doubt in our minds that the way would have been smoother, the problems solved in a more God-like manner, and the mending and blending less noisy and disheartening had we known the spiritual rewards of this powerful concept.

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Since that time, we have learned we were certainly not alone in this “discovery.” At the conclusion of our weekend marriage conferences and class series, it is our practice to ask the participants to fill out a “feed back and evaluation” form. The most frequently commented upon concepts are those dealing with reading the Word together and praying together as a couple. It is usually something the participants have never attempted nor even thought about trying on their own.

Consider the following oft-quoted statistic² concerning couples who Read their Bibles together regularly, Pray together regularly and Attend church together regularly: the divorce rate for

such couples is 1 divorce in every 1287 marriages. Wow, how these activities can impact a marriage! Not a bad incentive! We strongly encourage you to divorce-proof your marriage through Prayer and Bible Reading as a Couple.

Our initial thought when planning this article was to share a favorite Bible passage and comment on each verse, bringing our personal experiences as a blended family to the readers’ attention. Then we realized that would be contrary to the intent of this article. We would rather *you* read these verses to each other, meditate upon them and share with each other the thoughts that come to *your* minds when reading them. By deferring to the Lord’s power and grace and accepting Him as a partner in solving each and every problem presented by, and as a result of, the blending of two families, we are sure you will find understanding, resolution and peace as you draw closer to the Lord as a family and to His plan for your marriage.

We realize that taking such an approach to your Bible reading may feel strange and uncomfortable to you at first, so try these suggestions which we found helpful:

- Read out loud to each other.
- Stop and talk about anything that grabs you about the scripture as you are reading.
- Initiate what we call a “continuous, intermittent, as applicable” open conversation about how you can apply these verses to your marriage and the problems that your family may be facing at the time.

Lean on the promise of the Lord when He says, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and

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mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3 NKJV).

Remember this is “a journey”. It doesn’t happen overnight and the journey never ends. You will never arrive nor will you ever get it all together...it is a constant “Becoming”! Enjoy the trip and rest in the Peace of the Lord! To begin your journey, we suggest reading Psalm 19:7-11. We like to call it the Bible’s spring training for the parents of blended families...or any family for that matter.

We also encourage you initiate the practice of praying together “*as a couple*” on a daily basis. Grace before meals does not count nor do short “popcorn” prayers we shoot off to the Lord in times of anxiety or confusion. Statistics³ indicate that less than 4% of married couples pray together at any time. The most eye-opening and rewarding experience for couples during our marriage enrichment weekends and studies is the opportunity to pray together as a couple. Most had never thought to do it, and if they had tried it, the experience was at arm’s length, facing each other across the expanse of Queen or King sized beds, shortly before or while falling asleep at night.

There are many Bible verses outlining reasons to pray and the

promises of God regarding the outcomes of our petitions. A few examples are: “...if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.”⁴ “...by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart(s) and your mind(s) in Christ Jesus.”⁵ “If any one of you is in trouble? Pray!”⁶ Note especially the phrase in the first verse... “if two of you”... What a clarion call for couples to pray *together!*

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If you aren’t sure about how to begin, here are two suggestions.

- Be in physical contact with each other. Hold hands or lay in each others arms.
- Pray from the Scriptures. Take turns reading a phrase and personalizing it to your situation as a couple or family. Try this with the following verses.

“For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped

praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father...” (Col 1:9-12)

We hope these ideas will encourage you. If you are not reading the Bible and praying together on a daily basis, structure a Covenant to do so immediately. Detail a plan that will work for you and remember the words of Dr. David Jeremiah ...”Prayer is my (his) declaration of dependence on God.”⁷ What a great foundation for any marriage for... “unless the Lord builds the house they labor in vain.”⁸

JUST DO IT...that is the path of blessing.⁹

(Footnotes)

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² *When Couples Pray* by Cheri Fuller

³ Survey by Charlie and Martha Shedd

⁴ Matthew 18:19

⁵ Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ James 5:16

⁷ The daily radio broadcast of Dr. David Jeremiah on February 21, 2008

⁸ Psalm 127:1

⁹ John 13:17

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