

## **A House Divided Cannot Stand**

### **Introduction:**

1. When it comes to child rearing, the old expression “United we stand; divided we fall” is certainly true.
2. If the father and mother are not united in their marriage and in their child rearing philosophy and goals, the child will pick up on this and will use it to his or her fleshly and carnal advantage.
3. Our goal as parents is not simply to raise good kids, but godly kids – children that love God and hold to the Bible as the final authority in their lives.
4. If this is going to happen, it is crucial that mom and dad be on the same page. Mom and dad need to build a strong marriage. When you become one flesh, God’s plan is that you become lovers **and** best friends. **Song of Solomon 5:16; Ephesians 5:29** (cherish means delighting in each other’s company and holding each other dear.)
5. When this happens, it does more for kids than you will ever realize. But it certainly is not a sure thing. In fact, it is absent from most marriages.
6. There are a couple of essentials to a husband and wife building a strong marriage which imparts so many advantages to the child.

### **First, married couples must enjoy a close companionship.**

1. Too often, husbands and wives build their own separate lives, and the close companionship that existed in the dating relationship is gone.
2. This spells trouble because over time you drift farther and farther apart. You are not living and functioning as one flesh. How does this affect the children?
3. Because mom and dad aren’t on the same page on a daily basis, the kids lack accountability, consistent discipline, and family closeness. All of this spells trouble for the child or teen.
4. When our society was more rural, it was normal for families to work together, talk together at night, play games together, relax together, go places together, serve the Lord together, etc.
5. In the busyness of our culture, it is so easy for married couples and families to become fragmented and divided in everything they do – they share a roof!
6. It is crucial that mom and dad **not** allow this to happen and give their time in areas that bring them and the family together, not fragment their relationship.
7. There are only so many hours in a week, so you have to make a choice:
  - You can pursue interests that you can share together, resulting in growing closer together.
  - You can pursue interests that you do not share, resulting in growing apart.

### **Second, married couples must experience meaningful, ongoing conversation.**

1. This is so crucial not only for your marriage, but for your children.
2. When mom and dad are talking daily and on the same page, kids win; when mom and dad are not talking regularly, kids lose. It is that simple.
3. Men, this is harder for us than it is for our wives. But remember, your wife probably fell in love with you during your dating relationship because of the time you spent exchanging conversation. You got to know each other and shared your hearts.

4. This needs to continue after marriage! It is crucial to the health of your marriage.
5. Why do couples quit having meaningful conversations after marriage? We are too busy with work. We have different interests. We become selfish. We get tunnel vision for what **we** want to do (sports, hobbies, TV, etc.).
6. When this happens, not only does the married couple lose, but your children also lose. When mom and dad are not having regular meaningful conversation, kids get away with mischief, “work the system” by playing mom against dad, and clam up and don’t talk (they learn this from mom and dad).
7. When couples have daily, meaningful conversation, three things happen:
  - You come to understand each other more clearly.
  - You learn what it takes to meet each other’s needs (and the children’s needs).
  - You become best friends.
8. And when all of this happens, not only are you the winner, your child is the winner!

**Third, married couples must display respect for one another.**

1. The world says, “You need to love yourself.” The problem in most marriages is that we love ourselves too much, and we are far too self-absorbed in what we want.
2. Men, your wife must be number one in your life. Nothing comes before her except your relationship with Jesus. You are in love with your wife; she is your top priority, and your kids know it! **Ephesians 5:33**
3. Ladies, you should demonstrate respect and admiration for your husband regularly (in front of the kids). This does more for your husband and your children than you will ever know. **Ephesians 5:33**
4. When couples show disrespect to each other in front of the children, it does incredible damage to them (screaming, demeaning words, a critical spirit, meanness, etc). You are not just scarring your spouse, you are scarring your children too.
5. Never fight or say disrespectful things about each other in front of the children. Show proper respect for one another at all times.
6. Never allow the children to think for a minute that they can pit one of you against the other. They must know that mom and dad are unified.
7. Husbands and wives, we are one flesh; let’s live like we are one flesh. It will do more for your children than you will ever know.