

# HOW TO HAVE A NO REGRET MARRIAGE AND FAMILY Psalm 127-128

When your life is done, and you look back those last few weeks or months that you have before cancer, or heart or respiratory problems overtake you – will you regret these days of your marriage and family? Will you be saddened when you remember these days? Will you be saddened when you see what your children are doing? Or will these have been the greatest years of your life? I think the choice is yours. Where are you headed in your marriage and as a family tonight? You will never get to anywhere you are not headed right now!

## **DO YOU KNOW THAT A NO REGRET MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IS A WONDERFUL BLESSING FROM THE LORD?**

2 Timothy 4:6-7 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Look with me at Ps. 127-128 where we find the inspired sketch of the beautiful stages of God's work at growing a wonderful marriage and family. As we look, ask yourself: Is this what I want? Is this what I have? Is this worth changing areas of my personal life to accommodate God's Word and my response?

Psalm 127:1-2 **A NO REGRET FAMILY IS CAREFUL TO LAY A GODLY FOUNDATION:** Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. 2 It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.

Psalm 127:3-5 **A NO REGRET FAMILY IS CAREFUL TRUST GOD FOR BLESSED FRUITFULNESS:** Behold, children are **a heritage from the Lord**, The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are **the children of one's youth**. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128:1-4 **A NO REGRET FAMILY ENJOYS A HAPPY FAMILY LIFE:** Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, Who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants All around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord.

Psalm 128:5-6 **A NO REGRET FAMILY ENJOYS THE FULFILLMENT OF A GODLY FAMILY THAT IS SATISFYING IN OLD AGE:** The Lord bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life. Yes, may you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel! And as the Apostle John said at the end of his life in 3 John 4 that the supreme earthly joy we can ever experience is when we see our family following the Lord! "I have **no greater joy** than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Quite a promise -- what an opportunity to have such a rare and precious home. And that is exactly what the Lord offers to us this evening.

## **WHAT IS THE END RESULT OF NO REGRET MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES?**

There are few words that can describe the sheer delights of a marriage as God designed it to be. The Lord planned for His people to have marriages described as:

- Joyful rivers of intoxicating blessings (Proverbs 5: 18-19),
- Fruitful vines that delightfully grow around our lives (Psalm 128: 3),
- Such wonderful attraction that seven years of hard labor waiting for this is like a moment (Jacob in Genesis 29:20),
- Goodness and favor from the Lord (Proverbs 18:22), and
- A companion of our youth (Malachi 2: 14-15) to whom we make a life long covenant to;
- And enjoy so much we "sport" (Genesis 26:8) with them!

All of us here tonight blessed in our marriages and families can testify what God's Word describes is exactly what we who have followed the Lord have experienced.

- A Biblical or a no regret marriage and family is just a small snapshot of the delights of Heaven.
- A Biblical or a no regret marriage and family is just a living portrait of the perfect love of Jesus.
- A Biblical or a no regret marriage and family is just a traveling demonstration of the way the Lord works on earth.

Winston Churchill<sup>1</sup> once attended a formal banquet in London at which the attending dignitaries were asked the question, "If you could not be who you are, who would you like to be?" Naturally, everyone was curious as to what

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, R.Kent, *Preaching the Word: Ephesians—The Mystery of the Body of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997).  
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Churchill, seated next to his beloved Clemmie, would say. When it finally came to be Churchill's turn, the old man, who was the dinner's last respondent to the question, rose and gave his answer. "If I could not be who I am, I would most like to be" — here he paused to take his wife's hand — "Lady Churchill's second husband." The old boy made some points that night. But his comments also apply to every one of us this evening who has a no regret marriage and family.

## **WHERE IS YOUR MARRIAGE AND YOUR FAMILY HEADED THIS EVENING?**

Our marriages if unattended, begin to slowly decline in closeness, intimacy, fruitfulness, and blessing. To illustrate this several years ago, the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article entitled: "The Seven Ages of the Married Cold." It revealed the reaction of a husband to his wife's colds during their first seven years of marriage. It went something like this:

**The first year:** "Sugar dumpling, I'm really worried about my baby girl. You've got a bad snuffle, and there's no telling about these things with all this strep throat going around. I'm putting you in the hospital this afternoon for a general checkup and a good rest. I know the food's lousy, but I'll be bringing your meals in from Rossini's. I've already got it all arranged with the floor superintendent."

**The second year:** "Listen, darling, I don't like the sound of that cough. I called Doc Miller and asked him to rush over here. Now you go to bed like a good girl, please? Just for papa."

**The third year:** "Maybe you'd better lie down, honey; nothing like a little rest when you feel lousy. I'll bring you something to eat. Have you got any canned soup?"

**The fourth year:** "Now look, dear, be sensible. After you've fed the kids, washed the dishes, and finished the floor, you'd better lie down."

**The fifth year:** "Why don't you take a couple of aspirin?"

**The sixth year:** "I wish you'd just gargle or something, instead of sitting around all evening barking like a seal!"

**The seventh year:** "For Pete's sake, stop sneezing! Are you trying to give me pneumonia?!" The decline of marriage as seen through the common cold. A funny look at a not-so-funny reality.

## **THE BIBLE HOLDS THE KEYS TO HOW TO HAVE A NO REGRETS FAMILY!**

## TONIGHT WHY NOT DECIDE TO BE A DAD<sup>2</sup> AND HUSBAND WITH NO REGRETS

### TONIGHT WHY NOT DECIDE TO BE A DAD AND HUSBAND WITH NO REGRETS

One of my greatest joys in life is to have a family.

One of the most challenging responsibilities I have ever had is leading and guiding that family.

Men, as we sit here tonight with our wives and enjoy this meal and the fellowship around the tables, may I challenge you to Finish the Course with joy that God has given you?

Paul confidently said at the end of his life that he had NO REGRETS.

- Sins, yes, he was a saved sinner.
- Scars, yes, he had murdered Christians and so on.
- But regrets, NO. He finished the course of his life with joy.

So that tells me that all of us here can by God's grace finish what ever the Lord has given us to do in life with NO REGRETS!

1. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband includes his wife in envisioning the future.*** 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being **heirs together** of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
2. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband seeks the consultation of his wife on all major financial decisions.*** 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, **dwell with them** with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
3. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband encourages his wife's personal growth in her personal life.*** 1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, **giving honour unto the wife**, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.
4. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband prays with his wife on a regular basis.*** 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, **that your prayers may not be hindered**. Also Ephesians 5:26 that He might **sanctify and cleanse** her with the washing of water by the word,
5. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband accepts spiritual responsibility for his family.*** Deuteronomy 6:7 **You shall teach them diligently to your children**, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the work of the gifted authors, Robert Lewis and William Hendricks, who have identified 25 ways to be a husband discipling his wife in the book by Robert Lewis and William Hendricks, *Rocking the Roles* (Colorado Springs: CO, Navpress, 1991), p. 69.  
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6. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband is willing to say "I'm sorry" and "forgive me" to his family.*** Mark 9:35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he **shall be last of all and servant of all.**" Mark 10:44 And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. 1 John 1:7 But if we **walk in the light as He is in the light**, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
7. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband discusses household responsibilities with his wife and makes sure these are fairly distributed.*** 1 Corinthians 14:40 Let all things be done **decently and in order.**
8. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband follows through with commitments he has made to his wife.*** Psalm 15:4 In whose eyes a vile person is despised, But he honors those who fear the Lord; **He who swears to his own hurt and does not change;**
9. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband anticipates the different states his marriage will pass through.*** Remember the model of Psalm 127-128?
10. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband likewise, starts early training his children in submission, anticipating the stages his children will pass through.*** Luke 2:51-52 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and **was subject to them**, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 **And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**
11. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband frequently tells his wife what he likes about her.*** Proverbs 31:28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; **Her husband also, and he praises her:**
12. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband provides financially for his family's basic living expenses.*** 1 Timothy 5:8 But if **anyone does not provide for his own**, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
13. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband deals with distractions so that he can talk with his wife and family.*** Song of Solomon 2:14-17 "**O my dove**, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, **Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice;** For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely." 15 **Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines have tender grapes.** 16 My beloved is mine, and I am his, He feeds his flock among the lilies. 17 Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away, Turn, my beloved, And be like a gazelle, Or a young stag Upon the mountains of Bether.

14. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband initiates meaningful family traditions.*** Deuteronomy 6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates; 6:14 **You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you;** 7:25-26 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. 26 **Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house,** lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing. Psalm 106:35 But they mingled with the Gentiles And learned their works;
15. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband initiates fun outings for the family on a monthly basis, or even more often.*** Mark 3:14 Then He appointed twelve, **that they might be with Him** and that He might send them out to preach,
16. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband takes the time to give his children practical instruction about life, which in turn gives them confidence with their peers.*** Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall **teach them diligently to your children,** and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. Nehemiah 8:8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; **and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.**
17. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband goes over the upcoming week with his wife to clarify their schedule and anticipate any pressure points.*** Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren **to dwell together in unity!** Ephesians 4:26-27 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 **nor give place to the devil.** James 3:15-16 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For where envy and self-seeking exist, **confusion and every evil thing are there.** 1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, **dwell with them with understanding,** giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.
18. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband keeps the family out of debt.*** Romans 13:8 **Owe no one anything except to love one another,** for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.
19. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband lets his wife and children into the interior of his life.*** 1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate me, **just as I also imitate Christ.** James 5:16 **Confess your faults one to another,** and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The

effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 1 John 1:7  
But if we **walk in the light** as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

20. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband makes sure he and his wife have drawn up a will and arranged a well-conceived plan for their children in case of death.*** Luke 16: 10 He who is **faithful in what is least** is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.
21. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband praises his wife often in public.*** Proverbs 31: 23 Her **husband is known** in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 31: 28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; **her husband also, and he praiseth her.**
22. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband explains sex to each child in a way that gives him or her a wholesome perspective.***  
Proverbs 5: 1-3 **My son**, attend unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding: 2 That thou mayest regard discretion, and that thy lips may keep knowledge. 3 **For the lips of a strange woman** drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: Proverbs 7: 1, 10-11 **My son**, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. 10 And, behold, there met him **a woman with the attire of an harlot**, and subtil of heart. 11 (She is loud and stubborn; her feet abide not in her house:
23. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband takes the lead in establishing with his wife clear and well-reasoned convictions.***  
2 Peter 3: 18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. Proverbs 5: 18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with **the wife of thy youth**. Malachi 2: 14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: **yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.**
24. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband watches and learns from godly of men who are dedicated to improving their skills as husbands and fathers.*** Philipians 3: 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and **mark them which walk so** as ye have us for an ensample.
25. ***A No Regrets Dad and Husband provides time and encouragement for his wife to pursue personal interests.***  
Proverbs 31: 11-16 The heart of her husband doth **safely trust in her**, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 12 She will do him good and not

evil all the days of her life. 6 She **considereth a field, and buyeth it:** with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

So, what are we to do to protect our marriages and families? Avoid at all costs being irresponsible!

1. A MARRIAGE WITH REGRETS HAS AN IRRESPONSIBLE PARTNER. This husband or wife is nothing but a child in search of a mommy, and he seems to have found one in their marriage. They are thoroughly self-centered, but manages to appear to others as a loving and devoted partner.
2. A MARRIAGE WITH REGRETS HAS AN EMOTIONALLY DETACHED PARTNER. This husband or wife is one of the most stable and even-tempered people most people know. They are often asked to serve on the boards of numerous organizations because of their organized mind and methodical way of making decisions. But they are about as detached and emotionally unavailable as a married person can get.
3. A MARRIAGE WITH REGRETS HAS A DICTATORIAL PARTNER. Their idea of marriage means that nothing happens without their approval. Whenever someone dares to question their decisions, they resort to intimidation tactics and then go into a blind rage.
4. A MARRIAGE WITH REGRETS HAS A WORKAHOLIC PARTNER. This husband or wife never stops working, their endless tasks are never left either mentally or emotionally. They live under constant pressure and often spray their family with explosions of frustration.
5. A MARRIAGE WITH REGRETS HAS A SPIRITUALLY APATHETIC PARTNER. This husband or wife is a believer and a church attender. But beyond that, they remain unresponsive to spiritual things; they never encourage genuine spiritual nurturing in their home. And that void blocks an intimacy that spiritually shared life always produces.

## **ARE YOU FOCUSED ON THE MODEL OF A NO REGRET MARRIAGE AND FAMILY**

**LEAD HER:** By that I mean a husband who leads and a wife who follows. A Christ reflecting husband gives the stability and direction of a spiritual leader.

**NEED HER:** By that I mean a husband who expresses to his wife how much he needs her and a wife who responds. A Christ reflecting husband tells his wife she is meeting vital needs in his life and work that no other woman can meet.

Certainly, an emotionally flat, chronically dull marriage signals the need for positive steps toward building intimacy, injecting new life into the relationship.

Recently I read of a young husband who said with in a note of despair, "My wife and I have already lost touch with each other." It was a graphic description of their lack of intimacy, for to experience intimacy is to *touch* — emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

**CHERISH HER:** By that I mean a husband who cherishes his wife and a wife who recognizes it. A Christ reflecting husband allows his wife to see and hear that he cherishes her and delights in her as a person. Here are some of the strands that



make up the bond of intimacy between a husband and wife. They are given in no particular order, and you may have others of your own to add. A Biblical marriage as described and designed by God has physical touching of an affectionate nature; there will also be honest and vulnerably shared feelings; this leads to increased closeness and open communication and honesty; in the process of discussion there will be intellectual agreement on major issues; which fosters spiritual harmony; which encourages sensitive appreciation of your mate's physical and emotional responses; this strengthens the discovery of similar values held; so that there can be even more imparted secrets; which leads to a life long delight in a helper God designed to have all of your life in whom you have genuine understanding of their goals, plans, desires, feeling, and fears!

**PROTECT HER:** A Christ reflecting husband shows that he understands his wife by protecting her in areas of limitations.

**NOTICE HER:** A Christ reflecting husband enjoys setting quality time aside for intimate conversation with his wife so she knows that he is aware of her presence even when his mind is on other matters.

**SACRIFICE FOR HER:** A Christ reflecting husband is willing to serve his wife in encouraging and regular ways.

**FEED HER:** A Christ reflecting husband can be heard reading the Word of God to his wife. He is the one who initiates God's Word into the cycle of daily life.

**LOVE HER:** A Christ reflecting husband understands that one of the most vital aspects of marriage is *intimacy*. And that is the key to the great joy of marriage life which is sex. Always remember that sex is beautiful and godly because the Lord designed it, commanded it, and blesses it. The Lord even inspired Solomon to use sexual terms to help us understand the beauty of Christ's love for His Bride. If you have a wrong view of marital sexual relationships you will have an unsatisfying marriage, and unfruitful personal life, and an unfulfilled family. A passage to understand how to really love your wife is: "When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken" (Deuteronomy 24:5). This is often called the "newlywed verse." Note the "cheer up," which means "discover how to please her." It is essential to remember that marital dullness is *not* confined to middle and later years; indeed it can and does occur in the first year of marriage and sometimes sadly, it stays that way.

So, when your life is done, and you look back those last few weeks or months that you have before cancer, or heart or respiratory problems overtake you – will you regret these days of your marriage and family?

Will you be saddened at what you neglected when you remember these days?

Will you be saddened at what your legacy through your family has become when you see what your children are doing?

Or will these have been the greatest years of your life?

I think the choice is yours. Where are you headed in your marriage and as a family tonight? You will never get to anywhere you are not headed right now!

3 John 4

I have no greater joy than to hear that  
my children walk in truth.