

“FAMILY ~ Keeping the Spark Alive” 8.8.10

Today we begin a (5) week series on the ‘FAMILY’;  
The most important WORK ~ most important MINISTRY of your life!

Let’s get started.

I. Jacob & Rachel

- (R) Genesis 28: 1 – 4 = (1<sup>st</sup> book in the Bible)
  1. I wish I could get around v. 2 without having to stop an answer some obvious questions that surface immediately from the text.

Don’t marry a Canaanite woman but marry one of your uncle Laban’s daughters?
  2. So what’s going on in this passage? Why would Jacob be instructed not to intermarry w/ the Canaanite women & instead marry one of his cousins?
    - a. 1<sup>st</sup> question ~ why the prohibition against intermarriage with the Canaanite women?
      1. Intermarriage with those of other religions is the primary issue; has nothing to do with interracial marriage or ethnic cleansing.
      2. This prohibition had everything to do with Isaac’s desire to protect His son from turning away from God; marrying non-Israelite spouses had potential to destroy purity of faith.
    - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> question ~ is a little more complex = cousins marrying one another?
      1. Depending on what state you are from, this is problematic ☺
      2. Generally speaking in ancient Bible history it was assumed that Israelites would marry other Israelites.
    - c. (Q) Leviticus 18: 6 – 10 sets up (2) specific boundaries for marrying someone who is closely related:
      1. 1<sup>st</sup> boundary = NO marriage between blood relatives. (mother, sister, granddaughter, aunt)
      2. 2<sup>nd</sup> boundary = NO marriage between relatives by marriage. (stepmother, stepsister, stepdaughter, step granddaughter, sister in-law, daughter in-law, aunt by marriage)
      3. Technically, there was no prohibitions against marrying cousins

Back to our story = Jacob sets off to find his wife

- (R) Genesis 29: 1 – 9
- (R) Genesis 29: 10 – 14 = God’s plan unfolding
- (R) Genesis 29: 15 – 19 = full blown infatuation ~ head over heels ☺
- 2 discreet observations about Jacob:

1. Jacob noticed, "...Rachel had a beautiful figure & a lovely face."
2. Jacob learned that when you are in love, time flies.

"Jacob worked seven years to pay for Rachel, but his love was so strong that it seemed to him a few days." (v. 20)

(7) YEARS seemed like a FEW DAYS. You remember what those days were like (early dating experiences) ☺

Time just evaporated; hours seemed like minutes enjoyed writing letters; never would have dreamed of messing up a date by going to a movie couldn't talk

Couldn't wait to just be with her ~ loved her sense of humor & pretty brown eyes!  
I asked God to make her my wife after 2<sup>nd</sup> date  
IF you've been married for more than (6) weeks ~ this msg is for you!  
&  
IF you are single & desire to be married someday ~ this msg is for you!

TODAY is about recovering that initial spark + recovering that youthful passion; for that person you promised God to always be faithful too.

Enemy longs to destroy your family = Do you know when most divorces occur?

There are (2) peaks:

- 1<sup>st</sup> peak is (4 – 5 yrs) into the marriage when disillusionment sets in.  
Your wife or husband is not at all what you had hoped for & expected.  
You begin thinking that maybe you would be happier with someone else.
- The other peak is right after the last child leaves home = empty nest syndrome.  
Couples who have been 'kid-centric' find out they hardly know one another ☺
- Good News ~ Do you know when the highest level of marital satisfaction occurs?  
It's not the honeymoon phase – it's after (25 yrs) of marriage.

Couples who have been married a quarter of a century are generally the most happy!  
Please STAND UP if you have been married (25 yrs) or more = Congrats!

Biblically what is the key to 'sustaining passion' + 'keeping the spark alive?'  
Answer: learning to honor God + learning to honor one another.

## II. Honoring God + Honoring your spouse looks like...

- 1<sup>st</sup> ~ Wife's responsibility = its all about taking responsibility!
- (R) I Peter 3: 1 – 6 or p. 935 in pew Bible = honoring husbands by:
  1. Honor him by living godly lives.
    - Living godly lives speaks volumes w-out saying a word.
    - (Growing up) Most godly person in my immediate family ~ little granny (4'9)
      - When she married my pa-paw Clifford, he was a handful, far away from God in a back-slidden state.
      - She was an awesome preacher; to my knowledge never said her name out loud in public, but her godly life was the best sermon we ever heard.

- (1946) Revival @ our country church was powerful ~ several men including my pa-paw repented & accepted the Lordship of Jesus.
  - My family will be in heaven someday b-c of her godly life!
2. Honor him with unfading beauty.
    - re(R) I Peter 3: 3 – 4
    - It's not a sin to take care of yourself (matter of fact) its one of the best gifts you can give your husband; Peter is not instructing to let yourself go.
      - Remember Jacob ~ he noticed she had a beautiful figure & lovely face.
      - I'd be lying if I told you the 1<sup>st</sup> thing I noticed about Becky was her self-less nature or her great personality. NO, I noticed she had gorgeous brown eyes & looked pretty in our Levi's (pew)
    - Today she is prettier to me than when I met her at age 19. Sincerely, she still is beautiful but her most attractive feature is her playful gentle spirit.
    - By the way ~ God considers this beauty precious to Him.
  3. Honor him with respect.
    - You might be convinced that your husband's greatest need is sex, it just ain't so!
      - A husband greatest need is to be respected & admired by his wife.
      - Express appreciation for working hard & providing for the family.

Passion fizzles when you are your spouse feels unappreciated ☹

re(R) I Peter 3: 6

Understand a wife's fears are legitimate: men have the ability to dominate the lives of women & children, for either good or evil.

- Husband's responsibilities ~ essence of a man is taking responsibility
  1. Honor her faithfully.
    - Be a man of your word. Be a one woman man – absolutely. Keep your promise you made to God to always be faithful to her as your wife.
  2. Honor her physically.
    - Be strong for your wife; not against her. Be protective of her & your home. There's nothing more cowardly than hurting a woman or child.
      - IF this is you ~ please know there is help for you today; anger is an insatiable adversary that many men have to monitor.
      - Treat your wife with tenderness & respect ~ not as an old skillet or Tupperware container.
  3. Honor her emotionally.
    - Husbands, learn to pursue your wife by doing the little things that once made her feel special. My challenge is to start dating her again this week.
    - Emotionally, your wives know how much you actually value her as a person.

- INSERT story of 10 cows

Five Biblical Rules that will deepen your relationship emotionally:

1. If they are breathing, your mate will eventually offend you. Learn to forgive.  
Luke 6: 37 "...if you forgive others you will be forgiven"
  2. Never go to sleep w/an argument unsettled.  
Ephesians 4: 26 "...don't let the sun go down while you are angry"
  3. @ least once a day, try to say something complimentary to your spouse.  
Proverbs 15: 4 "Gentle words bring life & health; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit"
  4. "For richer or for poorer" be thankful in every moment that God has given you together. Proverbs 15: 17 "A bowl of soup w/someone you love is better than steak w/someone you hate."
  5. If you have a choice between making yourself or your spouse look good, always choose your spouse.  
Proverbs 3: 27 "Do not w-hold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them."
4. Honor her spiritually.
- Husbands, God appointed you to be the spiritual protectors of your family. You take lead in shepherding your children: You initiate & lead prayer & study. You take responsibility for your family's weekly involvement in church.
    - INSERT University of Chicago findings
    - Husbands, did you catch what happens when you fail to honor your wife?
    - re(R) I Peter 3: 7 = God ignores your prayers

Do you want to recapture that youthful passion ~ that old spark? Honor God & Honor one another = watch God work!