

Daily Devotion for the Family of Berea and Zion and All who would be encouraged.  
from Rev. John E. Trembulak III  
Wednesday-Thursday, August, 19-20, 2020

**Romans 12:6-8 – “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”**

**Luke 12:15 – “And he (Jesus) said to them, ‘Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”**

I have been having the pleasure of spending some time in this last while with two couples, Nico and Emily, and Travis and Rebecca. They are both planning to be married by me in the upcoming weeks. I spend some times with them in pre-marital classes to get to know them better and they get to know me. We talk to help equip them for this thing called marriage, something that it difficult to navigate as many of you can attest to. It takes patience, forgiveness, love, kindness, compassion, and a whole host of other gifts to make it work. We talk about all sorts of things, from being a husband and wife, to sexuality, to conflicts, to being a parent, to God’s vision of love. We talk about their past, and their future, and what God envisions for couples in a God pleasing marriage and how He will supply what they need.

In these Covid-19 days, I have been reading a lot that marriages are on extra shaky ground these days. Being quarantined, being limited in contact with others, to not being “out and about” as much has put a strain on some people relationships. For some it has become dangerous. For others it has broken down completely.

But it doesn’t have to be that way or remain that way. For the new relationships, the struggling relationships, the broken ones, and for the healthy ones as well, I invite you to consider this list of 10 words of wisdom to help strengthen and renew your relationship. Some will be familiar, some may be new, some are merely a reminder to keep your relationship in check. I started yesterday with three thoughts, “*Always put your spouse first*”... “*Have fun together.*”... “*Build “together time” into your schedule.*”... “*Don’t sweat the small stuff.*”... “*Give back, and do it together.*”... “*Communicate clearly and respectfully.*”... “*Tell the truth.*”... and “*Get physical.*” Today ends these thoughts with the final two points to help make your marriage feel less stressed.

The bold statement comes from the websites: Family First, All Pro Dad, iMOM, and Family Minute.

- 9) **Play to your strengths.** Plus is always better than minus (*except in a COVID-19 test when you want a negative*). But you know what I mean. A bank account in the plus is great, in the negative and it could be time to worry. When you are talking to your spouse it is so uplifting, building up, affirming, and encouraging, hearing about our strengths. We all have our strengths. For some it might be math, others musical ability, some are strong in empathy, others are good talkers, or good with business, for some, they are given common sense street smarts. Whatever it is in your spouse that you see as strengths, point it out, encourage them, let them know you value those strengths. Oh... we have weaknesses too... we all do. Now when you see it in your spouse you can

do one of two things, 1) tear them down with it tell them how dumb and useless they are, or 2) you can, in kindness, point out the struggle and help to find ways to improve on the weakness. Not judging, always encouraging.

- 10) **Live within your means.** Money problems are one of the leading causes of stress in marriages, along with sex, and communication. When it comes to money, you can take preventative measures to work it out; make a budget, examine how your income comes in and goes out, discuss big purchases, come to agreements, set some money aside for a rainy day, set aside some “fun money” and stick to it, and look at all things you are considering as a need or a want. Is it something you need in the moment or can it wait? Is it going to hurt my family or help? You will find that in our instant gratification, microwave world, some things might have to wait... and that’s not necessarily a bad thing. Most of the stuff we get into debt over is simply not worth the stress and in fact is so destructive.

This ends our 10 point’s of marriage encouragement, I hope it gave you food for thought.

*Prayer: Lord, You have blessed us with partners, spouses to walk this life together with, a help mate for one another. In that one flesh relationship are a great many joys and unity. Sometimes the moments are filled with stress, anger, and malice. Sometimes in sin selfishness gets the best of us and things are spoken that are harmful, destructive, uncaring. May we continually find ways with the Spirit’s guidance to draw close in unity with one another and walk this life together under Your care. In Jesus name, I pray.*

PJT3

Daily Reading: Wednesday – Luke 11:27-33  
Thursday – 1 Samuel 24:1-7

Daily Hymn: Wednesday – LSB # 690 (vs. 1-3)  
Thursday – LSB # 690 (vs. 4-5)