Appendix: Work

A Brief Literature Review of the Nine Principles that Establish and Maintain Successful Families

Work

There are many forms of work in family life. There is work outside of the home and inside of the home, in relationships and outside of relationships, and all are critical. For instance, it takes work to provide means for a family to obtain the necessities of life, such as food and shelter. This is crucial to the functioning of a family. The precedent for work in family life begins in the marriage. Parents, both husbands and wives, set an example of the meaning of work, both work outside and inside the home. A common area of conflict for husbands and wives related to work in the home is the division of household labor. When women report performing more housework than their husbands, which is common (Baxter et al., 2008), they report lower levels of relationship satisfaction. They are also more likely to break up (Ruppanner et al., 2018). One indicator of the amount of routine housework that husbands will participate in is their level of moral commitment, with husbands having a higher level of moral commitment participating in more housework (Tang, 2011).

The work in home management can become particularly difficult as couples go through different life transitions, such as becoming parents. On average, men's time performing routine housework tends to remain fairly stable before and after the transition to parenthood, with the exception that their time in routine housework decreases with multiple children. Women, on the other hand, tend to have a different experience. The transition to motherhood tends to bring more time spent on routine housework, which increases with subsequent children (Baxter et al., 2008).

Satisfaction with the division of household labor can impact the marriage in a variety of ways. For example, in the United States, couples who reported a more equitable division of housework also reported a higher level of sexual frequency and satisfaction in their marriage (Carlson et al., 2016). This appears to be a change in more recent years as previous research among couples in the 1990s found that those in egalitarian marriages reported a lower level of sexual frequency (Kornrich et al., 2013). There are certainly other components that impact sexual frequency and satisfaction, but how well couples work together in the home should be considered. Another factor to consider in determining the division of housework is mental health. Khawaja and Habib (Khawaja & Habib, 2007) examined the relationship between wives' psychosocial health and their husbands' participation in housework among over 1652 couples living in Lebanon. Their results found that the less husbands participated in housework, the more their wives experienced marital dissatisfaction, psychological distress, and overall unhappiness. When compared to wives who had husbands who were highly involved in housework, wives with minimally involved husbands were 2.69 times more likely to be unhappy, 2.96 times more likely to be uncomfortable with their husbands, and 1.60 times more likely to be distressed. Couples would be wise to communicate clearly and kindly in their relationship

about their household work expectations, and maintain that kindness even when there are differences of opinions (Carlson et al., 2020).

Children also benefit from participating in household chores. Children who participate in household chores have seen better physical health (Francavilla & Lyon, 2003), working memory (Tepper et al., 2022), and improved math and problem-solving skills so long as their chores do not impede school attendance (Tan et al., 2023). Furthermore, the frequency of chores in kindergarten was positively associated with a child's perception of academic, social, and life satisfaction competencies when they were in the third grade (White et al., 2019). "By the sweat of thy face" (Moses 4:25) is good for adults and children.

With all of this being said, there are ways to push household chores too far with children, something that tends to happen more with girls than boys (Dinku et al., 2019). Parents should use wisdom in teaching their children how to work and contribute to the well-being of the family.

In addition to the more traditional ideas of "work" (e.g., household work), it is also important to work at maintaining our family relationships (Aloia & Warren, 2019; Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013). A willingness to work at and invest in your marriage is related to higher levels of marital satisfaction (Katz et al., 1995). Also, as mentioned in the section on repentance, relationship self-regulation is a form of relationship work (as is repentance), and can improve the satisfaction and stability of a marriage (Hardy et al., 2015)

If you want a successful marriage and family, there is no way around the critical principle of work.

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