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# Cooperative Parenthood

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# Cooperative Parenthood

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If your marriage partner is more intimately involved in your life than anyone else, your children run a close second. You will either reveal or conceal your spirit around your children.

With your children in mind, consider this Bible verse: “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:10-11).

The demands of a child will keep you constantly aware of your spirit, your diligence, and your sincerity.

Guiding children is a long, hard, demanding responsibility. But so is any rewarding job. Expending the energy to interact with one another is part of living. Parenthood is a 20-year-long haul, and it becomes the most demanding when children are in their late teens.

Guiding children requires that parents set limits for their children, which notably demands not only working together to set limits, but also to administer them. Thus, parenthood is a continuous, ongoing test of the marriage partnership. Not only must limits be set, but as children grow older, they need to be adjusted. All of this requires good will and cooperation between parents.

Interacting with people is tiring. There are good days and there are bad days. One day you have happy children. Another day it seems they are grumpy all day long.

Some days all goes smoothly. No one is stepping over the limits or challenging the calls. Other days you are called upon to make some debatable decisions. Guiding children isn't something that interferes with your life—it's part of life. Half the battle in parenthood is accepting the task and the never-ending surprises and frustrations that keep coming up.

Setting limits and dealing with the inevitable resistance from the children to some of the limits is a real test of the marriage. There is either cooperation or competition over setting the limits and how to supervise them. You are doing or requiring something you believe is worthwhile and in the best interests of your child. If you hold on to that conviction, you will have enough conviction to see it through.

If parents are competitors rather than partners, they will likely have two sets of limits—one set when mother is home alone, another set when father is home alone.

The result? Bedlam. The children will begin to play one parent against the other. Or it can result in the withdrawal of one of the parents from the discipline process.

You will either enjoy the job of parenting or it will irritate you. You either cooperate with your partner or you compete. You either diligently rise to the demands of the job, or you neglect it.

You build your own self-respect or self-love as you cooperate with your partner in setting limits and administering them...as you remain loyal, cooperative, submissive, and committed to do all in your power to guide your children into becoming wholesome, happy, contributing adults.