



PREPARING FOR OUR BABY

Congratulations on entering this exciting new chapter of life! Whether you have just welcomed a new baby or are eagerly awaiting your due date, you have likely noticed that parenthood is a whole new world—and it's meant to be. You will find that stronger emotions, new determinations, and a protective instinct are naturally emerging. You may even notice that some of your opinions begin to shift.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!" (Psalm 127:3–5).

Amidst all the joy and anticipation, this journey will bring growth—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. You may wonder if life will ever feel the same. In many ways, it won't. This season calls for intentional preparation as you embrace essential steps to ease the transition into parenthood.

STEP ONE: BUCKLE UP

As you already know, marriage is a partnership—a journey you navigate together, realizing that each of you may take different steps at different times. Ideally, you are moving in the same direction, but sometimes you're running at different paces. Raising children, though wonderful, can sometimes disrupt this harmony. Mom and Dad might experience the same emotions at different times, or they may feel entirely different things simultaneously.

Becoming parents is like strapping into a roller coaster—filled with exhilarating highs you couldn't have anticipated and challenges that uncover new depths of strength and courage. Your communication with each other

will need to increase in both frequency and clarity. With the gift of a child also comes God's call to selflessness (Philippians 2:3–11). Simple things you once took for granted, like a full night's sleep, a warm meal, or spontaneous outings together, may now feel like luxuries. While friends without kids sleep in or linger over coffee, you'll be tackling what one sociologist calls the "bone-wearying" work of parenthood.

Sometimes, Mom may feel as though she's doing everything on her own, which can lead to short tempers. She is exhausted and often anxious about doing things right. Dad, on the other hand, might feel left out, as though this new joy-bundle has claimed his best friend, sparking some jealousy or resentment. And that's okay! You may not experience these feelings at all, or you might encounter others entirely. The key is to over-communicate, establish strong habits early in this process, and hold on to them. You're in this together—as partners!

STEP TWO: GIVE UP

As a parent, you will often give sacrificially, without the applause you might receive at work or the appreciation you once shared as a couple. This season calls for selfless giving—often without recognition. Seek out ways to support your spouse and resist the urge for acknowledgment. In this journey of "losing your life," you'll actually find it (Matthew 16:24–25). You'll develop "servant muscles" as you embrace daily acts of love and selflessness. Parenting, too, becomes a unique and powerful path of Christian discipleship, with a daily intensity unlike any other.

You will learn to care more deeply and love more intensely. While your efforts may sometimes go unnoticed, that does not make them insignificant. God sees, and God rewards. Do the right thing simply because it is right, not for the sake of credit. This choice to love and serve builds character and strengthens your family in ways that will endure.

STEP THREE: TEAM UP

Parenthood, though sometimes straining (as growth often brings change), can deepen your relationship, creating a profound sense of purpose and shared joy. However, it can also test your patience. Adjusting to less sleep, financial stress, and shifts in time and emotional or physical intimacy can affect marital satisfaction, and couples may find themselves venting frustrations toward the only other adult in the home. Yet, through these challenges, your marriage can grow stronger as you commit to being a team. By choosing to lay down your lives for each other (Ephesians 5:22–33) and offering each other extra love (1 Corinthians 13:4–8) and grace (2 Corinthians 9:8), you can experience the joy of parenting together.

This is an ideal time to consider creating a Marriage Mission statement, a reminder of your marriage's purpose. One couple wrote theirs early in their marriage: "By the grace of God and through our marriage, we choose to be a symbol of His love to each other." That statement helped them stay grounded when tensions rose, reminding them that their relationship and family exist to glorify Him. It also reinforced they were on the same team, not competing against each other. Reflecting on your marriage's purpose can strengthen your relationship and, over time, set a meaningful example for your children.

GOING FURTHER: RESOURCES

Your Marriage Can Survive a Newborn by Glenn Williams and Natalie Williams

Expectant Parents: Preparing Together for the Journey of Parenthood by Suzanne Hadley Gosselin and Gretta Kennedy

Sacred Parenting: How Raising Children Shapes Our Souls by Gary Thomas

The Art of Parenting by FamilyLife

A Parent's Book of Prayers: Day by Day by Tony Wood

Parenting Together Bible Study by Karen Stubbs and Greg Stubbs:
<https://birdsonawiremoms.com/media/series/4sq7b36/parenting-together>.



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