

# FAMILY VALUES EXERCISE

Developed by David Robbins, FamilyLife®

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So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. **-PSALM 90:12**

## WHAT:

An exercise for couples who want their family to live with intentionality and on mission.

## WHY:

To wisely prepare for the commitments, decisions, and transitions that will affect the next stage of your family's life.

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Wise men and women "number their days," they are attentive to what is happening in their own life and in the lives of those they love.

They see the constant ticking of time not as a threat, but as an opportunity to learn, grow, and adapt.

They also recognize the need for preset values that can guide their family through the knowns and unknowns of life.

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## ON YOUR OWN

(approximately two hours)

The goal is to settle on 5-10 core values that will guide the next 3-5 years of your family's life. Work through the following questions on your own, and then come together to discuss them with your spouse. Pray for wisdom as you begin.

**1.** What is the next big event or change you see coming for your family? (Examples include a move, oldest child graduates, etc.) Think of this event as the end point of your family's current life stage and the starting point of the next.

**2.** Describe what you want to be true of your marriage and family over the next several years. Be as honest with yourself as possible, and list any values, passions, giftings, and burdens that come to mind. Include not only the spiritual goals, but also your hopes and desires related to finances, travel, schooling, and other aspects of life. The point is to get on paper all the thoughts driving how you think about your future.

**3.** Rank your values and desires, marking the one that is most important to you as #1.



## WITH YOUR SPOUSE

(approximately an additional two hours or so)

4. Come together to discuss your responses to 1-3. Talk through each other's thoughts honestly and patiently. Pay attention to where your lists overlap or to things your spouse listed that you didn't. Ask honest and nonjudgmental questions if you feel a value is ranked too high or too low.
  
5. Combine your lists into one and rank the values.
  
6. Pray over this list during the next 2-3 days to determine if any changes need to be made.
  
7. Once you have agreed on the list of your family's values, post them in a place (or several places) where you will be reminded of them and can pray over them often (ours is in a Ziploc bag in our shower). Take steps of faith toward your values, and celebrate when you find yourselves making progress.

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*To listen to David Robbins, President of FamilyLife discuss how to live on mission as a family, the best advice for a young husband, and how to get away with your wife to plan for the future, check out this episode of Dad Tired.*

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