

Four Keys #2

Devotional Practices



Colossians 3:16. *Let the word of Christ live in you richly as you teach and encourage each another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

THE PARABLE OF PERCIVAL AND PENELOPE

What can we learn from this story? When did things start to go wrong? How can they rebuild? What did Percival misunderstand? What belongs both before and after the wedding day?

1. FOR LOVE TO PROSPER IT MUST GROW BEYOND “IN LOVE”

In the Louis de Berniere book ‘*Captain Correlli’s Mandolin*’ a father explains to his daughter...

“[Real] Love is not breathlessness, it is not excitement, it is not the announcement of promises of eternal passion, it is not the desire to touch every second minute of the day, it is not lying awake at night imagining that he is kissing every cranny of your body. No, don’t blush, I am telling you some truths. That is just being ‘in love’, which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away... Your mother and I had it, we had roots that grew towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two.”

(Quoted in ‘The Marriage Book’ by Nicky & Sila Lee, Alpha International)

2. FOR LOVE TO PROSPER, WE MUST DEVELOP “DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES”

Acts of devotion are the things you do that centre your lives on serving each other. Devotional practices require ‘practice’ and they communicate love in a variety of ways: words, serving, gifts, affirmation, time, physical affection etc. Although some are common, they vary with individual relationships. When two people engage in ‘devotional practices’ for each other, a relationship prospers.

FAITH IS A RELATIONSHIP: TO PROSPER IT REQUIRES “DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES”.

Pastors Dave Anderson and Dick Hardel write...

“Devotional practices are repeated activities through which the word of Christ can “completely fill our lives”. They are the spiritual equivalent of daily meals: things we do regularly, almost without thinking, that permit God to feed us and sustain us, to keep us spiritually alive and healthy. When “devotional practices” are mentioned, most Christians think of formal

gatherings around the meal table with bible, songbooks and perhaps a written devotional resource. Such gatherings certainly are one type of devotional practice, but in truth “devotion” is more about a total way of being than specific acts of doing: more an awareness and way of life than a formula for accomplishing a certain task. To practice “devotion” toward God is to show ardent love or affection toward him as our Divine Lover.”

LIST YOUR OWN CREATIVE DEVOTIONAL IDEAS?

GET OUT YOUR WEDDING PHOTOS (SPIRITUALLY!)

Revelation 2:3-5. I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.

RANDOM DEVOTIONAL PRACTICE IDEAS:

- Grab the **“Growing Faith @ Home”** sheet. Try something simple on it at dinner time.
- **Don’t force things when kids are exhausted** – be flexible – **HAVE FUN!**
- **Set devotional times:** 15 minutes to come together as a family.
- In these times keep it simple, start with **‘highs and lows’** and a prayer.
- For families with younger children, **a bible story at bedtime.**
- **Bless** each other before bed. A simple ‘sign of the cross’ on the forehead is a start.
- Put children to bed with the words **“Jesus loves you and I do to.”**
- Just **light a candle.** Or go further: As a reminder of God’s presence with you in your home, develop a **“sacred space”**: a small table or shelf on which you can place a cross, bible and other spiritual symbols. Redecorate it for each season.
- Play **Christ-centred music** in your car. Many are based upon specific bible passages.
- **Decorate** your home with Christ-centred artwork – or do it yourself – **whatever art form!**
- Upon returning from church **discuss how God spoke to you today!**
- Say **“grace” at mealtimes** (but don’t do it just as a routine – always with meaning and love!)
- Set up a **“prayer board”** at home with photos of people to pray for.
- In our home we when our children were small we **“acted out”** Bible stories in silly ways!
- **Luther’s Small Catechism** is a very basic summary of the Christian faith. You could read little bits together and simply discuss. They are available for free from the church. The catechism includes excellent morning and evening prayers too.

- Pastor Matt Thiele, 12/06/2018 Immanuel Lutheran Church, Buderim