

What We Believe... Why We Believe It

By
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The Husbands' Survival Guide

Part VI—A Man's Gotta Do...

I'll just bluntly blurt this out to begin our discussion. As a husband and father, I firmly declare that we modern men are lazy and selfish. Period.

A man's role in the family is to be the spiritual and temporal leader. We are to put our wives and children before everything else. Do we have a right to get the toys we want—the fruits of our labor? Sure we do... after absolutely everything else for our family is taken care of.

"But I do that, Joe. I'm not selfish!"

Really? Part of your family's needs is in the spiritual realm. Have you been helping your wife to become a saint? That's one of the primary responsibilities we have as Catholic men, because growth in mutual holiness is one of the purposes of Matrimony. Do your kids know the faith as well as they should? Sending them to religion classes at the parish isn't enough. According to the Church, parents are the primary teachers, and I assure you that what they get at the parish isn't complete. No matter how great your priest might be, unless he's the one doing the actual instruction (and most likely, he's not), your children aren't getting everything they need.

It is your job, gentlemen, to make sure your kids are thoroughly instructed. That isn't done by pawning them off on a parish PSR instructor; that's only a basis for what they need. On the JoeSixpackAnswers.com website, I offer a free email course. It's written for adults, but the information it covers (with the exception of only a very few things) used to be taught to every Catholic school child seventy years ago. Sadly, some of the adult Catholics who have taken that course have told me the course is like something you'd get in a Catholic college. But that material is *exactly* what your children need to be learning, and if **you** aren't teaching them because you're "too busy", you're being selfish.

Your wife and children cannot become saints if you don't go to the effort of leading your family. When you won't lead, they can't become saints. You can't become a saint if you're not leading them to sanctity.

"Joe, I don't want to be a saint."

Then why are you a Catholic? Jesus said, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) Wow! That one sentence statement from Christ is incredibly profound! He says you must be perfect. How perfect? As perfect as the Father. How perfect is the Father? *Infinitely perfect!*

Is perfection possible? In a word, yes. Jesus commands perfection in Matthew 5:48, and He'd never require anyone to do anything that isn't possible. When the Church recognizes someone as a saint, that's an infallible statement that the person's soul is in heaven, and no one imperfect can enter heaven (Revelation 21:27). Every single saint was perfect by the time he/she died, so achieving perfection is something that requires life-long effort and constant diligence.

But perfection, as commanded by Jesus, cannot be achieved on our own. We have to work with our Eternal Life Coach (God) in order to achieve perfection. That's done by doing what's required of us to constantly increase sanctifying grace, and by responding positively to all the actual graces God sends our way every minute of every day. *Men, you can't help your wife and children become saints until you are earnestly working on sanctity yourself.* And here's another shocking wake up call for you: Until you begin actively working on your own sanctity and (by extension) that of your wife and kids, you're subliminally telling them you don't completely love them—that other things in your life are more important than their ultimate good.

Exactly what you need to do to achieve holiness is an all together different topic, one that would require ol' Joe Sixpack to write an entire book, but I can give you a few pointers here.

The very first thing you need to do is make up your mind, here and now, to get serious about your relationship to God by making Jesus and His holy Catholic Church the number one priority in your life. The second thing you need to do is make a good confession, and get into the routine of making one each and every week. I would suggest a general confession early on. A general confession would be everything in your life from the age of the use of reason (from your baptism for converts).

The third thing I would recommend is that you find a good spiritual director. Be careful about whom you choose to direct your soul. Just because a man's a priest doesn't necessarily mean he'll make a good spiritual director. Not all priests are at all equipped to be spiritual directors. Most aren't trained for it, and among those who are, most haven't been trained in classical spiritual direction. Priests who are not trained, or have been trained in this modern psychologically based mumbo-jumbo, might possibly end up having the opposite of the desired effect and cause grave consequences for your immortal soul. That's not the intention of the priest, though; it's just what it is.

I want to make one thing perfectly clear right now: What I have thus far written about some priests not making good spiritual directors is not intended to be at all disparaging of any priest. For example, I know a priest I'd go to for any theological question, but he lacks the ability to "connect" as a spiritual director, as well as lacking in knowledge of the principles. On the other hand, a priest I had years ago was a very good spiritual director, but he'd be just about the last priest I'd go to for any complex theological question. Another way to say it is, you wouldn't go to a brain surgeon for a heart problem. Just like any other man, a priest has his strong points he excels in, but has limitations in other areas. My priest for theological questions has a strong background in theology, but he lacks a strong knowledge of the principles of spiritual direction and affairs of the soul. Yet he's just as good and holy as the other priest. It is what it is.

In our next installment, I'll give you many more tips on finding a good spiritual director. Until then, if you have any questions or comments, visit JoeSixpackAnswers.com. You might want to consider signing up to get the free email course about the faith. You'll also begin to get invitations to webinars where I teach the faith live... and you'll get a chance to interact with me.