

// Parent Ministry

Belonging and Becoming

Creating a Thriving Family Culture

Authors: Mark and Lisa Scandrette

REVIEW:

We all want a family that is happy, healthy and thriving. *Belonging and Becoming* is an inspiring book, helping families discover how to thrive through purpose and intentional living. Mark and Lisa Scandrette write from their own hearts and vision for their family and life, while sharing other families' stories as well.

This book is more than just a book about improving what happens inside your home. It is a book that pushes the family out of the home into the world to live out its Godly calling! You will discover that to thrive as a family, you must live as a family with a calling.

This is the perfect book to read as a couple or as a small group. There are great discussion questions and activities at the end of each chapter for families and groups, and group prayer sections at the end of the book for small group learning.

SNAPSHOT

A Thriving Family Lives from a Vision

The families in the Bible were not perfect, far from it. The Bible presents a real look at family life, including mistakes and pain. The Old Testament prophet, Malachi, foretold of the coming of Christ that would turn hearts in the family back to each other. When Christ came, He revealed a new way of being human and new possibilities for the family. Christ brought wholeness and peace to the brokenness of all of creation, including the family.

We and our families were created for a life that flourishes and thrives as we live as part of the larger human family. Living with a family vision and intentionality does not happen overnight. It takes work. The three tools this book will offer at the end of each chapter to help you begin that work are: *"Reflection"*, *"Family Meetings"*, and *"Whole Family Activity"*. A few things to remember as you read this book: 1.) *Family thriving is about process, not perfection.* 2.) *Family thriving is about both vision and action.* 3.) *Family thriving takes cooperation and work.*

Think of a family as a strong redwood forest. Trees and families have many similarities. They are "receptive", requiring access to energy to grow. They are "rooted" in a rhythm and cycle of life. They are "connected," growing together with interwoven roots that protect. They are "responsive" as they seek opportunities to grow, despite tough times. They are "resourceful" through living as part of a larger system. Both are "productive," constantly investing in future generations of growth. Finally, families and redwoods are "purposeful," encoded by God with a reason for being on the planet.

A Thriving Family Carries Out Purpose

"A thriving family lives from a deeper sense of purpose and positive vision of the future that they can articulate and use as a guide for decision making..."



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As you establish your own family, you must decide what you are going to carry from your family growing up and what you are going to leave behind. The values and traditions of your family of origin can be chosen to carry on or move on without. Either way you must make peace with your family inheritance by: 1.) *Seeing beyond all or nothing.* 2.) *Avoiding determinism.* 3.) *Developing compassion for your parents.* 4.) *Finding ways to tell a cohesive story about your life.*

A family's purpose is driven by a script that informs our daily goals and decisions. The drive toward achievement, security, moral perfection, individuality, the good life, family intimacy, survival or toward a mission are all scripts that direct a family's direction.

A Thriving Family Finds Its Rhythm

Family rhythms are shared agreements about how a family spends its time. It is bigger than an individual member. It is the pace that all will give into and live by. It is important to create family rhythms. Daily rhythms include family meals, bedtimes, getting outside, and doing chores. Weekly and monthly rhythm may be family fun times, faith community, parents date nights and more. There are seasonal rhythms of vacations, holidays, and birthdays. All the rhythms are important and should reflect a family's purpose and values.

A Thriving Family Discovers a Common Story

Humans are storytellers. Stories teach and shape us. The core of our family story should be our common story of shared faith. It is an essential part of a healthy, thriving family.

Your family is connected to the good story of God's story. Good stories always have a world, and our story is about a world created by God. Every good story has compelling characters. Your family members are characters in this good story. The best stories have characters on a quest. We are all on a quest seeking God and our purpose. Every story presents a problem, conflict, and challenge. We know the challenge and problem in our world is sin. Epic stories reveal how each character changes and grows over time. Our family is the place that should reveal change and growth in us and our children over time.

A Thriving Family Fosters Connection

"A thriving family relates with love and respect, pursues healthy ways to connect, communicate and navigate conflicts." Families connect best when they are doing and enjoying activities. Find times as a family to do things that will celebrate and communicate.

The other key way to make sure your family remains connected and free from conflict is to have a set of shared rules that also include clear ways to navigate conflict.

A Thriving Family Nurtures Growth

A family's real character is revealed by the ways we respond to challenges and opportunities. A family's goal should be to celebrate the blessings and be open about our brokenness to nurture growth. Growth comes through change, and change involves recognizing false narratives and destructive behavior. A family must be committed to helping each member grow and use God's power to overcome what is false.

A Thriving Family Celebrates Abundance

“A thriving family lives abundantly, using resources wisely and practicing gratitude, trust, contentment and generosity.” When our family lives with a healthy sense of blessing, rather than fear or worry, our family will thrive. Cultivating gratefulness and contentment comes from teaching the difference between wants and needs in our family.

When we come to a Biblical perspective and understanding of what we have, we will have clearer financial goals that will be reflected in our budgets, spending and even our own generosity.

A Thriving Family Supports Productivity

A family that is going to thrive must learn to celebrate each family member’s creativity and abilities. Family is a place to find out and celebrate giftedness and explore how best those gifts can be used to serve God, others and the world.

Parents need to model hard work and its value, while celebrating the connection we have to our world. Allowing our children to work hard and use their God-given gifts helps them grow in self-confidence and capacity.

The family and the home is where we first learn to work and serve others through the daily tasks and chores of life. A thriving family builds productivity through together doing these things for each other.

The above is a very quick overview of an amazing book. We hope you pick up the full book at your local book store or online soon, along with the authors other works including: *“FREE: Spending Your Time and Money on What Matters Most,” “Practicing the Way of Jesus”* and *“Soul Graffiti”*.

They are also founders of “ReIMAGINE, a center for integral Christian practice” based in San Francisco (www.reimagine.org).

