



## 5 Common Mistakes of Christian Married Couples with Preschoolers

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Throughout the stages of marriage, nothing is more stressful than the preschool years. Couples can become stressed, irritable and even depressed if left unchecked. However, there is hope. Here are some common mistakes and solutions that can help:

Mistake #1: Thinking that their children will always be small

Too often we forget that our children will grow up. I could easily spend the entire day trying to get the house cleaned, not having anytime to play with my four year old. The preschool years ages are only for a season. Let's not miss a bit of it!

Solution: "What three things do I want my children to remember about me after I am gone?" Answer this question, and you will have created your parenting credo. Work these answers into you weekly routine, and you are well on your way to creating some lasting memories.

Mistake # 2: Not spending enough quality time alone with God.

Parenting small children can seem like you are in the middle of a whirlwind. Everything is flying around you, and you are just trying not to get blown away. When I neglect my time with God, I am tired, frustrated, and even depressed.

Solution: Spend some time alone with God where you can just "be." Take some walks. Have a prayer time where you can unload your cares for the day.

Mistake #3: Sacrificing couple time

Diapers, potty training, midnight wake up calls are a few of the duties for parents of preschoolers. It can be difficult to find some quality time for one another where one person or both are not falling asleep mid-conversation. However, couples that find the time to play together will have decreased stress and increased closeness.

Solution: Schedule time together like you would a doctor's appointment. Put the children to bed early and cook a meal together. Spend a few minutes each morning or evening just talking, or praying together in the morning. Travel together without your children for a weekend trip.

Mistake# 4: Forgetting to take some individual time.

It's a global fact: Kids can suck the life right out of you. Mostly, the time you spend with them is very fun and enjoyable for all involved. Regardless, it can still drain your energies, especially if they no longer take naps. Yup, that was a sad day in our house! Getting some time alone, no matter how little, allows us to recharge for the next tea party or monster truck contest.

Solution: Find out some time alone doing something you enjoy, even if it is for 10 minutes. Sometimes a phone call to a friend or relative can make all difference. I don't know how many times I called my sister only to have some "adult conversation", especially when my daughter was learning the two most mind numbing words of the English language: "Knock, Knock..."

Mistake #5: Letting finances limit your date nights and time together

Why is it that we think "quality" time together requires money? My experience has been that when my husband and I don't spend any money, we feel more connected. What is quality time? Simply spending time together.

Solution: Get creative together as a couple to list some things you can do together that does not require money. Come up with 12 things to do, and you will have your date nights scheduled for the next three months Right there is a date night! Only 11 more!

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