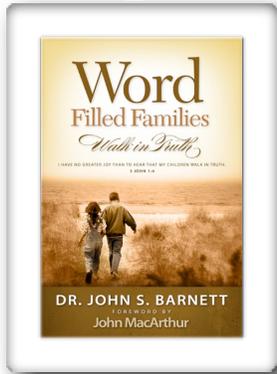


“The Christian’s Duty—A Word Filled Family that Walks in the Truth”



Book Review:

Barnett, John S. *Word Filled Families: Walk in Truth*. Tulsa: Müllerhaus Publishing, 2009. 361 pages.

Reviewed by: Geoffrey R. Kirkland

3 John 1:4 ⁴ I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

Review:

John Barnett’s work *Word Filled Families* contains biblical wisdom that husbands, wives, and children all must attend to with all diligence. The biblical saturation throughout the work, the practical wisdom from decades of marriage and parenting, and the clear applications pervasive throughout the work demand that the listener pay careful attention to the words in this very insightful reference work.

The book breaks down in the following format:

1. A Word Filled Life—There is No Greater Reward
2. A Word Filled Marriage—There is No Greater Partnership
3. A Word Filled Family—There is No Greater Joy
4. A Word Filled Prayer Life—There is No Greater Power

Each section contains at least five chapters that clearly, practically, and biblically work through the practical issues of having a family that is, very simply, Word Filled and Biblically Centered!

Instead of giving a lengthy summary of each chapter, I will concisely summarize some of the main points that Barnett emphasizes in the book.

First, Parents Must Model Godliness Before Expecting Their Children to Ever Imitate Christ. This truth is repeated in nearly every chapter. Barnett brilliantly shows how the parents must take the challenge from Paul and say as he said: “Imitate me as I imitate Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). What a challenge to parents! If the parent is not fully submissive to Jesus Christ, if the parent is not wholly devoted to the LORD in *every* area of life (=speech, action, visual, entertainment, etc.), if the parent is not committed to personal times with Christ every day, if the parent is not dependent upon the Lord Jesus by bathing each day and activity in prayer, then how can one expect to have a word willed family if the parents (that is, the leaders) aren’t even modeling the truth they preach?

Second, Parents Must Faithfully, Consistently, Fairly, and Evangelistically Discipline Young Children. The book underlies the absolute, biblical imperative that all parents have (none excluded!) to discipline their children. It is not because the parent doesn’t love the child that he/she must discipline them, but the opposite! Because the parent does love the child so much is the very reason why the parent must inflict physical pain (the “rod” in Proverbs) to nurture, train, and teach that child the right ways to walk. This discipline needs to be started from the earliest of ages in a way that is fair, faithful, consistent without bias or favoritism. Moreover, the parent must take *every* discipline situation as an opportunity for the gospel as the parent explains why the

child is being disciplined, what God expects, what the ultimate solution is that God offers, and then reconciliation between parent and child *and* God and the child.

Third, Word-Centered Families Begin with Father and Mother Loving Each Other as The Primary Relationship in that Household. The most important relationship in that home is, without a doubt, the husband and wife relationship. This must be the priority—biblically! The children do not come before the spouse. Their activities do not drive a wedge between husband and wife. The parents must both model a genuine, serving, others-oriented, deferring kind of attitude toward each other as a *model* for the children to see and follow. Our culture today has turned this principle on its head but biblically, we must turn it right side-up where the marriage is the most important relationship in that home.

Fourth, Genuine, Christlike Love Is Imperative for a Godly and Word-Centered Home. This does not mean a member quickly chants “I love you” on the way out the door to the soccer game. Biblical love is serving. Biblical love requires giving. Biblical love requires commitment. Biblical love requires forgiveness. Biblical love requires shepherding and patience. Biblical love requires teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. Biblical love is not *only* words—it *is* a way of life for the Christian. The ID badge for the Christian is “love.” If we don’t love each other, the Apostle John says, we deceive ourselves and our faith is dead (=worthless, 1 John 3:10, 14; 4:7-18).

In conclusion, I whole-heartedly commend this book to everyone who is married, considering marriage, engaged, with or without children (whether they haven’t been born yet (!), whether they are young children, teenagers, or out of the home) as this book will be a great encouragement and tool to convict you of sin and give the practical solutions to implement the recommended truths to your Christian life so that you can have a word filled family and, most of all, glorify the God who made you and created you to make much of him and model His relationship with you in your marriage (and, by extension, family).²