



The Changing Seasons of Marriage and Parenthood

with Isaac Tolpin

DISCUSSION

1. Isaac says he and his wife felt empowered to start a large family in part because they simply refused to accept the conventional wisdom that the teenage years were bound to be terrible. Are there any negative assumptions or worldviews you've adopted not because of your own experience, but merely because many other people held them? Have those views limited you in any way, or prompted you to make any life decisions you now wish you'd done differently? *Romans 12:2*
2. Isaac says he didn't want to use his own somewhat unstructured upbringing as an excuse for not being more active and involved as a husband and father. Have you ever painted yourself as a "victim of circumstance," using negative situations from your upbringing as an excuse to engage in life practices that weren't constructive (or as an excuse to avoid things you knew you should be doing)? Looking back, what opportunities do you think you might have missed out on by using those excuses? *Matthew 19:26*
3. To what degree does your spouse serve as your accountability partner? Are there things you keep secret from your spouse, and has that put any strain on your relationship, or on your own mental health? *1 John 1:7*
4. Think back to a time in your life when you were in the early stages of marriage or parenthood and life was particularly challenging. Did those challenges cause you to make any decisions in the "heat of the moment" that turned out to be more permanent than you anticipated? What kind of relationship did you have with God at that point in your life? If you could go back to that younger, less experienced version of you and give him one piece of advice, what would it be?

5. What sorts of things did your parents teach you when you were young to help you build resilience—the ability to adapt to changing circumstances and navigate difficult situations? Do you feel that teaching properly prepared you for the challenges you’ve faced as an adult? What are you currently doing to build resilience in your own kids (or nieces, nephews, grandchildren, students, etc.)?

6. Isaac says that one of the most important things we can teach our children about with regard to technology is “the algorithm”—the ways tech companies interact with us and determine which content to show us. What sorts of conversations have you had with your own kids (or other young people) about that subject? *Deuteronomy 6:6-8*

7. Has Isaac’s discussion of the algorithm made you look at your own media consumption habits differently? If someone were to look at the algorithm you’re associated with, what would it say about your habits or preferences? *Matthew 6:33*

8. In what aspects of life do you take on an active, leadership-oriented role, and in what aspects of your life are you more passive? Is that level of passivity appropriate to the environment or circumstances? Are there any aspects of your life as a husband or father in which you’ve taken a less active role than you feel like you should have?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Be Courageous ministry—becourageousministry.org
- Resolute Man—resoluteman.com
- “Courageous Parenting” podcast
- “Resolute Man” podcast