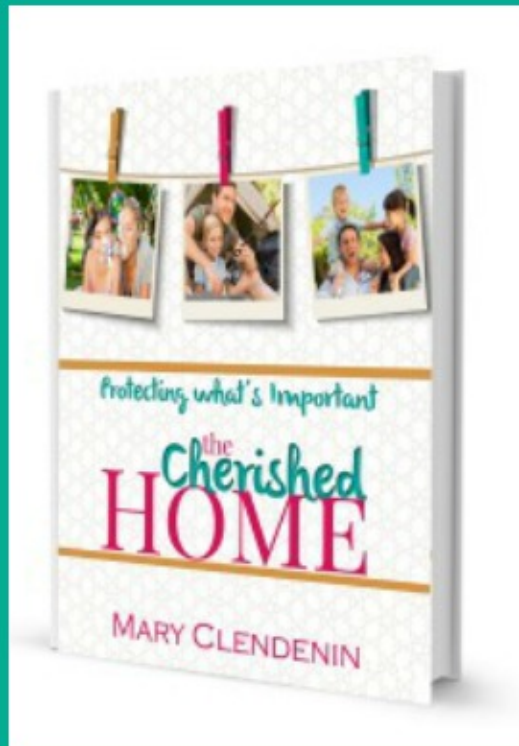


Free Guide: The Cherished Family

An Excerpt from

The Cherished Home: Protecting What's Important

Love your family well.
Make memories. Write
letters. Gaze at the
stars. Go on picnics.
Have tea parties just
because. Make your
home a haven.



Thank you for downloading this free guide!
It is my hope that this will give you some ideas for loving your
family well and cherishing them in this busy life

Thank you!
Mary from [The Encouraging Home](#)

Make Your Home a Haven

Home. This should be a shelter from the busy world. ***A place of comfort and rest.*** It should be a place where your family can relax and not be stressed out. It is a place that I want my family to love and to be happy at home.

It is important to create a loving atmosphere and make our home a haven. How do we do that?

The first thing that I feel is important is our attitude. Our family knows whether we are content or resentful in our job as keeper of the home. And I know it is hard to not get overwhelmed or resentful when you have cleaned up the same mess a million times.

It is important to remember that mothering and caring for our home is a privilege and something that will pass quickly. I know you doubt those words that it will pass quickly, especially if you have little ones but it does pass quickly and you will go to the bathroom by yourself and sleep through the night once again. You will.

Ways to Make Your Home a Haven

Clear the Clutter

Clutter just makes a home more stressful and not as pleasant a place to be. We have been through these clutter seasons and they are not that fun. *The kind of clutter that you don't know what to do with and where to start.*

Getting rid of the clutter just makes a home feel cozier. You can actually find things and know what you have. You aren't embarrassed to invite people to your home and you are able to be more hospitable. And did you know that you save money when your life isn't so cluttered? It is amazing at what all gets lost in the clutter that you have to buy over and over.

Candles/Diffusers

A pretty candle always makes the house smell better and there is just something about a candle burning. Much like a warm fire in the winter...it creates a cozy atmosphere.

Since using [essential oils](#), I am bothered by the chemicals in candles so I get unscented or natural candles. I like to use a diffuser to give the house a pleasant smell, while helping to fight germs.

Music

I love playing music in our home. It sets such a happy and relaxing tone. It helps to drown out the busyness going on around us. Grab your radio, CD player or smartphone and enjoy! Find your favorites on Pandora.

We love to play Praise and Worship, classical and when we are cleaning or want to have fun, some oldies.... when I say oldies I mean the 1930s-1950s. I love Big Band Music. And sometimes it just wants to make us do the jitterbug...not that I know how, but still.

Look around and see what little things you do that can make your home a haven.. a fire in the fireplace, a fresh batch of cookies waiting when they come home, blankets around the house to snuggle under, a fresh pot of tea or hot chocolate all go a long way to say I love you and you are special.

Date Nights

Do you have special dates your husband and each of your children? Is it scheduled or spontaneous? In our home it is spontaneous, but I want to make it part of our schedule. Sometimes it can be a long time in between dates before we realize it. This is such an important step in building a deep relationship and cherishing your husband and your children.

Your Husband

It is important to have special time with your husband. That is often hard to do. Dates out are sometimes few and far between. Money is often an issue. Dates can be done at home without spending much money.

Some ideas include:

- ❖ Movie Night
- ❖ Picnic after the kids are in bed
- ❖ Snuggle on the couch
- ❖ Go for a walk
- ❖ Enjoy a cup of coffee together
- ❖ Read a book together
- ❖ Text each other

It is important to work on your relationship. We can get so busy working, caring for our family and keeping the house together that we can overlook our relationship. It is easier to get on the computer, do our work or chat with friends. If we continue to not work on our relationship with our spouse, we will wake up one day when the kids are grown and not even know each other.

Your Children

Dating your children is fun and much needed. We try to go on dates once a month. We have had more dates than usual in the last few weeks. And it does get easier as they get older. I took each of the boys out to lunch and clothes shopping. The highlight for them was a visit to the tractor store. They could spend hours there.

One night was extra special...Chick-Fil-A ~my favorite restaurant by the way~hosted a Mother-Son Date "Knight". It was so neat to find something for mothers and sons! The boys were "knighted" by the Royal Cow and promised to be brave, honest and chivalrous. We had a special table and were served our food. So being served our food on tablecloths was a treat. I received a flower and we made family crests. It was a fun night for us and another memory made. They also have something special for fathers and daughters.

It is important to have dates with our kids. I know, we are with them all day long, but how much individual time do we spend with them and how much do we talk with them...uninterrupted? Dates are a special time to bond, talk and let our children know how much we love them.

This is also an excellent time for them to practice being a gentleman or a lady. Moms can help their sons know how to treat a lady and learn to be the man. Fathers can help their daughters see what they should expect from a man, as well as encourage them in their feminine role. There are so many opportunities to plant seeds on the dates.

I know it is hard to fit it in the schedule and budget and the more kids you have, the harder it gets. Dates don't have to be expensive. They can be at the park to play, walk around their favorite store, go fishing, an inexpensive restaurant or a nice one to commemorate a special occasion ...anything that you can do to let your child know that they are so special to you, that they can tell you anything, that you cherish your child.

So, try to fit in a date with one child, rotate throughout the month...just find a way to spend special time with your special gift. You will love the gleam in their eye and the smile on their face when you do!

Dates don't have to be expensive or away from the house. They can be with one child during the others' nap or quiet time. Or you can let one child stay up a little later on a certain day of the week.

Ideas:

- ❖ Let the child choose a favorite restaurant and just talk
- ❖ Go bowling on Dollar Days
- ❖ Movie
- ❖ Window Shop at your child's favorite store (my boys love just visiting Lowes Hardware)
- ❖ Driving around looking at Christmas lights
- ❖ Having fun at the park

At Home Ideas:

- ❖ Popcorn and a movie
- ❖ Board game
- ❖ Make a craft
- ❖ Snuggle and read
- ❖ Take a walk
- ❖ Play outside
- ❖ Play hide and seek

- ❖ Let one child stay up a little later
- ❖ Cook with you one night

Dating is a special time of bonding with your husband and children. Do you have any special date ideas or special date stories?