



# MARRIAGE WITHOUT MEN!

RENAISSANCE OF MARRIAGE 2018

IMPACT talk by Robert Falzon

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I was sitting in mass one Sunday in the summer of 2003, with me were my wife and 4 children. Father was into his homily, however unfortunately I was not. I was distracted, disengaged and disappointed. I was not-connected!! Looking around at the people at mass I was impacted by something --destiny defining. It was a question that has shaped my life up to this day.

As I looked around I noticed something. There were many women, older women and very few men, mostly old. Staggeringly I was one of the few younger men and one of only a couple of families at mass.

The interior question I was asking is ---

**Where are all the men?**

It was this question that was the catalyst for starting menALIVE in 2003. Myself and a small group of men began in Brisbane QLD. Essentially to try and do something about the participation rate of men in Parish Life. To find out and respond to why men are bailing out on Church? (that would be a good conference topic for another day).

We started doing parish missions the first one in Cannon Hill Brisbane (87men), then Upper MT Gravatt (60 men) then the phone started ringing and ..... the rest is history.

15 years, 26 dioceses, 380 events, 22,000 men and 70 men in regional ministry.

This year we have 50 + events booked.

Now before I am misunderstood, this is not so much about human genius or effort, although some of this was necessary, it was more about an Encounter with God. That moment in church and the months following shaped my destiny. I went on retreat to Willow Creek and the first session first half hour Bill Hybels said—Are you going to continue working for dollars or are you going to work for people's destinies.

I was convinced.

That question became personal. Where are all the men? Where are you Robert? What sort of man are you Robert! What kind of Husband and Father are you Robert? and what sort of man of God are you Robert? It became personal!

I realized that I needed to be a better man, husband, father, man of God.

You might say I had a conversion and an experience of the ineffable God. That changed me and my life direction.

God can and will come directly to whom he created.

God promises himself!

I began the work on me and the work of menALIVE.

I have often said as I began to work on God's project he began to work on me.

So--

Where are all the men?

- Where are all the men— In Society--25 million people--There are now more women in Australia than men and more women born each year than men. The median age of the population is now 40 years old and getting older.
- Where are all the men—In Church—Catholic Church—there are about 6 million Catholics on the census. There are about 650,000 regular worshipping Catholics. There are about 200,000 regular worshipping males.

- Where are all the men—In Marriage— Marriage without Men---Just over 61% of adults are living with a partner. Approximately half the population is registered married, Just over 12 million people. Around 46 % of all marriages end in divorce. So nearly 6 million people are divorced. There are approx -- 120,000 marriages each year and 55,000 divorces each year. There are around 2.25 million defacto relationships and 50,000 same sex couples. The average age of new marriages is 30 years old. The median age for divorced females is 42 years and divorced males is 45 years.

Marriage without Men. There are so many marriages and married women without men. Of the men who have not left or been forced to leave many are: absent, too busy, disconnected, checked out, don't know what to do, addicted to porn and don't know that there is a problem!

Divorce is often a surprise to many men!

- Where are all the men—In Families—Of all people married they have on average 2 children. Therefore approximately 11 million children. So about 5 million children grow up with one parent, usually the mother.
- Where are all the young men that are ready and willing to enter committed loving relationships? One of the greatest complaints from young eligible, marriageable aged women is – what has happened to the men, where are they and why are so many men --boys in men's bodies.

The PEW Research Centre reports that 40 % of the 18 to 35-year-old single women say that having a successful marriage is the most important objective for them. It also reports that only 20% of heterosexual males responded that this was important. There is a growing body of research as to why men no longer want to get married and a summary is as follows: —

Ref: Philip Zimbardo Book — "Man(Dis)Connected"

- You lose respect—married men are being portrayed unfavourably.
- You lose out on sex—Casual relationships, Co Habitation and Porn are easier ways to get sex.
- You lose friends—I am not sure I want to lose my man buddies when the wedding bells ring.
- You lose space—man space—where will I put my stuff.

- You run a nearly 50% chance of losing your kids and money.
  - You lose in the family courts.
  - You lose your freedom. Can't do what I want.
  - Single life is better: I can play my computer games and watch my porn.
- Where are all the men with Jesus?  
 The weeping women of Jerusalem cried for Jesus. His mother comforted him as he carried his cross. Veronica had the courage to go to him and wipe his face.  
 Four women mourned him at the foot of the cross with only one man?  
 About the current ratio at mass these days!  
 The women stand out as heroic disciples. They stood by him, never abandoning or betraying him. Only women cared for him as he carried the heavy burden of our sin and death. Only women mourned an unjust and evil sentence. Possibly only one woman cried out for Jesus at the Pavement.
  - There seems to be a growing idea in the world, media and press today that we don't actually need men. This was highlighted by Greg Hampikian in the New York Times who said "Men, Who Needs Them" he states that outside the miniscule contribution to reproduction men are no longer necessary. Furthermore, men are being portrayed in the press/media as dead beats, buffoons, social idiots and boys in men's bodies. Professor of Communications James Macnamara reports that 69% of mass media and commentary on men was unfavourable.
  - There is an increasing and long list of health issues facing Australian men. At the pointy end is 80% of all suicides in Australia are men and it is the leading cause of death for men under the age of 44. Why?

The leading edge of our work (menALIVE) is to experiment and pioneer ways to teach and encourage men to be involved and participate in Married life and Family life as Husbands and Fathers.

If men step up in this area of the Family (Domestic Church) >>> the Church and the World will be a healthier and a more God honouring place.

In my workshop I will look at the impact of these issues on Marriage and Families and propose some ways to make some radical challenging changes. I will, in a particular way look at the IMPACT of men as Fathers.

I will be using the research and material in the book I wrote with Dr Peter O'Shea "The Father Factor." Available at the menALIVE stand. ppt slide.

Here is a taster--

- More than 1 in three families is fatherless.
- 40% of our teenagers grow up in a home without their biological father.
- Over a million Australian children will go to bed tonight in a home without one parent – usually the father. Millions more will go to sleep in a home where dad has checked out—the lights are on, but no one is home.

Like St Joseph let us listen to the voice of God, even if it comes from an angel, let's believe the impossibility of the message and the enormity task ahead. By our Yes, courage and obedience we may well usher the Messiah into our age.

St Joseph pray for US.



[www.menalive.org.au](http://www.menalive.org.au)

## Intimacy Improvement Skills for Men: —

1. Start talking one on one, face to face with your wife/partner about the deeper you and let her talk to you about the deeper her. No fix it up comments or advice, just listen and love. This may require some repentance and repair to your relationship. Say I am sorry. Make this weekly. You may need some help from another couple and/or do a program together. Start this immediately. Intimacy means—IN—TO—ME—SEE. Try not to hide or shut down. Be vulnerable and watch the world change.
2. Sort out the Practical problems--- communication skills, bad breath, body odour, going to bed too late, tiredness/fatigue, drinking too much, fear of pregnancy, no privacy, overweight, irritating habits and so on. Do some exercise and eat well. Have a shower. Love yourself and love others. Get help.
3. Work on the Physiological issues—Snoring, fear, lack of knowledge, erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation and dryness. Have at least one day a week away from work. Turn off the TV. Make sure you have an annual health check up with you GP. Get help.
4. Resolve the Psychological issues—libido, self-esteem, depression, child hood abuse, hurts, wounding from your parents, deal with grief and sadness, addictions, STOP immediately any use of pornography! Deal with your past: Jesus is in your heart, but grandpa is in your bones. Family History is very important. What is not resolved is repeated!! Forgive your past.
5. Romance—start your foreplay 24 hours in advance—no sexual touching, clean up your mess, put your clothes away, help with the house work, do your chores, bring home flowers and gifts. Use music and candles. Find out what your wife's love languages are. Tell her with words that you love her, often. Do not assume she knows. The best thing you can do for your children is to love their mother. Be Nice.
6. Be Brave—this takes courage and is not easy territory. Be a man, not just in your work place but also in your home and in your bed—it is worth it. Talk about Sex and Intimacy and what it means for you with your wife. This is important, silence won't solve this tension. Make some agreements about what an ideal intimacy life might be. Do not give up. Do not fear rejection. It can be done.
7. Get on your knees and fight like a man---Pray every day—personal, private, still, solitude – talk to God about your life and even your sex life. It's not new news for Him. He made you male, it is His image and likeness. Be blessed. He wants to and can help you. God is with us—God is for us—God is in us.
8. Find ways to be the spiritual leader of your home—Go to mass, be faithful to the sacramental life, read the scriptures, pray, speak with your children about your relationship with God and about the brilliant beauty of the human person and yes even sex; Bring Joy to your family. Be fun, Laugh lots.
9. Find some trusted men that you can share your life with. A band of brothers and a fellowship of men will be an invaluable support and strength. Start a small group of men in your parish.
10. Check out Mark Gungor -- 6 talks <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbH1d4V6dCg>

## **Dad Checklist**

- ☐ Do I love their mother? Does my child know and see that I love her?
- ☐ Have I intentionally planned my work/life and put my family first? How much time did I spend one-on-one with my child today?
- ☐ Was I really engaged or distracted with calls, texts and emails when I was with my child? What did my behaviour communicate?
- ☐ Did I hug or show affection to my child and did I say, "I love you"? Today?
- ☐ Was I calm when I disciplined my child? Can I say NO!
- ☐ Did I have a meal with my child? Did we have a family meal together?
- ☐ Did I help my child with their schoolwork or any other activities they are interested and involved in? Did you attend their external events?
- ☐ Did I monitor my child's television, computer and phone time?
- ☐ Did we have family night this week—was it FUN? Did I have a sense of humour and was I fun to be with?
- ☐ What sort of example have I been? Do I need to say sorry and ask for forgiveness from my child and my family?
- ☐ Am I grateful? Have I said thankyou to my child, family and wife?
- ☐ Have I planned a special event with my child and/or family adventure?
- ☐ Did I pray with and for my child?