

## **JACK'S CORNER**

**QUESTION:** I'm thinking of going back to school to work on my Master's. I'm worried about the time crunch our family is already experiencing and our three kids, ages 14, 9 and 6. What do you think?

**ANSWER:** I'm glad you're "worried". Too many parents give little thought or concern to the ramifications of a commitment as time-intensive as graduate school, and how it might impact their marriage and family. With what information you have given me, I would challenge you to think carefully and pray earnestly about the following questions:

1. Can you do almost all the homework and take classes after the kids are in bed or at school? If not, they need you during these childhood and teenage years. Grad. school can wait until they are out of the house, or their schedules are so busy you have time at home without them.
2. At this time, do you require an advanced degree for employment that your family desperately needs? If not, grad. school can wait. Your kids need as much of you as possible. (Of course, they need as much of dad as possible too!)
3. Will you have time for intimacy (of all kinds) with your husband, or will grad. school put your marriage on the back burner? If the marriage will suffer, grad. school can wait.
4. Are you aware of the underlying motives for going back to school? All behaviors and choices have a function. Do you understand the function of grad. school for you (escape, self-image, meaning, purpose, security, etc.)? Make certain your motive is godly before you take yourself away from your family for significant amounts of time.

You have already stated that your family is in a "time crunch". At this point in time, why would you choose (take another look at point #4) to add more stress unless it is required for your family's survival (i.e. financial emergency)? I talk with more and more people these days who suffer from S.I.S.D. (Self-Imposed Stress Disorder). Yea, I made it up, but give it a

couple of years and the diagnosis might start appearing in psychiatric journals. More and more people these days try to cram more and more activities into their lives with little thought as to the effects on their marriage, children, health, future and relationship with God. They emerge depressed, disillusioned, frustrated, burned-out, angry and exhausted...and, it is often the result of their own choices.

If you were single, grad. school would be about you, and what you want. Once kids and a husband are in the picture, they take priority over what you might want for yourself. Not too popular a thought now days, I know.

PS: These thoughts would of course apply to a dad too.

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