

# Romans 7

Sunday 10/28/2007

SEC: Introduction to Future Studies and Church Vision

Today, we are going to finish our study on the power of parenting. I need you to think about this before we get into it. We're going to take about four or five weeks. I always try to balance things out. We have just come through a very practical side of your family. I know that many of you don't have kids, or some of you have grandkids or whatever. But I have really tried to focus on, as you've seen as we've come through it, all the parallels that make it fit across the board wherever you're at, whatever your relationship with the Lord is.

I like to balance things up and change things up. So, what we're going to do, coming down the line, maybe in four or five weeks, we're going to start a book study. We've never really done a book study. I'm torn between two books, and you're going to have to help me with this. So, I want you to think about it. I've said it, this is your church. It's really not my church in the sense of what we do. God leads me and shows me and tells me, but I don't want to just do something for the sake of doing it. I want to do something that you want to help.

I have two books in mind, and you're going to have to decide for me which way we go.

1. One of them will be the book of Romans. We'll go through the book of Romans verse by verse, breaking it all down. Of course, Romans is without a doubt a book you have to learn at some point in your life. It's just that simple. If you're ever going to be effective in ministry and really know your Bible and the way it lays out, you're going to have to understand the book of Romans and also the book of Acts. We're not ready for the book of Acts yet because there's just so much in there.
2. The other book is the book of 2 Corinthians. The book of 2 Corinthians is the book that really deals with the aspect of ministry and will help you.

I don't really care which. I'll do Obadiah if you want to. It doesn't matter to me. But those are the things that God has put on my heart. I always like to be in touch with where you're at. I think our church could go either way with those books. It's basically how the Spirit of God moves you as a church, what you want to do. So, pray about that. In a week or two, I may have you fill out a little card with the book you want to study, and the majority rules, something like that.

Until that time, I'm going to bring you through five or six weeks of some things that I think are going to really just help you as an individual. They won't be long studies. There will be a study each week. I always want to get everything balanced out. We spent what, eight or nine, twelve weeks in training your children. But there are things going on around the world that you need to be aware of. You're dealing with people, meeting people, talking with people from other churches who have some weird ideas or this or that. You need to understand how all of that works too.

The ministry of being a pastor is always making sure your church is getting a good balance. We don't want to just stay with the doctrinal. We don't want to just stay with the practical. We don't want to just stay with the historical. We want to always be changing it up and moving around

where everybody gets what they need and it stays to be well balanced. So, those things I've already got laid out. We're going to start next week with that. We'll talk about some good areas in your life that will help you. But you'll be praying about which book you want to go through, and in a week or two, we'll do that.

### SEC: The Importance of Repetition and Consistency in Learning

Today, we're going to finish our study on what has become known as the power of parenting. God just kind of gave me that as we started through this, and how important it is and how it really lays itself all out. We have covered a lot of material and talked about a lot of material over the last twelve or thirteen weeks, however long it's been.

Here's the problem with all of this. I'm always looking for a better way to help you. I've been talking to you who have been coming over and seeing me on a weekly basis for the last two or three years. We have got a good basis now in the Bible. I made the opportunity open to people ever since we started our church. Some of you have taken advantage of it, some of you haven't. But about thirty or forty of you are coming over on a regular basis. It started out every week. We've got so many people now, it's coming like every other week. Some of you, it's once every three weeks or whatever. But we have been working diligently now as you've been asking different questions on your own level.

One of the things I want to do now, and of course, I've already talked to you about this, is I want to get you together in a small group. I've been working for the last year and a half on an absolutely incredible way of learning the Bible in a systematic way. And, and I bet was my guinea pig. Remember when you came over there and we did it out and what I had you do the third week you came over, what did you do? That's right. You stood up in my office. I sat in the chair. You took the professor's position and you laid out almost verbatim exactly every concept of the Bible. And we did it what, three weeks? Something like that. It's a foolproof system. The key to it is the fact that you and I have already been working together one on one. So, you know, we can take that time and we're going to infuse this into it.

I have to say this, I'm always looking for ways to better help you learn the Bible. I'm always looking for better ways to help you do anything because that's my job. We don't want to just stay in the rut. We've got a lot of material here. We've got a lot of material that I just don't want to dump it into your lap and then say, "Okay, go work it." That's, again, in this situation, just like you people that are coming over and working with me in the Bible, I want to help you get everything out of what we're doing.

We have a couple of people in our church that have really been helping me under the surface of the radar here for a while, doing some specific things for me, as far as taking some of the material that we have been teaching and putting it into a book form. I have a guy who, and these people are really good at it. One lady that's working on church history, she's phenomenal. I have a guy that is phenomenal, that's working on the child training. In about two, three months, we're going to have a complete manual or book of outlines in book form for you to take and will help you on a regular basis keep going through this material.

You've heard me say it time and time and time again, that the price of learning is repetition. You have to keep going over the material. There's a lot of material here. We have spent a lot of time, and there's a lot of complicated things in here that are hard to remember. I want to make it as easy for you as I can. So, we're working together. We're trying to get this material in a book form that is, somebody has basically taken the material, put it in an outline form structure that you could just sit down. If you've never been through the course, you could read it and understand it and use it as a reference book for training up your children because you've got to understand all this stuff that I've given you the last twelve weeks, you got to learn it. You got to learn how to use it. You can't now just go out of here and say, "Okay, I had a class," and think everything is going to work for you. It isn't going to work that way. I know that this material has to be kept fresh in your mind. Today, I want to help you get a plan together toward that end.

I want you as parents to know that I'm available to sit down with you. I think that our next round or our last round of parenting classes will really be a benefit to you in these areas. But I really want to help you to get a plan together to how to implement all of this information that you have. It's absolutely vital that it is something that you begin to incorporate into your daily life and your daily routine.

#### SEC: Review of Parenting Principles

Last week, we talked about how to lead your child to Christ. I talked about the three days. Really, I talked about it the last two weeks, the three most important days in the Bible:

3. The Day of Christ, which is the rapture of the church.
4. The Day of the Lord, which is the second coming of Christ.
5. The Day of Salvation.

That Day of Salvation is important for you. It's important for your child. It's really the thing that you're building toward. We looked at Romans chapter seven, and we really, and I think Romans chapter seven, it whetted a lot of your appetite to study the book of Romans. Because Romans chapter seven is an incredible book. Romans is an incredible book. Romans chapter seven, the whole book of Romans, if you ever get it down, and you ever get it where you just understand it, it's the key to everything. It really, as far as the church is concerned, and understanding why we believe the things that we believe.

So, we talked about Romans 7 and the age of accountability, the importance of not only knowing how but the when to win your child to Christ. Most important, we talked about the three necessities, the three ingredients that have to be in somebody having a true conversion toward Christ. We talked about how there are a lot of professions today, but there are not many true conversions. That is really the key in making sure your child is not just making a profession of faith, but making sure your child is truly converted to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Gospel. That is really the important thing.

As I've said many, many times, and I say it again, and you'll hear me say this till Jesus comes back, the price of learning is repetition, going over it and over it and over it and over it. I understand the book of Acts. I understand the book of Romans. I could stand up here today and

probably without a Bible, without any notes, walk you through from beginning to end, and probably on each book, take the next four or five hours without stop just laying those books out. You know how I got to that point? It's not because I'm smart. It's not because I have any greater corner on the Holy Spirit of God than you do. In many cases, I'm dumber than you are. In many cases, you have better abilities than I have. Some of you, especially you young ones, your mind is a lot sharper than mine. The older we get, the more we forget, the harder it is to retain.

With that in mind, my point is this: you know how I maintain those? I probably go through Romans three times a year. I go through the book of Acts probably four times a year. At some point, and of course, Thursday night Bible study helps me because, and our one-on-ones help me because those questions many times come up out of the book of Acts and the book of Romans. So, it's just a refreshing of everything for me. That, by the way, that's one of the great benefits that I get out of you coming over to my house and you sitting down with me and letting me help you with the Bible. You think that you get something out of it. Well, it's like everything else I do. It's a two-way street. I try to squeeze every drop of everything out of everything we do for the Lord.

You came over and asked me questions about the Bible. Did you ever stop and think about this? If I have forty people a week that come over to my home and the average person asks five or six questions, say in a night and an hour's time, sometimes we just get into one, but whatever. But you stop and multiply that. Forty people a week, if they just ask three questions each, that's a lot of questions, and they're all in different books of the Bible. You are my own Bible study where not only what I do with myself, but you keep me in forty different books of the Bible a week going in every different direction. It's just a good thing for me. It's as much as it is for you.

This is why I try to push you into working with people in the Bible. This is why I try to prepare you to disciple people, to work with people. This is why some of you are, I'm doing my Bible classes where I'm doing the books of the Bible and we get new people to come in or people that maybe want to get in after the fact. I've got some of you guys doing those things. I don't have to do it again. It's good for you to do it. That's why you've got to understand that you grow as much by giving as you do just sitting down and listening and learning and reading. It's so important for you to understand that.

You've got to keep going over and over and over and over and over again. There's never a time when it comes to the Bible that you can stand there and say, "I got it. I don't have to go over it again." I read the book of Romans through probably a hundred times. I probably studied it verse by verse fifty times. I can guarantee you the next time I go through it, it'll take another dimension that I never saw before. I'll find probably twenty, thirty, forty, fifty things that I didn't see before. That's the beauty of just constantly going through the wording of God and letting the Word of God do what it's supposed to do in your life.

Of course, that starts in your life with your children. You've got to build a plan to teach them the principles of the Word of God, just like I have a plan to teach you as members of this church, the Word of God. Just like when I give you somebody to disciple, you sit down, at least I hope you do, sit down and put a plan together. What you want to accomplish, how you want to do it. Well,

you've got to do that for your child, except that the discipleship lessons end in about ten weeks, twenty weeks, thirty weeks normally, but your child goes on forever. It's always something that you have to do.

### SEC: Recap of Previous Lessons

Remember when we started our lesson, just to kind of refresh your memory here, we talked about the evil day back in the book of Daniel. That was our first lesson. I showed you how that the life of Daniel is a picture of your child. He's really a picture of you, if you want to take it to a real practical application, but certainly a picture of your child. How that Nebuchadnezzar and the wicked system of Babylon had a daily provision of ungodliness for the three Hebrew children. How this world system has a daily provision of ungodliness for your child. Just as Daniel and the Hebrew children were able to stand up to that because somebody had built into their lives the foundation that they needed. That's how you need to look at your child and your family.

In lesson two, it was kind of by design, it was kind of a shock message to get your attention. I talked about the fact that why most of your children will die and go to hell. That was an overkill message, no question about it. But I wanted to make my point. We talked about two men in the Bible that really represent two types of Christians you find.

6. One of them was Lot. Lot was a picture of a saved man who was vexed his soul with the filthy conversation of this world. He lived down in Sodom and Gomorrah. He lived down there in part of the filthy ungodliness that was going on.
7. The other one was Jephthah. Jephthah represents the deacons of most churches. Many of the pastors of most churches. He represents the great spiritual, pharisaical body of believers that just want to walk through life with their head so proud and have all the great spiritual positions and all the great titles. But inside are as empty as, you know, as empty could be. They're empty! That's what they are. Why don't you write that down? Lot and Jephthah.

Then in lesson three, we talked about providing a vision for your child. We went back to the book of Proverbs and I showed you how that without a vision the people perish. I showed you the verse before that was dealing with your children. How that you need to provide a vision for your child. We talked about four types of parents:

8. The autocratic parent that is very demanding, "my way or the highway."
9. The permissive parent that seemingly lets their child do anything with no accountability.
10. The neglectful parent who just turns them loose and lets them run through the world and don't care.
11. The one that we all want to get to be, and that is the relational parent. One who builds a relationship with their children through their own relationship with the Word of God and brings that child along.

We talked about correct thinking, correct treatment, correct teaching, and correct testimony. We talked about the four stages that your child is going to go through from the time they're born and how through this correct teaching and testimony and treatment and all of this stuff, you bring them through those four levels.

12. We talked about the discipline stage where you've got to get a handle on your child, where you've got to be able to get control and you're the one that's in charge, not them. We talked about parents who turn their families over to their children and the children pretty much tell the mom and dad what they're going to do because mom and dad doesn't have any say in it.
13. We talked about the relationship stage, how that when they get a little older and you can communicate, how you talk to them and work through that.
14. We talked about the fellowship stage, how you begin to take your relationship with them and point them to a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
15. We talked about the responsibility stage, how that as they get older you give your child more liberty. He had to have more responsibility. You ought to be able to trust them more if you've done your job right.

I showed you through all of that, that is the same way that your pastor at church. When I laid out for you and gave you the understanding of how to raise your children and train your children, I basically were giving you young men the formula to be a successful pastor. You have to take, I take young men and young ladies, moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, wherever they're at in life, it doesn't matter to me and I bring them through those same four stages spiritually and I come to the place where they grow up and they take responsibility of ministry in this church and I trust them because I know that they're going to, they're going to do the job of this church and they're gonna, they're gonna, their life is going to be as impeccable when they're outside this church as it are is when they're, when they pretend that it is in this side of this church and it's just that simple and that's the key to doing it.

We talked about the main issue in John 1:17, grace and truth. We talked about the six parent principles of parenting, how that they fall under the two categories of grace and truth. We talked about authority and accountability and we talked about how as parents we hold our children accountable and we hold them under authority of truth. We set bounds for them, we set limitations for them. There's things that they learn very young, they can do and they cannot do. So when they get to be seventeen or eighteen or fourteen and fifteen, today twelve and thirteen, eight or nine, that they're not fighting you on it because that's already been established where the line is and I may go up to the line but I know I can't go over the line. That's what it's all about and you deal with truth but yet there's a grace side and we talked about affection, availability, appreciation and acceptance. How that you have to balance the relationship with your child through grace and truth. The same concept that Jesus gives you and I, the same concept by which I pastor you as your pastor in this church. There's things that I hold the line, there's lines that you cannot cross but at the same time I have to exercise grace. I have to be able to understand that some of you struggle with things. Sometimes there's extenuating circumstances. Life and dealing with people isn't just black and white where you come down with a hatchet and cut somebody's head off. Now there's times that that needs to be done but at the same time you need to understand that human nature is human nature and it becomes the concept, the great concept of training your children and pastoring a church under grace and truth.

I told you how that many churches have truth but they have no grace. Many churches have grace but they have no truth and the key is having a balance of both and that's why I want to build this

church on the Word of God the way we do but yet never forget the grace of God that we're all pretty sorry individuals when it comes right down to it.

Then I really talked about the number one key to success in all of this is one word, and it's the word consistency. It's the word that you as a parent have to be consistent. For some of you young men down the line who are going to be a pastor someday and maybe pastor this church or you're out pastoring your own church or have some area of responsibility in this church you need to understand the main thing that gives stability to this church is its consistency with what we do. We're not flying all over the place doing all kinds of stupid things. We have a very systematic way that we do it based on the Word of God and we stay with it and that outline and there there is the base of security for people.

#### SEC: The Tools of Parenting and the Imperfection of Parents

Now that's a lot of material and I just briefed over it. Every one of them was a full hour and a half if not divided up into three hours when we had to split some of them lessons. But now you have the tools. You now have the tools as a parent. Of course, most of you are at some point in your life missed some of those which is, you know, things happen. But you can get it on the CD and get caught back up. But when the book comes out or the material in print comes out, you'll have another aspect of that tool. You now have the tools to be the right kind of parents. You now have the tools to be the right kind of grandparents. You now have the tools if they have no kids at all to be good in working with people. You're going to find where God is going to put you into scenarios. He already does with most of you. God puts you into scenarios at work or with people that you know who are struggling with issues with their children that you now have the tools to be able to help them and be able to use what you know. At the same time, it prepares some of you couples that someplace down the line when you have a large part of ministry or you're pastoring someplace yourself and doing what God would have you to do if the Lord tarries His coming, it gives you a depth, a great depth that most men don't have in the ministry today to be able to deal with people's problems from the Word of God and with insight and being able to make the hard decisions.

One of the things that I want to say, and I've said this all the way through this, and I see this so many times with parents who try and try and try and try, remember this: there's no such thing as a perfect parent. Never is. I see parents many times beat themselves up because of the fact that they have a bad view of themselves or they hold themselves too high of a standard. I'm not saying we shouldn't have standards. I'm not saying we shouldn't have things that we hold our children accountable for. But sometimes parents have unrealistic goals about themselves and they beat themselves up. I know I've talked to some of you throughout this course and I've told you to chill out a little bit. You're going to make mistakes.

Then you have other parents that I don't necessarily know that we have any in our church here, but I've dealt with them down through life that their ego gets involved, their pride gets involved, and they basically don't want to deal with their children for whatever reason. That has its own set of problems. But you're going to make mistakes. Many of you have come to me as individuals and I've seen you have situations where your kids were like fourteen or fifteen or your kids were

like eighteen or nineteen and you had some real issues and you did what I told you to do and you turned that thing around. I've seen some of you already put it into play with your younger children and the name of the game is consistency.

I never fault parents for the mistakes that they make. I never fault people for the mistakes they make. When you come into this church, I really don't care what you've done unless it's illegal and you're running from the law. In that case, Joe's going to arrest you. I really don't care what you've done in life. I don't care what mistakes you've made. I don't care how big you've blown it in life, whether it's with your family or it's just in life in general. That's not the, it never has been the issue with me. We all make mistakes. We've all blown it in life, and the grace of God is as good for me as it is for you. Pastors who live up in an ivory palace someplace and cast their judgment down on the rest of the world out there, they don't get very far in dealing with people. I never fault parents for the mistakes that they make. We all make them. We're all going to fail at some point. We're just that human. But you've got to understand that you've got to do some things. You've got to take some steps.

#### SEC: The Pastor's Consistency and the Church's Foundation

I know, just speaking to a crowd this large, that anytime I preach about anything, I know that there are some people out there who don't like what I say. I understand that being a pastor and telling the truth is sometimes hard. But you know what, I'm going to tell you something, I'll let you know a little insight: I don't like everything I have to say either. If you think I enjoy everything I preach to you, I preach to myself first. When I'm preaching, I'm preaching to me first and you second, because that keeps me in order and keeps me in line. But if you think I enjoy all the hard things you've got to say sometimes, I don't. You show me a pastor that does, and I'll show you someone who probably pulls his fingernails out at night and likes pain. I don't like to say things that hurt, but sometimes the truth has to stand. That's all there is to it. That's part of the grace and the truth concept. Truth is true. I tell people all the time, make sure that what you're upset about is not just your bad attitude getting in the way because you don't want to do what's right, because that happens many, many times. You see it all the time.

It always amazes me, and I have a lot of problems just like anybody else does. I'm certainly not perfect in any way. But I will tell you one of my greatest characteristics. I'm not bragging, this is just true. It isn't what I know about the Bible. My greatest characteristic, I think for myself, my greatest characteristic for myself is the fact that I'm so stinking consistent in what I do. You can go back to 1976, 1977, and you could find tapes that I preached, and you could find things that I laid out, and I am teaching the same thing today that I taught thirty-some years ago. I have never moved from what I believe.

Pastors today, I know a couple of guys, every something new comes out, they want to get it. They think this is the answer. I know one guy, bless his heart, he's tried everything. Every time somebody out there who gets a crowd says, "This is the way to do it," he's off trying to do it, and he's ruined his people. He's ruined the guys that work with him. It's just like every time he comes up with a new idea, his whole church, and they love it, his whole church goes, "Oh, here we go again." I guess it was just the way I was brought up. I thought God was good to me in the

scenarios of which I was trained in ministry. You don't see a lot of fancy-dangled things around here. If we get a building someday, and we get to be a large church, you'll never see a lot of fancy-dangled things. There'll never be a lot of sparkly things. As far as I'm concerned, we won't have to cut the grass. We'll just pave the whole thing and paint it green. I'd do that to my yard if I could get away with it. My neighbors hate me. They send Chem-Lawn over to my house. You walk down my street, their lawns are just immaculate. Mine looks like the house on a haunted hill. I don't know what to tell you. I know I'm bad in those things. Confess your faults one to another. Here I am. You want me to lay it out? I'm terrible in those things. I don't like to cut the grass. I don't like to do the shrubs. My neighbor kid, I'm paying his way through college because he's cutting my grass. That's it. I just don't see those things. My wife is saying, "Honey, you got to go out there and cut them bushes down." I say, "Why? Why? They're higher than the house." "Yeah, but then people can't look in the windows." To me, that's a good deal. But I'm out there, and I'm whacking them down with the old thing, whatever they call them. That's, I just, that's not me.

A guy came up one time, stopped in there, and you drive down in the spring, everybody's yard is absolutely great. Mine's got more dandelions in it, it looks like the Garden of Eden. Chem-Lawn truck pulled up. They all got the little signs, "Protected by Chem-Lawn." Guy comes up and he says, "I can get rid of all your dandelions for..." I said, "Why? What did they ever do to you? Why kill my dandelions?" I said, "There's something else I don't want to get rid of them." I'll tell you something, you tell these neighbors, I'm really sick and tired of putting all their dandelions in my yard.

I've got my problems. Consistency when it comes to what I believe about the Bible is not one of them. I still believe you build a church just by preaching the Bible. I believe that the Bible meant when it said, when Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men unto me." We didn't have a sign out here until about a year and a half ago. You know why? I didn't put one up. It keeps out the riff-raff. You know what I like about this church? Most of you got here, we've got, I say that, and I, you know, tongue-in-cheek, whatever that means. I can't say it, my tongue in cheek, so I don't know. I don't know what that's saying. What's that saying, "tongue-in-cheek"? Somebody tell me. Anyway, somebody said this, "tongue-in-cheek," and I said, "Okay." I can't say it when they put the tongue in your cheek. It must be a colloquial thing. What's colloquial mean? I don't know. I'm really getting lost here, so I'm just going to get back on the subject matter.

You know what, I look at those things and I think to myself, hey, the Bible is still the Bible. If the Bible and just preaching the Word of God doesn't change people's lives, and the Holy Spirit of God can't bring people here through you. You say, somebody said, "You don't have a sign." I said, "You're wrong. I've got 120 signs in my church. They're just mobile." Most of you that got here, you got here because somebody in this church said, "Come and hear this wild guy. You want to hear some BS, come and listen to this guy." Most of you got here because somebody else said, "Come in here." You know what, some of you come in, you like what you hear. Some of you come in and don't like what you hear. I can understand that. I've said from the beginning, this church isn't for everybody. But I'm telling you, you want to build a church, let God build it. You don't have to go out there and do all these fancy-dangled things. You don't have to go out there

and do all of these things that people get to draw people in. If the Holy Spirit of God cannot do in this church what needs to be done through you, then we just ought to all go someplace else and do something else. That's how I look at things.

I'm without a doubt probably the most consistent guy you'll ever find in your life. You go back in my life and find out thirty years ago when I was teaching, when I was believing. Now, maybe I understand a little better today, and maybe my speaking skills have gotten a little better. I don't think so, but maybe. And maybe I can communicate it better and I understand it better. But I believe the same thing today as I did the day I got saved, and I'm not about to change twenty years from now. I believe sin is still sin. I believe there's right, there's wrong. I believe that the bottom line is that if you want to reach people, God has to do it through you. When you start to let the mechanics do it for you, you're in trouble. You're in trouble. You're in trouble. It's just the way it is.

People have heard me preach twenty-five, thirty years ago that hear me now and they don't like what I hear. But if they would go back, they liked it twenty-five years ago. Then they think I've changed. No, I haven't changed. Your attitude toward the Word of God has changed in what you want to do in your life, and that's the basic problem. But that's human nature. Changing yourself to change your child and admitting your failures and correcting them is tough. It's a, it's a, it's a thing where you just, you just got to, and not only do I believe the same things that I believe thirty years ago, I know why I believe them. I didn't get them out of some other book. I got them out of this book. I not only believe them, I know why I believe them. That's why I'm so convinced not to change.

The power of parenting, you've got to be consistent. You've got to be unchanging. Some of you boys get into ministry down the line, you've got to hold that rock line. You've got to be unchanging with the Word of God. There are still people out there who want, in a changing, fast-paced world, want something that doesn't change, that is good tomorrow like it was today. Everything else in this world, it was good thirty years ago, it ain't no good today. It's falling apart. It's broken. They think they can fix it better. Let me tell you something, you'll never improve on what God gave us 2,000 years ago when He gave us that book. You'll never improve on it. It'll improve us, but we won't improve on it. You've got to have the consistency with the Bible and pastoring. You've got to have a consistency with the principles in parenting. They've got to be there. You've got to learn it.

#### SEC: Implementing Parenting Tools and Understanding Gender Roles

We've covered this material thoroughly and in depth, and now you should be ready to put it into action. Whatever your situation is, wherever your child's at, whatever age, you now have the tools to do what's right. But let me just say this to you, just because I go out this afternoon and buy you a set of mechanics tools, we go down to Sears Roebuck and we go into the hardware department, we get you one of those big three-tiered chests on wheels, it's got all the wrenches in it and all this and that, and get you everything you need, that does not make you an auto mechanic. You have got to learn how to use the material.

I would suggest to you that in the next couple of weeks, maybe around the time that you have your parent in class, or maybe you want to come over and see me one-on-one, I think that you need to call, if you haven't already, a family meeting. You begin to lay out the vision for your child or your children, and you begin that process. You need help in that area. You say, "Well, I've got some different things here, how do I do this?" Let me help you. That's what I'm here for.

I think that you need to understand now that the time has come to begin to use those tools. This is where, if your children are in your home, if your children are out of home, nothing you can do about it. They left. Whatever they were after they left your home is whoever they're with or whatever you've done. It's at this point, this is only for those that are still in your home under your control. It won't work when they're out there. So if you've got some wayward kid out there that is living in St. Louis or living in Tubac, Mexico, or living in LA, or living in here, or living in Columbia, Missouri, or wherever, you know what, they're out of your control. You've got to deal with what you have biblically control of, and that's where it has to start. You have to begin a consistent process of keeping them accountable within the boundaries under the biblical structure that you bring them under the control that control them. They don't control you.

Fathers, you need to begin the concept of pastoring your family. I'll help you. I'll work with you. We'll start real basic and we'll work it up the ladder. But you have to begin to take that role model. You'll never be a leader in this church, and you'll never pastor in this church in some compound or anywhere else until you understand that concept. You cannot pastor the church of God if you do not pastor your family. Does it mean your family is problem-free? It means that you are dealing with the issues as they come up. There's no family problem-free, just like there is no church problem-free. You've got to be able to do that. The way you do that is to use correct thinking, correct teaching, correct treatment, and correct testimony.

In training up your child, and we've not talked about this yet, and I want to cover this before we put closure to this, well, we really won't be putting closure to it. We'll be working this thing through. When you talk to your family, remember this: you want to do it on their level. You want to bring it up. Don't get you some computer chart that you did on the computer. Your four-year-old will look at it and say, "Well, break it down to their level." Understand that it's going to be something you're going to reinforce throughout their life, not a one-time deal. You don't have a meeting one time and say, "Well, I'm glad that's over with." You're going to reinforce it as I've shown you through the aspect of all those things that we talked about that you ought to be building into your life.

I think the last area that I want to give you before we put this thing and put it all together is I want to show you the difference between boys and girls. I think that's very important. Let me ask you a question, and you raise your hand for this answer. Of all the verses on parenting, and I've given you a lot of them, of all the verses on parenting that I've given you, what is the number one thing you see consistent with every one of them that should have jumped out at you very early on? Maybe some of your younger Christians, it wouldn't, but you should have seen this. What is the number one thing that you see about all those parenting verses that are given to you about your children? Raise your hand, somebody tell me what is it? Jan, pardon me? That's right, very good, Jan. They're all in a male gender. There's not one verse given to your children that is given

to a female. It always says, "Correct thy son, spare not his crying, spare not his chastisement." You're going to find that when you begin to look at this, it's all in a male gender.

Now, I understand doctrinally why that is. I understand that. I understand doctrinally that you read those verses in Proverbs, not to get theological with you this morning, but you read those verses that we give to your children inspirationally. They're dealing with Israel as God's son corporately and in a doctrinal sense. I understand that. But there's a reason why that all of the verses that you and I apply to our children are given in a male gender sense. It's really, really key.

Now, let me ask the second question: why is that? Raise your hand again. Why is that, John? I can't hear you. Man is supposed to be the leader. That's absolutely correct. The man is supposed to be the leader. So now, with that little piece of information in the back of your mind as you're training up your children, you want to remember that if you're dealing with boys, and sometimes your family has boys and girls, so you've got to keep it straight in the back of your mind. You want to remember that the key for boys is that you're training them to make good choices as leaders. That boy needs to understand, and maybe you don't want to teach him this at four, but you certainly want to begin to instill it in him by the time he's nine, ten, eleven, twelve.

One of the basic things that I would do, I teach him to be respectful for women. I teach him to be respectful for his mother, his sister. I start with that. I teach them to be respectful for other women, and obviously men too. But I would teach them when they're eight or nine years old and they're going into a store. Man, I'm fifty-seven years old, and if a woman is anywhere within a hundred yards of me when I go into a door, I'll wait and open the door for her. Maybe not a hundred yards, but you know what I'm saying. Sometimes you can't tell if they're a woman or not. You say, "Whoops, sorry fella," slam the door in his face. That was just instilled in me. Now, my mom and dad didn't do that, but we grew up in an era where you did that. We grew up in an era where there was still some sense of men being respectful to women. We grew up in a time that you opened the door for a lady.

When my wife worked at her hair salon, and she worked out there, I would go out there and their ladies would talk to me, and I would answer them, "Yes, ma'am." They didn't like it. One little sweetheart says, "I'm not a ma'am." "Well, what are you? How come you want me to call you?" To me, that's respect. Say, "Yes, ma'am." That's like, "Yes, sir." I grew up calling men, "Yes, sir." I never called my dad, "my old man." He was my father. I never, never called my mother, "the old lady." I never did that. She was my mother. You called her my an old lady, I didn't weigh you out. I had respect for it. It was something that is missing today in kids, and it's just not there. It's just as much society's fault as it is the parents' fault.

But if you have a child, a male child, you need to build into that the equation and understand that, hey, the bottom line is this: he needs to understand he's to grow up to be a leader. Maybe he'll not be a leader as far as a pastor's concern, but if he has a girlfriend or he gets married at some point, he needs to understand. Now, this is why I'm really big on long engagements. I think that the engagement is a very key part in this. This is not a marriage course, but I think, you know, when it comes to kids getting married, I think it's very important for them to have an engagement period of time that is a lengthy time. I think that the Bible says, "Prove all things." I

think that the bottom line is this: if he doesn't do what's right with you biblically down the line before you're married in that period of time, hey sweetheart, I guarantee you he's not going to do it after you're married. That's an illusion. That's thinking like, I mean, it just isn't going to happen. It's a nice fairy tale, but it doesn't work that way. If he can't be the spiritual leader before you get married and honor God in your relationship and honor you, he's not going to do it suddenly once you say the wedding vows. God isn't going to throw, "Okay, throw the good husband switch." It ain't going to work that way. Those kind of things don't make you better, they just make you worse. They don't get any better.

Now, I can take a bad husband after you're married and many times turn him around if he wants to do what's right, but it's tough. You shouldn't have to go through that. Of course, the whole concept is parents, you training up that child if he's male to be the right kind of leader, and that's very important. It starts out by the basic thing that you can build into his life.

Now, if you've got a girl, then you teach her to make the right choices in all those areas of her life of being a good follower. You teach her that she has to look for some things, and she just, she has to make choices just like he does, but she has to make choices in another arena. He has to make choices based on the fact, "My body belongs to God to be a leader for God." She has to make the choices based on the fact, "My body belongs to God to be submissive to the things that God wants me to do." When God gets a submissive husband with a right mindset and a submissive wife with the right mindset, then the Bible calls this in Genesis chapter one and Genesis chapter two a help meet, not a help mate. M-A-T-E, mate, that's what an animal gets. Trust me, I've got three dogs looking for one all the time. They get mates. God never gave a human being a help mate. God gave a human being a help meet. You know why the difference is? Because animals don't have a plan that God wants them to accomplish. They just hang around there for whatever they do. But God has a plan for you and me as human beings, and He wants the man to be the leader, and He wants the wife to be the one that works with him in submission.

Every time I go this way, I get, don't get nervous on me, that doesn't mean the woman needs to be a doormat. That doesn't mean the woman doesn't have a say in it. The woman, hey guys, if you haven't figured out yet, there's many things that your wife knows better than you, you're in trouble. Sometimes these men, I'll tell you, us men, we're something else. We can be, I mean, we think that, "Oh no, it's on my way." Hey, you know what, let me tell you something, there's a lot of things that your wife is smarter on than you, and the quicker you figure that out, the smarter you're going to look. Because I'll tell you what, there's things that that little sweetheart wife got that you don't have. God help the man who just bowls through life and says, "Follow me," like you're leading a bayonet charge. In most cases, just like that, you're up there four hundred yards ahead and you look around and they're all back there saying, "Follow who?" About that time, wham, you get one right between the eyes. You don't stand up under the husband and yell, "Follow me." You lead them to follow you. It's to help meet. Yes, you're the leader. Yes, you're the one who's going to be responsible, but she's a help meet. She helps meet your needs that together you two can fulfill what God wants you to do. That's why the beauty of what you kids did last week is so incredible. You really work together as a team. That's the beauty of it. You know what, my wife and I were praying for, she's so excited. Did you get a copy of it for me on

tape? We want to listen to it. I may, I may sell it on eBay. But that's the beauty, kids, that's the beauty. I heard the whole story how God, once you started, God just took both of you and just melded you together as one ministry.

Sometimes it has to start just like that with three or four people there, but it'll get better. You said to me this morning when I said, "Good job," you said, "Well, I'm sure glad there's only five people there." Well, you know what, the next time you do it, there'll be two hundred there. And then after that, you'll say, "Well, I'm sure glad there was only two hundred." And I'll say, "Well, you know what, Matt, I got the place we're going to go, there's a thousand." Then I'm going to come out and there it's going to be in the parking lot, a big old bus, Matt and Sale Evangelistic Tour. God's good, kids, God's good. But you see, you had the hearts for it. That's the key. You wanted God to use you, and God did. But He wants to take you as a team. So you're going to understand that the two work at different, are different, but yet they have to go together as the same.

I take your son and daughter, and if you haven't done it yet, I mean, you've got it on tape over there someplace where you can go back to Genesis 24 and you find the perfect scenario for a wife to find a husband or a husband to find a wife. It's just one of those things where it's, you know, it's God covers those bases. That doesn't mean there won't be some problems in any marriage. There's no such thing as a perfect marriage. No such thing as a perfect relationship. But there is such a thing as a perfect God with perfect principles, and if you apply those things to your life, you'll get a lot better. If you don't, remember the parallels between pastoring a church and pastoring your family are the same parallel.

#### SEC: The Power of Blamelessness and Balance in Parenting

Really the key, remember this: it's never too late to do right with your family. It is never too late to do it. No matter what their scenario is, even if at this point in their life your child is unreachable, even if it's impossible, even if they're inaccessible, the power of prayer and the power of the Word of God and the power of simply doing what's right and the power of the parent being blameless. Remember we talked about that. Blameless means that you don't become a perfect parent. Blameless means that when you make a mistake, you own up to it and you correct it. Therefore, nobody can ever point blame back to you.

The Bible says a pastor should be blameless. You mean to tell me that there's a pastor out there that goes through life and nobody, he never has any blame for anything? How ridiculous that is. You know what blameless is? Blameless is when you're wrong, you're wrong. It's all right. Say, "I'm sorry." Say, "I blew it." When you do that, nobody can go back later and say, "Well, you're not blameless." "What do you mean? I asked for forgiveness. I'm blameless." It's God's foolproof system, and parents need to be blameless.

I've been talking to Barb Christie about this and working toward this end. When we started our church here, I remember if those of you were here then, I put Nikki and Jamie in charge of the nursery. I wanted them to get some experience. I wanted them to, I knew that they would not stay in the nursery forever. Some of you worked with them and helped them, and many of you got involved on that level and really were supportive of what they were doing, not just as parents,

but on Thursday night many of you did things extra and worked things, and you can look back and you've gained some invaluable material out of it. But you've got to move on now. You've got to keep going up that ladder.

Now, all in my mind, according to this thing working, you know, we put together now this parenting classes, and I asked Barb to take that over in there, and she restructured some things and did some things the other way. My goal is to help you. You want to get all the help you can with your child. Now, the elementary division down there is not there to discipline your child in the sense of taking your responsibility away. That's your job. But it's a help. It's just like I'm not here to, I'm not here to, you know, to teach you the Bible in the sense that you don't have to do any work. It's your job, but I'm here to help you. That's really what the name of the game is.

I told Barb, I said, "What I want to do is I want you to get a list together, and the parents of this church that want your help, they'll get on that list." When you can, and if your child has an issue, your child has a problem, or there's something that you've got, just like you go to your school for parent-teacher deal, except in this case, it's going to run through Barb. I mean, I don't want thirty different people in there because everybody's got their own perspective on things, and it gets confusing that way. Barb will filter it all through. She'll deal with it all, and she'll come to you or you can come to her. If your name is on that list for your child, she'll help you. She'll lay out, she'll put the things there, she'll give you what you need. You can work back and forth together. If there are areas of discipline you need to work on, then that's exactly, you can work together. You can tell her, "Hey, my child is asking about salvation," so make sure that nobody, and you let me know what goes on if your child is getting to that age where they're wanting to get saved, and you need, you need to know that. You need to know if they're going up in there and saying, "Hey, I want to get saved today," and the person said, "You know what, we'll talk to your mom and dad about that." You need to know that there are obvious things that go on in your child's world that maybe they say that you need to know. It's just a matter of how much do you want somebody to help you, how much information do you want to have. That's your call. We're not going to be intrusive in your world and get coming in and say, "Okay, go." If you want to know, I do the same thing with your child I do with you. You want to come over and study the Bible with me, come on over. If you don't, it's fine. If you want to know where your child's at and have somebody help you and work with you in all areas so you can better do your job, that's fine. The bottom line is, it has to be your choice. We'll put a list together to help her know who wants to work together, and we'll help reinforce what you're trying to do as a parent. That's the whole idea.

You know what, there's, like I said, there are obvious areas that you need to know as a parent when it comes to parenting and training up your child. Let me just say this to you, you get all the good help you can. Don't be prideful. I'll help you any way I can, but there are other people here, this thing goes through, that we can help you too.

Remember what I said early on, Psalms 127:4:

*Psalms 127:4*

*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.*

You and you alone, as long as your child is under your roof, are responsible for the things that you do. I know this is a lot of material, and I'm trying to, and that's why I'm having it put out in material and form, and it's just a lot of material there that you've got to learn to balance.

Years ago, when I went to the circus, I remember as a little kid, there was a guy stood up there and he had in his hand, he had on each foot, he had a stick with a plate on it, and those plates were spinning. He had two in front of him, and he moved his body around and he kept not only balance, but he kept those plates spinning, and he kept balancing them, and he kept doing it, and he just kept going. He never, he had perfect balance, perfect hand-eye coordination. It was absolutely perfect, and he was doing, he was doing eight or nine things at the same time and keeping them all in perspective. Now, I didn't understand that when it all happened. I watched that, and I was just a little guy, I was amazed. But as I grew up in life and I came to the point where I really, really, really grasped the concepts of things, I understood how important balance was.

A lot of you know that I like to take astrophotos, astrophotography, that is, pictures of the galaxies and that through a telescope and a camera. When I started that, it was absolutely a challenge for me. I just, I just, it was hard. It was hard. Everything that I tried to do, it was just like that because there are so many things you've got to get done. I want to show you this here. This is, I took this two weeks or last weekend, all right, two weeks ago. This is the great galaxy in Andromeda. I will never take another picture of the great galaxy in Andromeda. You know why? Because I'll never improve on this. This is one of these nights where I could never get it any better than this. The great nebula in Andromeda, or galaxy in Andromeda, is what they say our galaxy looks like. It's probably six hundred million light years away, three hundred million light years across. It's just chock full with planets and stars and everything. In fact, it's one of the most, it's one of the most beautiful, beautiful things you'll ever find in all of your life.

I took it that night, and I've always wanted to get a good shot. I had tried for four or five years to get a picture of this, and it always came out because the problem is, you see the bright center there. What happened, and you've got real faint arms out here, the problem is when you, when you expose it for long enough to get the faint stuff, you burn out the middle, and it looks like a big red, a big white dot. When you get the middle right, you don't get the, you just got to be perfect with it. I had tried and tried and tried and tried to get it, and I just tried in every way I knew how to get that and take that picture. Finally, a couple of weeks ago, I got it. But you know what it takes? It takes the absolutely perfect balance of about nine or ten things.

First of all, the atmosphere has got to be just right. It can't be too, it can't be, no, the less water vapor in the air, the better. The best, everything, everything in it has just got to be absolutely perfect. You can have this put up on your wall. Would you like that? You're welcome. You're welcome. Someday it'll be worth a lot of money when I'm dead. You've got to be just right. The sky's got to be the right kind of clear, as little water vapor as possible. Everything has got to be just absolutely perfect. What you do is you put your camera in the back and you get up there and you'll get it in there. Then the next hardest thing is getting it focused. You've got to get that thing focused to the point where it just, any little off focus will show and it'll ruin the picture. Then what you've got to do, you've got to offset the Earth's axis because the Earth is rotating, and if

you don't do that, your stars look like little squiggly streaks. So what you've got to do then is you've got to, you've got to put another telescope on the back of that telescope, and then you've got to get an eyepiece with a crosshair in it, and then you've got to put a lot of magnification, and you've got to find another star someplace, and then you put that star right in that crosshair, and then you get it right in the middle, and then you run over here, you get your camera set up with your computer, and then you've got to get it polar aligned right on the North Star, and then you've got to push it back here, and then that picture right there was a twenty-minute exposure. You know what you do for twenty minutes? You stand there and you squint that little eyepiece with a little hand control box, and every time that little star wants to jiggle out of that box, you bring it back in, and you stand there for twenty minutes and move it back, move it back. You know what, you've got to have everything exactly right. How many times I stood there for twenty minutes, thirty minutes, kept it right in that thing, and then went back to look at it and forgot to go and push the button to start the camera? I've done that more times than I know what to tell you. It's an absolute, everything has to be just right. The longer you go, the tighter you become, the more fatigued you become, and you just, you just stand there and you just do that and you do that and you do that. You can't talk, you can't think. Jimmy came over one night and he says, "I'd like to come over when you take some pictures." And I say, "You can, but you've got to sit in the corner and shut up and not say anything. You don't get to see anything, you don't get to look at anything, and you can't say anything. You sit there and you watch me go, and if you get tired of that view, then move behind me and get this view." But that's all the excitement there's going to be.

Parenting is just like that, folks. You've got to pay attention to the detail. You've got to have everything lined up just perfectly. The atmosphere has got to be right in your home. You've got to have everything working for you in the right format. Then you've got to stay there at the eyepiece and you've got to guide out the errors to make sure that everything comes out just perfect. You've got to learn to juggle five or six plates at the same time and never letting them drop and keeping them moving. That's what you've got to do. That's the importance of understanding the power of parenting. It's a lot of work. There'll never be a day that there's not something you're going to come home tired from work and have to deal with issues. You're going to have to mentally prepare yourself as you're driving home for your family when you've had a rough day and you just want to veg and watch TV or do this or do that, and those little ones run up and want your undivided attention. You've got to mentally process yourself to get out of that thing. It's tough. It's just like pastoring a church. You have all kinds of things you've got to deal with. You're tired yourself. You have your own issues. You have your own family issues. You have this or that. But when the phone rings, you always got to pick it up and be the guy who has the right answer on the other end. That's it. You've got to discipline yourself for that mindset. You've got to be able to learn to balance all of these things as tools and use them and know how to fix what needs to be fixed because all the tools are right there. That's the key to parenting.

I'll help you however I can. This whole church and everything that we do is geared largely toward your kids. I want to always make your kids know that this place is a fun, safe, secure, loving, warm, compassionate place that helps you as a parent bring them right up through the process, knowing that we're there to help you. But you have to do the work. You've got the tools

now, and you're going to have to learn to keep it all balanced so your pictures of your child at the end of their life come out exactly the way God wants them to come out. That's your job.

Every head bow and every eye close.