

Hebrews 12:5-11

Sunday 10/7/2007

SEC: The Model of Corporal Punishment

Last week, we laid out the second part of disciplining your child, talking about corporal punishment. This is the time in your child's life when you have to resort to the physical side of discipline more than just talking with them about issues. It's for a clear act of rebellion that requires more than just conversation.

We ended last week with Hebrews chapter 12, discussing that the model for corporally disciplining your children, where physical chastisement is used, follows the model of our relationship with God. He is our Father, and we are His children. The Bible is very clear that we, as God's people, are not perfect. We will all fall into things in our lives where our attitudes will need adjustments, to the point where God has to deal with us. There is no one perfect on this planet, even after salvation, who will not go through some struggle. This does not mean we shouldn't strive to do everything right. Obviously, the hand of chastisement in our lives is never pleasant and can bring terrible consequences that may affect us our whole lives.

The Bible says in Hebrews chapter 12 that all of God's children receive chastisement. In fact, in verse 5, He says a great admonition:

Hebrews 12:5-11

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

This passage is marvelous, not only for you and me as Christians but as the model for dealing with your children at the point when you have to resort to something more than just speaking and talking with them. It shows that, first of all, we as God's people have forgotten. This is what happens with many parents in disciplining their children: they forget that the real model is their

own relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. God is my Father; I am His child. Every aspect of training and dealing with children, including chastisement, finds its model in this relationship.

I have told you from day one that it doesn't matter if you have children or not, or if you are past childbearing age. These principles are not just based on people with children; they are based on you and me as children of God in our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

SEC: The Five Points of Action in Chastisement

You remember we talked about this last week. I went through and said that in this passage, you find what I call the five points of action when you have to physically chastise your child. You want to apply these five points that you find in this passage when God deals with us.

1. Communication: Your child has to understand the offense.
2. Application: He needs to understand not only what the offense was but how it applies to him. He has to take responsibility for his own actions.
3. Explanation: As a parent, you are not going to allow that to take place.
4. Execution: You carry out the act of punishment, whatever it may be.
5. Restoration: These five things are absolutely crucial in building a process in your child's life.

SEC: The Four Stages of Discipline

We showed you that this act of discipline involves four stages. We have talked about this from the very beginning, how your child transitions through four stages as he grows:

6. The Discipline Stage: This is basically the foundation stage.
7. The Relationship Stage: Here, you begin to form his attitude.
8. The Fellowship Stage: You begin to see action develop based on his attitude.
9. The Responsibility Stage: This is a lifestyle he will carry with him the rest of his life.

I said it from day one: the older your child gets, the less restrictions you should have to put on them, not more. They should be responding by that point to the responsibility part if you have done your work through the other four. These four are absolutely crucial.

I showed you how the first two stages, the discipline stage and the relationship stage, are the absolute place where you have to deal with that child and begin to mold his will and his spirit, or break it in some cases. These two are the ones that prepare you for the next two, which are the fellowship stage (his action) and the responsibility stage. In these first two stages, discipline and relationship, you basically form their attitude about right and wrong. You give them a baseline by which they now know where the line is, what they can cross, and what they cannot cross. By the time you are through those first two stages, you should have that child where he completely understands the ground rules.

Then, in the next two stages, you begin to build on what you have already done. This is where you begin the fellowship stage. This is where you will see that because you have developed the right attitude, it produces the right action. The right action will lead right into the aspect of responsibility, which is a lifestyle that he will carry with him the rest of his life.

I cannot impress upon you how important these two aspects are. They are not only important in your own child's life but also absolutely important to you in your own personal relationship with God. Whether you know it or not, what I have just done for you is laid out the same process that you and I should have in our life of growing spiritually and getting to that point where God can trust your responsibility. That is really what this little circuit riding thing we talked about this morning is all about.

SEC: The Sponge Analogy and Giving Back

We are like sponges, and we absorb. Your children absorb a lot faster than we do, or I should say I do. Some of you absorb faster. But the older you get, the less you absorb, the less you have the ability to retain things. That is the process of life. But your child absorbs everything around them. You will find that young Christians are the exact same way—they absorb.

If you just take a sponge, it picks up water and spilled milk and whatever, but there comes a point that that sponge doesn't function as it was designed anymore. The reason is because now it is completely full; it can't take any more in. For you to pick up any more, you have to wring out what is already in the sponge. That is so true of your child's life, and it is also true of you and me. We get a lot of information around here, and there are a lot of things that you learn about God, the Word of God, life, history—things that can really help you grow. But I am telling you, if you do not allow God to wring you out, if you do not allow God to take you as a sponge and wring out what you are learning, you are never going to grow properly.

That is basically what our opportunity is down here with this young couple. It is basically a chance for you, and I don't care how young you are in the Lord, to get up and say, "Let me tell you what God has done in my life." I believe that as a young child of God, you need to begin as quickly as you can giving back. You may not be able to preach a sermon. You may not be able to get up and lay out something and articulate something in a great way in a teaching in the Bible or doctrine in the Bible, but you have the ability to get up and to tell somebody else what God has done for you. That is the basic stage. That is what I try to apply in your life, and that is what you need to try to apply in your children's life. It goes down the same road, just on two different levels.

I, as a pastor, try to pull everything out of you and develop you. I lay down a foundation stage in your life; we call it discipleship. I take you from that point, and from our one-on-one together, our Thursday night, our Sunday mornings, we talk about how to build a relationship with God. What I basically do when you come in here is, in many cases, get your thinking changed around. You come in with your own definitions from your own life that have gotten you into trouble or not gotten you where you needed to be in life. We change those. We follow the same pattern. We begin to take, through the foundation and the discipline stage, and change your attitude. When you get to the point that you get a little farther down the line, you really take that attitude and that discipline, and it helps you build the right kind of relationship with Christ, the right kind of relationship with His church, the right kind of relationship with other Christians, the right kind of relationship with me as a pastor. From that, through that natural process, just like I do with you, you ought to be doing with your children.

My goal for you, my goal for every one of you—now you may not want that or you may never get to this point, just like as parents, you have goals for your children, they may never get and realize those goals, they may never fulfill those goals in your life—and some of you will never fulfill the goals that I look at you and have for you. But at the end of the day, my goal for you should be the same as your goal for your child, and that is to take responsibility for ministry. This is the basic step where you go down and you begin to let God use you. The Bible says, "If you are faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many." God doesn't start out by putting you someplace where there are 10,000 people to listen to your testimony. He starts in a little restaurant someplace down there by Truman Lake and just lets you begin the best way you know how to let God move in your heart to tell somebody what God has done for you.

It is the same way with your children. Your children begin to go through that process. They struggle with things in their little lives, just like we all struggle with things in our big lives. They have their issues, and I know many times we look at them coming home from school and we see their little struggles or their little friend struggles, and we think how insignificant they are. But to them, they are really big deals. On different levels, we all struggle with our issues in life. It is the same process. It is the exact same process. Learn how to build a good relationship in your own life with God, and then you have the ability to transfer that to your child's life. It is the same process. God communicates to me. God applies things to me. He explains things to me. God always, in the bottom line of our lives as children of God, is restoration in everything that we do. The importance of following these outlines in dealing with your child in a disciplined situation is absolutely necessary.

SEC: Preparing for the Evil Day and the Day of Salvation

If you haven't figured it out yet, and I'm sure most of you have, we haven't said much about this. We're going to deal with it probably next week in a great way. But if you haven't figured it out yet, remember lesson one. In lesson one, I talked to you about the evil data that's coming into your child's life. We went back to Daniel chapter 1, and I showed you how Daniel was a picture of your own children. Daniel came at a time in his life where he left the comfort of his home. We don't know much about Daniel's early life or his early beginnings, but we do know that somebody did something right in Daniel's life. We know that somebody taught him about God and how to love God. Somebody taught him that when he was faced with all the things that Babylon had to offer, his heart would stay true to God in the most adverse situations with nobody around. We saw how Daniel had the character and the relationship with God that he simply said no to the world when Mom and Dad were not looking.

I told you how your child is up against that day. There's coming a day, some of you experienced it this year, when you send your kid off to school, and they have to face things on their own. They have to stand and face the cold, blustery wind of life on planet Earth, even in a kindergarten sense. From this point on, for the rest of their life, they're going to be up against opposition. Your job as a parent, I'm not saying it's over, but I want to tell you this: the most crucial part of your life with them is probably over, or you'll have to walk them through the issues. But let me tell you something, you've had your time now where nobody had more influence in their life than you. If you have not taken advantage of that now, as the winds begin

to howl and the snow begins to blow in their little lives, and they come home with issues and situations and circumstances, you'll find out that that day is the day that they're facing, and they go up against it. For the rest of their lives, the devil is going to have a daily proportion of ungodliness on this planet that he wants to serve them on a dish every day. Your working in their lives in those aspects will be the only thing that determines whether they say, "No, thank you," or, "Oh, could I have a double helping?" That's where it's at.

You're just not up against one day. If you haven't figured this out yet, there are two days your child is up against. The first one we've talked about, the second we really haven't said much about. But the first one is the evil day, where he faces all the issues. The second day that he's up against, that you're preparing him for, is his day of salvation. There's coming a day in that little kid's life where he's going to have to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. That day is coming, just like the evil day. The tragedy is, in 99.9999% of the time, the evil day comes along before the day of salvation presents itself. If you're not paying attention, and you're not in touch with reality, and you're not laying a foundation toward that second day in their life, then you're going to have some problems when it comes to that point. Next week, I think it's going to be next week, I have to look at my lesson plan, I think next week we're going to take the whole time and we're going to talk about how to win your child to Christ. It'll be a time where you can ask some questions. We're going to go over every aspect, we're going to go over every bad teaching that's been taught on it. We're going to talk about it in every detail, and I'm going to show you unequivocally that you don't miss that day. We'll talk about that, I think it's next week, but if it's not, it's the week after, but anyway, it's coming up.

SEC: Dealing with a Strong-Willed Child

Last week, we began to talk about disciplining your children in the second phase, and we ended with what has to be talked about today: dealing with a strong-willed child. From time to time, you're going to find children that are different than just normal children. This is the reason again God allowed you three, four, or five years alone with your child without any other influence. It was given to you so that you could lay a base from which to work in the years to come as he goes through those four transitional periods in his life. In that time, you are either molding his spirit or, in some cases of a strong-willed child, you are breaking that will.

Correcting that strong will is something that you have to do early. You have to catch it in the first two stages. You have to catch it in the first stage. If you wait until the second stage, you're getting behind the ball game here. You've got to get it done even before that. You've got to get it done while life is still uncomplicated. You've got to get it done while there are no other influences in his life. A strong-willed child is basically someone that you have to get their undivided attention before other people start vying for their attention. Again, and I cannot emphasize this enough, this is why God gave you, Mom and Dad, as the parent, that time where nobody has more influence in their life than you. You have the time to break down and deal with everything long before you put them out there at a bus to go to school or drop them off at school for kindergarten, first grade, or whatever, wherever they go.

You've got to get it done by the time that child reaches what we call adolescence, which will be around 12, 13, or 14 years of age. Let me tell you something: those times in your child's life, without a doubt, will be the hardest times of his life. Without a doubt, this will be the hardest time of life. The most destructive things that can happen will happen in this time period to him if you're not paying attention as a family. This is where he changes. This is where he's like going through a total metamorphosis of life. This is where they're changing emotionally, they're changing physically, they're changing spiritually. This is where their bodies are moving faster than their emotions are. This is where every aspect of them is being pulled and pulled apart and twisted and developed. This is where, if you have, you've got to get the strong will, and I cannot overemphasize this, you have got to break the strong will before we get to this point. It's absolutely crucial.

This is where your child will face his or her greatest challenges. This is where, in reality, they're not a child anymore, but they're not an adult yet. They're in limbo. They're struggling with their own identity. They're thrown into a mix of other kids at their own age who set the rules for life in an age where they're all screwed up about who they are. This is why you get so many goofy fads that happen with kids. Kids are trying to find their own identification; they're trying to find who they are. The parents have not provided for that. So what do they do? They wear all the goofy clothes, they pierce their noses, pierce their ears. I saw a guy at the mall the other day. In his earlobes, I don't know how he did it, he had holes in them that big. He put those things in there, and they're hanging down. I mean, I couldn't believe it. I mean, he looked like, I don't know what to tell you. I'm thinking to myself, what possesses a child to want to make your ears look like the rear end of trash cans? I mean, what possesses a child to want to put a, I saw one with a bone through his nose. I saw one with his eyebrow with a big thing sticking through it. You look at that, and now I know we come out of a time when we didn't do those things. I saw older people. We had our own deal. I cannot remember anything that radical. I mean, what we did is, you rolled your cigarette pack up in your T-shirt. Maybe you got a tattoo, "Born to Raise Hell" or something like that. One of those, "Born to Kill," one of those things. But my goodness, I'm walking down the mall, and I pulled Barb's arm and said, "Check that out." This guy's earlobes were hanging down to here. I mean, you could carry stuff in them. Maybe that's his point, I don't know. I'm thinking to myself, what possesses a child? What really, stop and think, what possesses a child to want to be that different? Don't you know that's a problem? Have you not figured out yet that that's not, if God wanted you to have loops in your ears or in your nose, He'd have made you that way? Do we not understand that that is a serious social defect in a child? Parents walk around, and they, I mean, how would you like to take your kid and say, "Introducing to somebody you never met before?" And all they're doing, and you know, I mean, I look at you or you, I just say, "Hi, I'm looking in faith." You're looking right through his ears, man. I said, one time somebody introduced me to a guy, and he had a thing sticking in one nose and out the other. And honest to goodness, I lost myself. A woman says, "Well, this is Bob Alexander." And he gave me his name. Instead of saying, "Hi, how are you?" I said, "Does that hurt?" I don't understand. I just don't figure it out. There's something wrong with a child that is so unhappy with the way God made him or her. There's something wrong with a child that is so unhappy with the way God made him that they've got to alter their appearance almost to Martian

proportions. That is so outlandish that it's almost a joke and laughable and ridiculous. There has to be an issue there of a child.

The thing that just bothers me more than anything else is to see a young kid. I'll tell you, some of you parents, don't make the mistake of allowing your little girl who's eight or nine years old, or four or five, to dress like she's 20. What a bad signal you're sending them. Or even the guys, you know, you want to keep them where they're at because the pressure is already there. When they go to school, they see everybody else. They're trying to make a statement. The whole unsaved world, we know, is not happy with who they are. Daniel chapter 1 says and teaches us that they're trying to be somebody else. So what did they do? God gave the three Hebrew children three names. The first thing Nebuchadnezzar did is change their names. That's what this world wants to do. It wants to change who your child is.

When they go to school, we were about to get Petco last night. My wife said, "Did you check this guy down the end?" I looked down, and he's got, and I don't, you know, he's got absolutely rust-covered hair. Rust, looks like his hair was steel-wooled and rust in the rain. He's got sandals on, and he has painted his toenails red. Now, I don't know what to tell you. I mean, I asked myself, what is the point of that? What is the point of that? Now, I'm taking a back to side that I'm old school. I was born in the 50s. I mean, in my high day, you buzz your hair, and that's just what everybody did. That was radical enough, I guess, during the time. But you know what? I just don't understand those things. But I'm telling you, that's what your children face. Your daughter got kissed last week, didn't she? See? They face it. How long has she been in school now, what? Six weeks, and a boy comes up and kisses her. Unless you're a millionaire, you better not be kissing my grandkids because if you do, I'm going to sue you for everything you got. We'll build a nice church. Sue them, sue them, sue them. That's a great idea. Sue them, sue them. I saw it, I was there. What school is it again? That's what they're up against, see? That kid's probably a nice kid. I mean, he's not a, and his parents are probably nice parents. It's what the world does to them. It's what it does. It's how it presents itself. Children get caught up into that. The first thing they do is the devil wants to give their daily portion, and suddenly they want to be somebody other than the person God made them. They're not happy with, don't you see it? They're not happy with who they are. Why is that? What would produce a man to go paint his toenails red and dye his hair rust-colored? If he wasn't looking for something else in life, I don't even want to know what he's looking for. But I'm telling you, there's tremendous pressure for your child to conform to these things.

I'll tell you, there are few things in life that get my righteous indignation up more than seeing a vulnerable little child, fresh from the hand of the Creator, in the morning of their life, walking around after a period of time saying to themselves, "I hate myself. I wish I was never born." Looking for their identity. I guarantee you, God will help them, the devil will help them find their identity. But it won't be the one that God wants them to have. I'm telling you, God puts you in place as a parent, gave you five years that there would be no outside influence anywhere in your child's life, that when they went up against that evil day, you had five years head start at least, molding, shaping, dealing with that temperament. When you have a strong-willed child, dealing with it in a case where it absolutely just becomes a non-issue. Because I'm telling you, in

their 13th or 14th year, it will be the hardest time in their life in many ways. They're stretched, they don't even understand. They need reassurance. They come to a point in their life where they don't know who they are. They go to school, and everybody says, "Be this way." They have what they've been taught, and they struggle. Then their emotions get kicked in. A young man begins to enter into puberty. His body is changing. He goes through, he starts to feel sexual desires but has no release for them. He starts to look at girls differently. Where once they were fun to play ball with, now he looks at them in a whole different light. But he has no understanding of it. He has no way to convey to anybody, his own self, what he's dealing with. Young girls start to menstruate. Their bodies change. Their emotions are pulling them. Their feelings, they're looking at guys differently. Where before they thought guys were yucky, now they think all the things they used to do were yucky. All they can think about is guys. You better get a handle on that before they get there. You throw into that mix a strong-willed child, you've got some serious issues. The real tragedy is that parents go along, unsuspecting, and then bang! "What happened to my little girl? What happened to my little guy?" It's during this time of self-doubt that the personality can be so assaulted and so damaged that sometimes it can't ever be repaired. You know why I believe with all of my heart that there are some kids that you'll never reach that are 18, 19, 20, and they're going to go the way of the world, and they're going to look like the world, and they may be saved. But they may not, but they're going to go that way is because the damage has already been done, and in some cases, it becomes irreparable. You can try all you want. You can make all these excuses you want. But the bottom line is, it ain't coming back, and it ain't getting fixed. There's only so much damage you can allow to be done. You can only wreck your car so many times, so many different ways that it doesn't run anymore. Well, if that's true about an automobile, what about that precious little guy or gal who's growing up, and you're bending, breaking, busting, turning, and allowing them to go through everything, and there's no foundation in their life? When they start to feel all these things, there's no place that's been securely moored for them. No anchor chain could have come back to nothing that reassures that the way your body is is just fine. You don't need that in your nose. You don't need your belly button pierced. You don't need your ear pierced. You don't need this or that. The way God made you is exactly the way He wanted to make you. As a parent, you want to make absolutely sure those major issues are dealt with by the time they reach that period in their life. Molding, breaking, shaping the will needs to be addressed, especially in a strong-willed child, before he hits this age.

SEC: Understanding Temperament and Parental Maintenance

I said all that to basically say this: in dealing with a strong-willed child, there are a thousand books on this subject. I'm sure you could go to the internet and just bathe in the material. But to me, over the years, the many things that I have read, and not that I did not always agree, I agreed with some of what they said, and I think it was true, but to me, in almost every case, they missed the point. Of course, that's what happens when you don't have the Bible to start with. Most of them spent the time trying to show me or you why some children have an easy will, an easy spirit, why another one is so strongly willed. I don't think they ever really addressed the issue. Finding out where that came from, to me, is not part of the solution. I don't need to know where it comes from; I need to know how I have to deal with it.

For years, child development experts have said that when a child is born, the first six to eight to twelve months is really where the parents shape the temperament of that child by the way that they deal with him and what they do. As a Bible believer and as a pastor growing up and dealing with people and learning the Bible and loving the Bible, I never really agreed with that. I think you can go in the Bible, like in Genesis chapter 25, where Rebekah has two twins in her womb, and their temperaments are already set. It wasn't anything that happened after they were born. It told before they were born, the Holy Spirit of God, through the full knowledge of God, said that those two boys were not going to get along. One was going to have an affinity for God, and the other was going to have an affinity for the world. One winds up being a picture of a child of God. One winds up being a picture of an unsaved man in the womb. But of course, that's what the Bible does for you. It gives you that little extra insight. Well, 20 or 30 years ago, they finally caught up to the Bible, and now nobody believes that anymore. Today, most child development experts would tell you there's no question about it that children have different temperaments and personality traits at the very time they're born. I've talked to mothers who had multiple children, and they would tell me, "You know what? I knew there was something different about this kid the first time I picked him up. He was different than the other kids." In fact, every one of my kids, a mother, and if anybody would know it would be a mother that carried him for nine months, the mother said, "The moment I picked that child up, the moment they put him in my arms, that child, I could tell that child was going to be different than the other kids that I have." There's no question about it. These complex little creatures are far from a blank slate when they're born. Out of the gate, the parent has to be aware of what they have and how they've got to deal with it.

I read one study a number of years ago that was done in 1976, written in a book by two doctors. It was called *The Parent of the Child*. They stated in that book, and it was two unsaved people that did it, that they had detected nine different temperaments that a child can have when they're born. Now, I don't know if that's true or not, but I know this: I know that you don't develop that. I know that child comes with that. I'll tell you why that is. God has a plan for your child, just like He has a plan for you. I believe God gives that child everything they need to accomplish what God wants them to accomplish. It's up to you, and God was betting that you and I would take the Word of God and discern our child, because he's known by his doings, that you would stay on top of that child, that you would recognize, as the Bible says, "As arrows are in the hand of mighty men, so are children of the youth." God was banking that you and I, as the child of God, would be in the Bible and recognize that it doesn't really matter where he got that temperament. Going back and spending volumes of time deciding where the temperament started is irrelevant. I personally believe, after studying the twins in the Bible and studying the births in the Bible, well, I'll tell you what, it's hard to study those births in the Bible and not see the hand of God in somebody's life before they're ever born, as far as God's foreknowledge is concerned. We're going to talk about that in a minute. I believe that God allows that child to be born because, in God's mind, God has a plan for that child, just like He has a plan for you. I believe He entrusts that child to us as parents. We are to know our child, understand where our child is, and to train up that child in the way he should go.

In that case, a strong-willed child is a good thing. A strong-willed child is only a bad thing if you don't deal with it and get it under control. That strong-willed child may turn out to be another J. Frank Norris. Did you ever stop to think about that? If anybody needed to have an iron neck and an iron will and a strong will, it was a guy that stood on and took on the whole Southern Baptist Convention, took on all of liberalism in America, and didn't even flinch about it. Now, I don't know what kind of baby he was when he was born, but I bet he wasn't your mama-gagagugu. He'd probably come out with a cane and a coat and a hat and a Bible under his arm and say, "Let's get this show on the road." So, you see, we look at it one way when the Bible looks at it another way. Now, I'm not saying that you don't break that strong will to your child's house. You don't break it, you get it under control. You help him channel that energy to the things of God, not to the things of the world. But that's the parent's responsibility. The will of God is an incredible thing. The will of man is an incredible thing. Your child will either use it for God and accomplish great things for God, or he'll use it for the world and he'll do great things for the devil. But hey, the deciding factor is not the child. The deciding factor is you, the parent. You're the one that decides that for him. How many times, he's five or six years old, his decision is made. Most parents, bless their hearts, all their life, are chasing after their child to try to get them back where they should have got ahead of the game and kept them from getting in front of them to begin with. But that's just the way it is. It's not a criticism, ladies and gentlemen. That's just a fact. Over the years, I've watched children and parents, and I've seen some incredible things.

I want to talk to you for a minute because I believe there are some legitimate things. I don't think all parents that have kids that turn out wild or bad, I don't believe that the parents are all bad. We went through the four different types of parents. I believe there are parents who don't do what's right with their kids. I don't know what to tell you. But I also think that there are some natural things that the parent just doesn't understand, and I think a lot of it has to do with a lot of bad teaching and a lot of bad stuff that's been printed. The number one problem that gets a parent into trouble with a strong-willed child, really, the bottom line thing is that parent not knowing their child.

Moms, let me just talk to you. You carry that child for nine months. There is nobody that ought to be able, you cannot give life to something, carry that life for nine months, birth that life through the pain that is probably the closest you're ever going to go through in dying and bring life by you going through the valley of the shadow of death and bringing forth life. There isn't any, I know that you have got to have a special sensitivity for that child. If you capitalize on that and add the Bible to that and bring God into the equation, you're going to have the discernment and the discretion of knowing your child and the way they are. If you are just oblivious to the Bible, you will lose those tender skills that you have. You will always love them, you will always care about them. You might be able to read when there's something wrong in their life because they're moping around or they're not going through their daily routine. But you will miss the ability to discern into that child, the discretion into that child's life that shows you not what's on the surface but what's underneath. You'll miss the signs. I believe there are some honest reasons for that.

The thing I think that most parents make a big mistake on is they get the idea that all their children or all children are going to be alike. Boy, that's a tragic mistake. Years ago, I used to shoot competitively. The game was that you wanted to shoot five shots, and you would get, and you'd have your rifle or your handgun, whatever it was, I did both. You'd have it fine-tuned, and you'd hand load your own rounds, and you'd find a, it sounds stupid, but you would find a right load mix that would match up to your rifle that you could put five shots at 100 yards that you could cover with a dime. I mean, you could cover them with a nickel. It's all about balancing it, finding out what your rifle likes in the powder measure and what balance is good. You just spend hours doing that. Then you sit down at a bench, and you sandbag yourself in, and everybody shoots. The guy who shoots the tightest group wins. He did it with handguns too. In that competition, they have what they call a flyer. A flyer is when you put four rounds real tight, and then for no reason at all, I mean, you held the same, you breathed the same, you squeezed the same, it was the same load, it was the same everything for one, one round. You got, I mean, you're down there, and you put four, and I mean, you got a world-class record going. On that fifth round, it's an inch out. They call that a flyer, meaning that it flew out of your tight group, and you just lost the competition.

That's the same principle that happens to most parents. They'll have multiple kids, two or three kids, and then they get a flyer. They get three that have nice temperaments, three that just get along fine. Then suddenly the fourth one comes along, and it's out of the group. Here's what happens with many parents. These are natural mistakes. I'm not saying they're okay, I'm just saying it's not because the parents are bad. You realize that the parents that have multiple kids, raising one child is enough, raising two is a lot, raising three is a really a lot, and raising four or more is, I don't know how you do it. It's incredible. But I know what happens is, by the time you get to that fourth child, you're worn out. You fought Normandy, Luzon, the Philippine Islands, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, the Battle of the Bulge, you fought them all. You are combat weary of raising three kids. That fourth one is a flyer. The first three or four, they come out, and they were perfect, they were great. They all had their battles, you had your issues, but I'll tell you what, and all of a sudden, that fourth one in the group is outside the group. Here comes Fidel Castro, who was just born into your life.

Then another mistake they made, and we actually saw this, we had a family that we knew, and they had, let's see, they had four kids. The first three kids were absolutely textbook. Absolutely great kids. They were the nicest, politest, do anything for you. They were nice, they'd never give them a bit of problem, did they? I mean, that first three just were absolutely perfect. I mean, just, I mean, as perfect as kids can get. Then they had the fourth one was a girl. Boy, I'll tell you what, she made up for everybody else. She caused this family unknown heartache, unknown grief. I'll tell you what, she had more unwed children, I mean, she didn't want to go to church, didn't want to go, but she got me fruitful, multiplied, replenished the earth down. She took that as her own personal, I bet it was written in the front of her Bible as her favorite verse. I mean, she just, it was an absolute disaster. I remember Barbara and I talking about it and saying, "Now, how does that happen?" Here's a family that raised three perfect kids, respectful, never had one major issue that I know of, and we knew them for years. Then here comes the fourth one and just is hell on wheels. Of course, you know what the problem was? The parents said, overconfident, "We've

done this three times now, we got this down." They take their finger off the trigger for the fourth one because they're tired, they're worn out. Yet they're satisfied, confidently satisfied that they got parenting down, and they got three really good kids. This next one will be a breeze. You know what happens? The flyer spoils your tight shot group. Boy, she was a spoiler, she was a flyer. It happens, happens all the time. It's a fact of life.

Some children just seem to be born with an easygoing temperament. As infants, they hardly cry. They smile, they laugh, they goo goo with everybody all the time, happy babies. I mean, sleep through the night, bring them home to the hospital, sleep all night long. I mean, smile while you're changing their diapers, take it's playtime. Just having a great time, want to wait patiently for you to feed them, hardly ever throw up. Just have a, I mean, just a perfect baby. They get a little older in childhood, a little later in childhood. And I mean, they're kids, you know, they have their issues they deal with, but they'll clean their rooms, they'll mow the grass. They're polite, I've seen what you say, talk to them, "Yes, sir, no, ma'am." They're respectful to older adults. They show respect. They do their homework. They get high grades in school. They balance it all out, they go get a job, and they take responsibility. They just seem to glide through life. Somebody says, "How do kids, where do I go get kids like that?"

Then there are children that from the time they exit the womb, they literally come out armed for combat. Shouting orders, bored in the delivery room with a cigar in their mouth and yelling at the doctor that it's hot in here, complaining about the incompetent nursing staff and saying that the administrators of the hospitals are buffoons. They expect their meals on time. They demand all of your time. They'll tell you when to beat it when they're done with you. They'll spit up at the most inconvenient times and sit and laugh while you scramble to get it done before you get in the church parking lot. When they enter into the terrible twos, you're looking while they sleep at night for 666 planted in their hair. You're sure you got the Antichrist in your family. By the way, so is your grandma and grandpa and the people at church and the nursery. The kid all of his life, her life, is defiant, fights you on every issue. You go to bed every night with a splitting headache, and you're just worn out, and you're exhausted. As they get older, the winds of disobedience, oh, now they turn into a 200-mile-an-hour gale force tornado. Well, why is that? How does that happen? I've been asked a thousand times why the two are different and how it takes place. Books spend enormous amounts of time, and they try to explain a study after study, and I think they basically missed the point.

Let me tell you something. When you realize, when you come through the Bible, and you realize that a strong will is not a bad thing, when you realize they're coming through, you've got to go back and study the life of Samuel sometime before he's born. Go back and look at Jeremiah chapter 1. Look what God said about John the Baptist before he was born in Mark chapter 1 and Luke chapter 1. God had plans for these people. God told you what kind of temperament, personality, and mindset John the Baptist was going to be before he was born. He told you he was going to be a wild man. He was going to live out in a wilderness. He was going to wear a loincloth. He was going to eat bugs. Now that's pretty detailed. He's all by himself. He's coming up against a whole nation, the nation of Israel, against the Roman Empire, who finally cut his head off. Every Jew who's in apostasy, every Pharisee, every scribe, every religious leader who

was totally against, he literally, one man takes on the whole nation and says, "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand." I promise you he was not some mealy-mouthed, weak-spirited guy, and I promise you, God gave him the personality that he needed to get the job done. I'm sure he was hard-headed. I'm sure he was strong-willed. I'm sure that when the king there, the thing that got him in trouble was he told the king off that you shouldn't be marrying your brother's wife. Now that either says he has no sense or he just don't give a flip what you think. But either way, it's not a mild-mannered, tempered person. They'll walk into the Roman government preaching the word of God with a 28-pound King James Bible under your arm, looking at Herod and saying, "You know what, bud, you got his wife, and that's the wrong thing. Let me tell you what the Bible says about that." Knowing full well probably that it was going to be payback time because Herodias down the line when she says, "Boy, your daughter really dances naked well, she really dances good. What can I give you for that hot dancing daughter?" She says, "Give me John the Baptist's head on a charger." He had to know it was going to end the wrong way. But you know what, he didn't care. I don't know who his parents were, well, I know who they were, but I don't have a detailed, but I'll tell you, somebody did their work. Somebody saw, God saw the kind of prophet that he needed. Like Jeremiah. Jeremiah went up against the whole nation of Israel in the Old Testament. They took him one time and put a rope under his arms and lowered him down into a dung pit. You think he was singing, "I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." God had to give these men and women what they needed to get the job done. I'm not saying a strong will is bad. You're running around saying, "Well, I got a strong-willed child, what am I going to do?" I'll tell you what you do. You understand that God may have given him that for what He needs him to do down the line. Get it under control. Get ahead of the game.

Though I've read a lot of books, you know my stand on the Bible. I believe the Bible is the absolute infallible authority. I believe you can judge every book by it. But I want to tell you something. When I looked at this thing about a strong-willed child, and I had to work through it too. God always deals with me in very basic ways. I believe the Lord does that. I remember Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John when He comes down there. Did you ever notice how the Lord just uses everyday things to give people great insights into the great spirit of truth? You go to a Bible college someplace that talks about angelology, soteriology, hermeneutics. You realize that Jesus never spoke those words. He didn't use big words. When He wanted to convey some great deep point, He'd point to the birds. When He wanted you to know that God would always know what your needs are and always know what you were struggling with and always would be there for you, He used a little example of a bird falling out of a tree and dying and saying, "You see that little bird? He didn't fall to the ground, and your heavenly Father doesn't know what happened." You know, I take a lot of comfort in that. I like that better than getting up and getting out the eschatology of the great Existence of the great passage to lay you out that God does care if you can ever figure out what I'm saying. I like that.

When I studied the Bible, when I came to strong-willed children, I looked at those things. I had parents coming to me, and I knew that it had something to do with God. But the greatest thing that God ever taught me about strong-willed children was a basic thing that we all do. Or if you don't do, guys, you ought to do. One was the Bible, the other was grocery shopping. I love to grocery shop with my wife. I know some of you guys don't like to do that. You know what?

You're really missing it. There's something about a grocery store and shopping that is magic to me. I like to go when there's not a lot of people there because I like to think it's my place. I like to take my time. Barb takes her cart, she goes and gets the stuff that she needs. I like to pick my stuff because I'm on a schedule, I'm on a diet, I'm on a this, I'm on a that. So I have things that I want. I know if I need four boxes of Twinkies or two. I know those things. I trusted her one time, and she got ones that were outdated, and there's nothing that I can stand more than not a soft Twinkie. You give me a Twinkie that is stale, and I'll show you a bad day in my life. I check those things out. I've learned how to dig in the back and find the right ones. They don't hide them from me. I enjoy it. I think it's fun. You get your cart, and nobody's on the aisle. You just push that cart down there. I like to, I know on this aisle, I got bread, buns, and ketchup. All unbreakable items. Push that cart, it starts to glide. I'm like I'm playing football. Push that cart, run down, get the bread, get the thing. Get the ketchup, back up. I'm a shopper. That's me, man. I walk into that, you know what it is? It's all the colors. You walk into the produce department, man, there's greens, there's reds, there's orange. It just motivates you, man. Motivates you. I walk in there, and you just glide down those aisles, you pick out a cart, and you just have a ball. Everything I need, you dunk the bread, dunk the ketchup, everything else right there down the line.

I went one morning a couple months ago, got me my cart with all the joy of past experiences. Push that cart, and immediately the front back wheel or back wheel locked up and turned left and knocked over a whole stack of cans of peas. Picked that cart up, began to push it. Didn't, dragged, looked down, big black mark, down on the thing, kicked that wheel around, kept on going. I'm not going to be outdone. I'm not going to be muscled by a shopping cart. I pushed that cart, fighting me every inch of the way. Sometimes when you shop, if nobody's in the aisle, get that sucker going and lean over it, put your feet in the back, you can coast all the way down. The way you throw your weight, you can guide that sucker. Not that day. That cart went left and right, fought me every inch of the way. I tried to dunk some stuff, it just wouldn't go. I fought that thing around, turned into a corner, and finally just got frustrated, shoved that thing. This time I went left, and there was an 80-year-old grandmother. All I remember about her is she had some kind of white long gingham dress on with green tennis shoes. I rammed her right in the rear end where she bent over to pick up a can of something. Oh no, no, no, no. She looks and smiles like that was a hello tap. I was half embarrassed and had some little old lady with green tennis shoes peeking around the things at me every time I go in an aisle. I was ready to check out literally.

You know, I thought about that, and you say, "Now, Bob, what has that got to do with my child being a strong-willed child or not? And what's really the difference?" You see, and this is how I looked at that thing, and months later, God, you know, the first cart had straight wheels, was well-oiled, and it was very well-maintained. The second cart had old, broken, crooked wheels, unoiled, and had absolutely no maintenance. Now both carts came from the same manufacturer and were delivered on the same day. One was maintained and checked out on a regular basis. The other was neglected. One was a breeze to shop with. The other was a shopping cart from hell. But I recognized very quickly that the key in both cases was proper maintenance. There was nothing really wrong with the cart. They were absolutely the same except somebody at Hy-Vee in Lee's Summit allowed this cart to get broken wheels, crooked wheels, and absolutely refused

the maintenance. Where one cart pushed beautifully and made shopping the ultimate enjoyment of my life, the other one was an absolute work, hard, frustrating, laborious, and I don't ever want to go shopping again.

You see, the real issue is not whether your child has a strong will or not. They all come from the same manufacturer. The issue is your maintenance of them. You'll turn your children out with straight, well-oiled wheels that'll make them glide through life, or you'll turn them out with crooked, broken wheels that'll fight you every inch of the way. Strong-willed children need more maintenance to keep their wheels straight. It's just that simple. Parents are the issue, and how and when and how often they, and by what consistency, they maintain those children.

You know now that you are to identify a strong-willed child because "a child is known by his goings." You know now, as Job said in that chapter, Job 5:7, "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." You know that kid is going to grow up having issues. If you have a strong-willed child, you have somebody that God has given you a child that comes with a strong will, then that child needs heavy maintenance. It's in the first and second stages that you discipline and you build the relationship, and you maintain and you fix your child, whatever his temperament is. If you recognize you have a strong-willed child, then your maintenance schedule is double somebody who doesn't. You know that. You don't look at that as a bad thing. You look at that as something that's the way God made him. You don't want to break that spirit, but you want to take that will and conform that will to God's will, and then let that spirit that he has carry him where God wants him to go. Who knows what's in that little child? But as a parent, you have to attack his problem. You have to crush his strong will without crushing his spirit. You have to provide for that child a lifestyle of zero latitude. You and your wife have to be an absolute brick wall. No room to breathe. Absolute supreme control. Ever vigilant, all mastered and built with grace and truth. You praise what he does, but when he steps out of line with that defiant, willful disobedience that's going to show you, you crush it. You let him know that this lifestyle is not going to work before he gets to be free. You let him know that his will will be straight. They will be not crooked. They will be well-oiled, and he will be well-maintained. You don't give him any illusion.

If you've ever been into the Army or the Marine Corps, you know very clearly that your first day at Basic, you knew that fun and games as you once knew it in life was over. There wasn't any, "Well, how can I get around this?" They made sure you understood that at least for the next eight to twelve weeks, your life was theirs. You were going to do what they told you to do when they told you to do it as many times as they told you to do it. You would do it all night long if that's what it took for you to understand. Most Marines that go in or most Army guys that go in, they adapt to it pretty quickly. But just like a strong-willed child, they have special motivation platoons which are designed for problem children with authority issues. Ones whose mommy and daddy didn't catch it when they were two and three, but Sergeant Rucker will catch it now. You are put into a situation where you have no options. You're up against a brick wall 24/7. They will show you the stupidity of your thinking. You can't break the system. They will meet you at every turn. They will meet you in the middle of the turn. They will meet you in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening. They will wake you up and meet you. You will know 24/7 that it's

their way, not yours. Your will of doing your life contrary to the United States Marine Corps has come to an end. That's what a strong-willed child needs.

I knew one guy that had a child that was strong-willed, and that child was defiant. This is when the kid was like four or five years old. He whipped that child nine times in a row because that child, every time he did it, and he said he tried to go through the five points, that child would smack him back, say something arrogant to him, and he just marched him right back in there. On the tenth time, on the tenth time, that dad looked down at that little kid and he said, "You know what, son? I love you. This is the tenth time we've had to come here tonight because I'm not going to let you do what's wrong. I love you to death, but son, I want you to know something. It's going to be a long night. But I'll bring you back here a hundred times if I have to because we're not leaving this issue or this room till we decide who's in charge." You know what? Just like that. The kid said, "That's not a bet I want to put on."

It's a lot like breaking horses. I had an old rancher one time, I was preaching out in Colorado, and all ranchers out there, not farmers, ranchers. A guy on a horse ranch. I got to go over and watch them bust horses one day. You know how they do it? They've got horses that have their own spirit and their own will. He told me, "We want to break that horse so we can ride him, but we don't want to break that horse's spirit. We want a good spirited horse, but we don't want a horse that has his own will." So you know what they do? They put a saddle on a horse that never had a saddle on it. They put a guy on his back who's experienced at breaking horses, and they just ride that horse till that horse silently says in his mind, "Well, this hurts. I think I'll just let this, it's a lot easier just to carry him where he wants to go than to fight this thing because it's killing me." Every once in a while, he says the average horse will break in about ten minutes. Every once in a while, we'll get one that we have to ride for two or three days. You know what we just keep doing? We just keep riding him. We don't let him rest. We don't let him breathe. You see, he's only one horse. I've got nine riders over here. We'll ride that sucker into the ground. That horse will say, "You know what? If I don't stop being this kind of horse, they're going to kill me. That last guy weighed 600 pounds. They're getting heavier. I'm not lighter. I'm not, I'm going to be a good horse." Now, if a horse can figure it out, that riding him into the ground, I'm not saying you ride your kid into the ground, but you know what I'm saying. You stay on that kid. You do it right every time. You make it your, you make it, you dedicate yourself to this cause. You just take that kid and you realize that that strong will is a good thing. It's just being manipulated out of control. You take it and you break it, you mold it, and you get him to take that same exuberance of energy and you get him to exhibit it toward the family, the schoolwork, the ministry, God. You're in charge of that.

When a parent refuses to accept their child's defiant challenge, and you need to listen to this, when a parent refuses to accept their child's defiant challenge for whatever reason, something changes in the relationship at that point. Your child, whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not, or whether you're aware or not, expects you to be the parent. That's the way God designed the program. When they get, and then when they get past you because of your passiveness, because your inability or your lack of discipline in your own life, they look at you differently now. Something changes. He now looks at you as the role of a parent with disrespect.

He may never say it, she may never say it, but now they look at you, and you have failed them. You have let them down. As much as they want to get away with it, they are now bothered by the fact that you allowed them to get away with it. You are now no longer worthy of their loyalty, and they will find someplace else or somebody else to give it to.

Let me tell you, strong-willed children, everybody wants to make them the children from hell. I know they can have their problems, and I know they can be a handful, but I'm telling you, you can deal with it once you recognize it for what it is. Every great man in the Bible that God ever did great things with that had the spirit and the tenacity and the power and all that he needed to get that job done in the face of a human sense. I'm not even talking about the spiritual. I'm just talking about looking eyeball to eyeball to 400 people who want to kill you. I'm talking about long before they were ever born, God said, "It's the kind of man he's going to be. I can send him to my people because I can count on him." Don't ever stop and think that that will that they've got that's out of control right now is a bad thing. It's only a bad thing if you don't channel it, if you don't get a handle on it. You get a handle on it by absolutely making it your life mission. That that child knows there's no profit in a strong will in this family, unless it's going to be a strong will for the things of God. You control that, you control that. You've got to define the boundaries clearly for him in a strong-willed child over and over again. You don't leave it to imagination that he understood because he'll tell you, "Well, I forgot." He'll tell you, "Well, you gotta define it for him." You gotta define it for him all the time. The boundaries clearly before you enforce them. Obviously, you avoid impossible demands, but you gotta read your child. You gotta be able to look for that strong will. You gotta be able to tell it just like I picked out two shopping carts. One was a breeze, and the other one said, "There's something wrong with this. This is fighting me every inch of the way." When defiantly challenged, you respond with confident, absolute power and force. Ten times the firepower. You gotta land on him. I don't mean physically hurting him, but I mean you've got to squelch that out of the box. You never let it grow. You never let it materialize. You never let it have a life of its own. That kid knows that my strong-willed disobedience, as any disobedience, will not have a life in this family. You have to realize it takes both parents. The actual punishment, you have to let the five points be your example, the communication, the application, the explanation, the execution, the restoration, Hebrews 12:5. You always let grace and truth be the balancing factor in dealing with your child. In some cases, if you have a strong-willed child, you ought to come in, and we ought to sit down and put a plan. We ought to talk about it. We ought to say, make sure, this is saying, "Well, you don't want to fly by the seat of your pants." You want to make sure you only get one shot at this. You don't get two. You can't go down to their five and say, "Well, we didn't do that right. Let's go back and replay the tape." Doesn't work that way. You got one shot, one shot, one.

SEC: The Ministry of Parenting

I think that many of us looked at the parenting lesson and lesson on discipline because I know that's the one you're all waiting for. I think people sometimes get the idea that because we talk about so much in the Bible, we take very hard concepts and we make them very easy to understand that there's some kind of, when it came to discipline, your child's going to be some kind of magic pill. "You know, Bob is going to lay out the magic verse. I just go home and put

this on my kid's forehead, and it's all better." It doesn't work that way. I wish it did. I wish it did. Training up your children in every aspect that we've talked about up to this point is a lot of hard work. It's a lot of long hours. It takes constant watching, vigilance.

You know what? And some of you will get this at some point in time. You know what the one thing that sets the ministry apart from everything else, whatever vocation it is, for the most part, I'm sure that there's probably maybe some places that are very similar. But let me tell you, the thing that sets the ministry apart, and if there's any downside to the ministry, and I don't mean that in a bad way, but if there's ever a downside to the ministry, and you'll learn this in time. If there's ever something about the ministry that is, it's really the negative side of it. It's the fact that it's never done. You go to work nine to five, and for the most part, you can leave it when you go home. But in the ministry, there's always something else that needs to be done. There's never a day I can say as a pastor, "I don't have nothing I gotta do today." I can't think of a time in my life in the last 30, 35 years where I said, "I'm done now, I don't have to do anything else. I can take the rest of the day off, the rest of the night off." Now, you may do that, but it only takes a phone call to change your plans. In the ministry, there's never a time when there's not something else that needs to be done, and it does not take your constant, total vigilance of watching what you're doing and what's going on. You know what? In that respect, it's the same way with your children. That's why the Bible says, if you're not good at doing the first ministry, which is your family, you have no business being in the second ministry, which is God's ministry. If you can't hold your child accountable and you can't, while they're in your home, you can't deal with them on the issues, then you'll never do it the way you need to do it when it comes to the church. The hardest part of the ministry is the fact that there's always something else that needs to be done, something that needs your attention, and your family is the absolute same way.

You know, the verse, one of my verses for ministry for me, and it's also great for the family, is found in Isaiah 21:8. A watchman in the Bible, I don't know if you know this or not, but in the Old Testament, they had cities, and these cities, as we've talked about before, they had walls around them. You're going to find that Jerusalem as a city had walls around that city. On those walls, they had what they called watchtowers. What they did was this: a watchman's job was to stand his watch in that watchtower. He watched over what was going on around that city from the outside. Everybody else could sleep good at night. Everybody else could do what they wanted to do because they knew up on that wall there was a watchman. That watchman's job was simply to watch. He would sound the alarm if something dangerous or precarious would come toward that city. He would sound that alarm and let everybody know what was going on. That watch was stood 24/7. There was always a man by somebody, and there was never a time when that person that was on that watch, his job was not to watch out for the city.

I thought years and years now the parallel is in Isaiah 21:8, where Isaiah says, "You see, Isaiah was a watchman." He didn't stand on a tower. He didn't stand on a tower, but he went out through the people telling them what God wanted them to know about where they were spiritually. He said in Isaiah 21:8:

Isaiah 21:8

8 And he cried, A lion: My lord, I stand continually upon the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my ward whole nights:

He's talking about the fact that he's in constant vigilance of the nation of Israel. That's what it takes for the ministry, and that's what it takes for your family. If you want to deal with your children, whether they're strong-willed, mild-willed, you know what? Children are a lot like ordering chicken wings. They can get mild, spicy, hot, nuclear. But the key is your total vigilance, your watch on the wall. When you see that child the way they are, you recognize that there's nothing wrong with that strong will. As long as it's maintained, it's right. The issue of going back, when he got the strong will, when do they get it? How do they get it? That's immaterial. God, we know now that God gives you those things, gives your children those things for what God has for you down the line. Your job and my job is to maintain it. Keep the wheels straight, keep them well-oiled, keep them from getting crooked, and making sure that child, to the best of their ability, glides through life, having everything that God wants them to have. That's our job. That's your job, and that's my job, to maintain those children. When you recognize you have a strong-willed child, then you have to take the steps to deal with him, and it has to be done. You can't do it when they get into the later stage, or you're wasting your time. Everything I've said today has to be incorporated in the first two stages. After that, it's another whole ballgame.

I think next week we'll probably come through, and I'll lay out how to win your child to Christ. We'll have probably one more session after that, and then we'll finish up our child training, and then we'll get back into our seven series and back into studying the Word of God back on the doctoral level for a little while. Please take the time this morning. If you want to sign up for the circuit ride ministry back there, please do that today. Put your name and your phone number down for me if you would please. We'll get that up and running here very quickly. If you have any questions about that, you can come and see me. Let's have a Word of Prayer, and we'll be dismissed. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus, we love you.