

Proverbs 22:6; Psalms 71:17-18; Proverbs 29:17-18; Deuteronomy 6:6-12

Sunday 7/29/2007

I. Introduction to Biblical Parenting

This class was very much needed within our church simply because we have so many kids and so many young parents, and that is a good thing. That is exactly what we want to have, and that is a good sign of a good, healthy church. But obviously, with that comes the responsibility of raising those children.

In the last couple of weeks, we started to deal with the process by which you take your children and build into them the biblical principles that they need to have, so that you can really bring them exactly where God wants them to be.

At the same time, I told you that many of you are not going to have any kids. You are past that point in your life. Some of you are young enough that you are not even married yet, and some of you that are married, you do not have any children yet. But there is something in this for everybody.

What we want to accomplish by the end of this year is to have our Biblical Solutions Counseling Ministry in effect. We are going to go online, and we are going to offer people help with their marriage, with their children, with their own personal lives. I have been working with a dedicated group of you to get you up to speed and ready to do that. I look at this as accomplishing two or three things at the same time here. This will give us the ability to get this done so that we do not have to take another time, another class to do it; we can all get it done together. So, wherever you are at in here, there is something here for you.

I am sure that many of you, and people that you work with, struggle with their children or have problems. This will be another tool that you will be able to use to help them bring them to the Bible or show them how the Bible has the answers for those issues. It is a win-win situation for us. Everybody has been just going into it; we have been having a great time.

Today, we are going to deal with the main issue. I told you this last week, and I told you throughout the week as I talked to you, that we are going to cover the main issue today in training your child. Everything else we are going to do in the next coming weeks is going to come back to today. Today is absolutely crucial that you get this. It is absolutely imperative that you get a foundation in what I am talking about today. This will be our anchor. This will be what we use in everything else we do, and you will use this the rest of your life in parenting with your children and doing what you need to do.

II. Review of Foundational Principles

You remember our first two lessons, we laid some really good groundwork, and we needed to do this. There was no reason or purpose to try to get you to the point where you knew how to

understand where your children were and how to deal with them if you did not understand where you were at.

The first week, we talked about the book of Daniel, and I showed you what you are up against as a parent as far as the world situation. Last week, God did some incredible things. It was a thing where it just went on out the whole week. We had a great time, and the Lord really did some things. We got to see the perspective of how key you are in your child's spiritual growth. That material, you ought to be doing something with that. You ought to be going through that material, ought to be looking at that material, you ought to try to get all that stuff together where you can apply it where it needs to be applied.

Last week, if you remember, I gave you our first real parenting verse. We are going to add verses every week. As we add these verses every week, I suggest you put them on three by five cards. One of the ways that I teach people to learn the scriptures when they have particular issues in their life that they want to overcome is to take those three by five cards, write the verses on them, and then constantly keep those verses in front of you in everything that you do. When you are waiting at the doctor's office, you can pop them out and go through them, or you are waiting whenever you have just a few minutes. You can just pull them out of your purse or out of your pocket and you can go through them. You can put them up around your home where you can see them. You need to learn these materials so these verses become automatic in your life and that you can use them.

The last one I gave you last week was in Psalms 127:4, just by way of review here real quick. It is a great principle. It simply says this:

Psalms 127:4

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

We talked about it in great detail last week, but it simply says that no one will have more influence over your child than you will, unless you allow them to have that. I think one of the problems that parents deal with many times is the fact that they wake up one day and they find out that their daughter, who now is 16 or 17 years old, is seeing a guy who is 24. They find that out, and suddenly the reality sets in, "Wow, how did that happen?" The answer is very simple: here is how it happened. You allowed someone to have more influence over your child than you did. Somewhere in your life, you opted out of that responsibility, and someone else picked up what you should have been doing. When they pick it up, they will always do more damage to it than you would have wanted done to it. I promise you. That is what happens.

No one should have more influence. No one should have more input into your child's life. Many times, parents worry about sending their kids to a secular school versus a Christian school. One of the reasons is because they do not want their children being influenced by an unsaved teacher. The truth of the matter is, I do not care if a teacher is an unsaved teacher. The bottom line is, unless you allow that unsaved teacher to have more influence in your child's life, that teacher will never have more influence than you allow for them to have. In fact, it is like everything else. You can either use the public school system against itself to help train your child, or you can let

the public school system take over your child, and they will make the decision for you. It is your choice.

But the verse is a great principle, and it stands:

Psalms 127:4

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

Just as a man takes an arrow and a bow and he hits a target with it, you take your child and you launch them in life to one of two targets. Of course, that is heaven and that is hell. That is a life of disaster or a life of blessings in God. But it is your responsibility, and that is the one we had last week.

III. Key Verses for Training and Teaching

Today, I want to give you a few more, and we are going to talk about these throughout the course of this morning. Right away, I want you to turn first of all to Proverbs 22. I told you to go to Proverbs. Now we are going to look at Proverbs 22:6, and then we are going to look at Psalms 71:17-18. We are going to introduce these verses to you. Many of you already know these verses, but they will be good verses that we are going to build on today, and they will help you.

First of all, Proverbs 22:6, it says this:

Proverbs 22:6

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Now turn over and go to Psalms 71, just back one book. Psalms 71, pick it up in verse 17. Here is another great one:

Psalms 71:17-18

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come.

All right, with that, let us have a word of prayer. Let us take out your little child's pictures you should have in your Bibles. I have my two grandkids here, and let us go to prayer and ask God not only to bless it in our lives but the rest of the little lives that are down the hall.

Father, we do thank You and praise You today for the Lord Jesus. Lord, we love You so much, and we thank You for all that You have given us here in this church. We thank You for the folks that are here today. We thank You for the Word of God that You have given us that makes things so clear to us. Help me, Father, today to take the Word of God and to articulate it, Lord, to the place where these folks can understand the great truths that are in it. Lord, I love You. I thank You, Father, for saving me. I thank You for Your blood that cleanses me from my daily sin and keeps me in fellowship with You. I pray, Father, that Your Spirit today, Father, would intercede in

my life, the Holy Spirit of God, that would take this message and reach out to these Your people. Lord, we will just thank You and praise You. Bless our little kids, Lord, down the hall. Bless every one of them, Lord, even the ones that may be in here this morning. We just love them so much. Lord, they are the future of this church. Lord, we cannot be concerned about world missions, or we cannot be concerned about all of the things that are going on and picking in here and taking a stand against this. The first most important thing in this church is the little kids that are down that hall. Help us, Lord, always look at them as the greatest commodity we have in this church outside the Word of God. We ask You now, Father, to bless our time today, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.

IV. The Core Concepts: Train and Teach

Proverbs 22:6, Psalms 71:17-18. Two words we are going to build on today, and they are found each one in these verses. The one says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." That is the word "train." I have said this before: you train children. You do not raise children; you train them. Your children today are what you trained them to be. It is that simple. Whatever they are at in their life, they are in a training program, and you are the trainer. You have trained them to be the way they are. You can blame it on me or everybody else in the whole wide world. Blame it on the public school system. Blame it on this. Blame it on that. The truth of the matter is, you trained them. They are what you trained them to be.

The second word is "teach." Psalms 71:17 says, "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth." You are going to train them, and you are going to teach them. That is your basic, fundamental responsibility as a parent.

I told you last week that people are worried today about raising their kids and training their kids up in the world that we live in. I have even had some parents go so far, and I know that they say it tongue in cheek when they say it, but they say it almost like, "With the world the way it is and all the things that are out there, and the Lord is coming anyhow, it is almost like maybe do not have children." Whether you have children or not is between you and your husband, but do not ever not have children because of the world situation. The truth of the matter is, those verses I gave you are just as potent today as they were when they were written two thousand years ago.

In other words, when you train up a child the way he should go, the Bible says, "when he is old, he will not depart from it." That is a promise to you from God, as good as John 3:16, 1 John 5:7, or any other promise in the Bible. If you do your work as a parent, and you do it right, and you do it biblically, your child is guaranteed that they will go where God wants them to go and do what God wants them to do.

Now, does that mean that your child will have no problems in life? No, absolutely not. Does it mean that your child will not do some really stupid things in life? No, absolutely not. What it means is this: you will lay a foundation in their life that when they do do something stupid, or they get out in left field, or they do something that is wrong, God has something to work with them to bring them back. At the end of the day, at the end of their life, and you are going to see

this as we get through it today, God has the wherewithal to bring them back at some point so that they do not die without a relationship with God as far as their personal walk with God as a Christian. Those are true, great verses, and the true key words are found right there.

V. The Bible as a Common-Sense Guide

The number one issue that we have with our young kids, and I am not castigating anybody, you are all where you need to be. Some of you that were not here for the first two messages, I do not want you to think I am coming down on everybody. We recognize that we have a problem. Most of the men and women sitting around you are very young Christians. They have been in this church probably, or were not in a church before they started coming here in the last three or four years. So this is all new to them. Some of them have children since they came here, and they did not have a good, strong sense of biblical understanding. They did not have a good relationship with God, but God brought them here, and through the Word of God and through their good attitude of hearts, they put their marriages together, they put their individual lives together, and now it is time to take the next step and help put their children into the equation. So that is where we are at.

We talked about the number one issue that your child is facing right now if they are at a young age, or even up through the whole picture time here: that number one issue that they are dealing with is authority. We see it in the nursery. I am sure you see it in your home. Of course, that is a teaching error. That is a training error. That is a defect in your teaching and your training. Now, I am not saying that you are doing it on purpose. I am saying you do not know how to do it, but we are going to help you with that.

If your child is coming to the place now and he is down there kicking kids in the nursery, or slapping, or biting somebody, or somebody says, "Go take a time out in the corner," and he says, "Up your nose with a rubber hose, I ain't doing it, my mom and dad's," that is a training issue. That is a teaching problem. That is a problem that needs to be solved in time and can be solved in time. But if you do not solve it in time, you are going to have some serious issues.

I want to put all this in a context today that you can all understand. It does not do me any good to speak way up here and lay all the stuff out if you are not grasping it on a level that is understandable. In fact, that is my goal. I do not want you to just understand it; I want you to be able to apply it.

To me, the Bible has always been a common-sense book. I am just a common guy. I do not have a lot of education. I do not understand a lot of things in life. I am not very technically minded, not very musically inclined. I do not have a lot of good qualities along those lines. But I will tell you, when I looked at the Bible and I began to read the Bible, I saw immediately that God wrote it as a common-sense book. I know the standard ideas today: you have to ship yourself off to some Bible college someplace and invest the rest of your life studying the Greek and the Hebrew to figure out the Bible. But that is simply not true. Do you think God would write a book that He would give to the common man that the common man could not grasp?

We have gotten into the element of Christianity now, like everything else. We have had to elevate Christianity so it is acceptable with all the other "ologies" that are out there and all the great professions of the world. If you go to a doctor, and you start talking to him or try to read his prescription, or he starts talking to you, you do not know what he is talking to you about. He has all kinds of fancy words for your stomach, for your intestines, for your heart, for everything. He will come up with some of the stuff that you just have a belly ache, and it sounds like you have terminal cancer and you are going to be dead in an hour because you do not understand the language.

A dentist is the same way. He talks about your bicuspid. He talks about your upper and lower and all those things. I do not know why he just cannot say the big teeth on the top, the little teeth on the bottom, and the ones in the back. But he could not charge you \$500 if he did that.

You go to a lawyer. He looks at your case and he says, "Well, we have to get a writ of habeas corpus." You do not know what he is talking about. Those are terms of the trade. They want you to go to school to learn to practice law. They want you to go to school to practice medicine. They want you to go to school to be a dentist. They want you to go to school to learn those trades, and you should, because those trades are held in secret. They do not just pass that out to everybody, so they develop their own language that basically excludes you, and they become a tight little group that know what the terms mean.

Tragically, they have done that with the Bible. You might know that they would. So the great theologians of the world, they sit around, talk about soteriology, anthropology, angelology, eschatology. The average common man thinks he is saying something that is incredibly deep. In reality, it always bothered me why a man would want to go to a Bible college, pay \$50,000 for an education, and when he comes out of the Bible college, he talks like nobody ever talked like in the Bible.

When Jesus met the multitude on the mountain and He started to give them the great discourse, did He get up and say, "Okay, ladies and gentlemen, today we are going to open up, going to go through eschatology"? No, He did not. He took the common, basic things of life. He made the illustrations to them that every common man could get.

I do not believe the Bible at all, when God wrote it, that He meant it to be a hard book to understand. When He wrote your Bible, and I am talking about a King James 1611 Authorized Version, 95% of your words in your Bible, outside the names, are one-syllable words.

A man says, "Well, salvation is a great thing." I heard a guy one time go on for 45 minutes about how salvation and went through all the theological decrees, and he laid it out for 45 minutes. At the end of the time, if you were lost, nobody could have gotten saved; they could not understand what he said.

The greatest verse in the Bible for us being saved is over there in 1 John 5:11-13. Do you know what it says? It says:

1 John 5:11-13

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Sitting here this morning, either you have Him or you do not. All one-syllable words. Who could not get that? In other words, when God wrote the Bible, He wrote it in a common-sense fashion that the common man could get it. What the devil wants to do, because the devil knows the greatest impact into this world is a common man with a common Bible, so he tries to take the Bible out and make religion uncommon, and everybody now starts talking trade terminology.

That is what happens. In the public school system, they have what they call the Flesch-Kincaid formula. The Flesch-Kincaid formula is a way that they grade the language style of books, of how old it should be. On the Flesch-Kincaid formula, which is the standard of the schools, at least it was a couple of years ago, the King James Bible, based on the standard for every public school in this country, is written at a fifth-grade level. The New King James Bible or ASV is written on a sixth-grade level. The Good News for Modern Man is written on the eighth-grade or seventh-grade level. The new Bible that all the scholars are pushing, the NIV, is an eighth-grade level. What they do is they try to take a book that is a very common book and try to make it to the place where it is harder for you to understand.

Now, when I say the Bible is not difficult to understand, that it is a very common-sense book, I guess I better clarify that. Obviously, there are some passages in here that are tough to place. Thursday night, somebody asked a question out of Ezekiel 36-37, and we got a case study on a tough text. I showed you how it works out, but I also showed you how everybody else teaches it this way, but when you see what the Bible says, we had to work at seeing that. I am not talking about obviously there are some doctrinal deep things in here that nobody is ever going to figure out, and many of them, we struggle with trying to put it all together. But the basic things of life, the common truths, the fundamental basic principles of your life with your husband and your wife and your children and your family, the basic things that you and I build on every day in our life are basic common-sense principles. The problem is today, common sense has become an uncommon thing. We do not find many people who have common sense today, and because of that, they get caught up in all of those things that really mess them up.

VI. The Crucial Role of Parental Vision

Our text for today to start to understand this concept of teaching and training your child up from the youth is found in a familiar path. I want to come back to Proverbs 29, and this is another verse that you want to add to your little three by five card verses. Everybody should know this verse because it is really where we are going to focus today. Proverbs 29:18, here is what it says:

Proverbs 29:18

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

That verse is used by churches, pastors all the time, and I have used it myself. What it basically says, and how you use it, is the church has to have a vision. If a church does not have a vision before it, the Bible says, "where there is no vision, the people perish." Of course, that is true at a church, and that is why if a man wants to, if he is a pastor and he wants to start a church, the first thing he needs to do is he needs to provide for that church a vision. They need to see through him what he has in mind for them. Of course, that is a great verse.

But did you ever see the context of that verse? I agree that it fits right into the concept of the church, and I have used it many times myself, and I did use it when we started this church. But I want you to look at verse 17, and let us take 17 and 18 and let us put it into context.

Proverbs 29:17-18

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.

The context is your children. You as a parent have to provide a vision for your child. This is, without a doubt, the number one most important single thing you have to do, or you will lose your child. Unquestionably, the number one thing you have to do. That is why today is a crucial day. Everything we do in the next eight or nine weeks, however long it takes us to do, is going to come back to this day.

When we have our parenting groups, by this week or next week, I told you that if you wanted to break down into small groups of maybe four or five couples, then you come over to my house where we could sit down and we could go through those things. You basically, I am teaching you on Sunday, you basically have a place where you can say, "Hey, Bob, I do not understand this. Hey, I am dealing with this with my child." Everybody in there will be dealing with the same thing. Everybody will learn from everybody else, but it will give you one-on-one access where you can actually say, "Hey, you said this on Sunday. Here is my situation. How do I adjust to this?" I want you to have that.

If your situation is more than that, then you are always welcome. We have here, I will give you an hour a week to come in and sit down with me and ask me any question about the Bible. If you and your husband or wife, or you are a single parent, you want to come in and lay that all out and let me help you, I will be glad to do that.

Let me say this now: maybe you are here, and you are just a young couple or whatever, and you really do not know anybody. Maybe you know everybody else. As soon as I say, "Break down in groups," it is like going over, getting a huddle. They all got their little groups that they, "My kid bit yours last week, you bit mine this week, let us get together and work it out." But if you are here this morning and you do not feel comfortable enough, you come and see me. I will hand-put you into a group that I think will really help you. I will put you in with some other couples that will really, no, Liz, not you. I know you are looking here. I will not put you in Liz's group. I will put you into a group that will really help you along with what I can do for you. I just want you to get the most out of this, and it is a shame that you are spending the time to come, but you do not

take it all the way to the end and get what you need. So, let me help you however I can. That is what I am here for.

The context of this verse is about providing a vision for your child. I am going to tell you right now what part of the problem is. Your child right now, if they are young kids and they are in that little elementary down there, at some point, I will tell you what their number one issue is: they are confused. They are not really old enough to enjoy sin yet, but they are already giving you some problems. They are giving us some problems, and maybe they are giving you problems in the home. I am going to tell you what you are beginning to see: they are confused right now. They are confused about what is going on.

In most cases, and I watch you, in most cases, most of you discipline your children when they do something wrong. But I also have to say that most of you discipline them wrong. Now, I am not saying up to this point, because what is the point? I needed to get this out. For me just to come up and say, "You are not doing this right," when you do not even have the tools yet to do it, is stupid. Do not change anything. The thing I do not want you to do is I do not want you to run out of here today and suddenly take one thing I am going to say and think you have got all the answers. Do not implement this yet. Let me give you all the pieces. Let me spend some time with you. Do not just run out of here and say you are going to get a vision today. He will think of a big screen TV. "We are going down to Best Buy, get a new vision." That is what he will think. No, I want you to be able to understand and put the material together. It is that important.

You have got to bring that child, and what he does not have, he does not have a point of reference. I am going to tell you why he is confused. He is confused because you are confused. He has no plan for his life because in reality, Mom and Dad do not have a real plan for their life. How many of you parents, if I would come up and sit down with you and I would say, "Detail out for me the plan you have for your child. Tell me what the vision is for your child that you have for them"? Here is what most of you would give me: you would say, "My vision is that my child loves God. My vision for my child is that I teach him the Bible, and he grows up and he really loves the Lord. My vision for him is that we try to do everything in our home to make it right." That is not a definition. That is not a plan. That is just a lot of surface things that you are talking about. There was not one thing in there that I said that has anything about implementation or application of how you are going to do it. Those are things you need to do. The question is, how do you do those things tomorrow? How do you start putting a vision in that kid's life? What do you say? You need to have a vision. He does not understand that. You have got to be able to communicate that vision to that child, but you have got to have a vision and a plan first.

It will do no good for you to say to your child, "You need to have a vision," if you do not have one and understand what it is. It will do absolutely no good to say, "I am going to put a plan into effect in my child's life," if you do not have a plan for you and your wife and your own life. It is that simple. You have got to understand that that child needs a point of reference. When I talk about a vision, he needs to understand. Those little kids need to understand who they are. They need to understand who you are, and I am not talking about, "Well, this is Mom and this is Dad." I am not talking about that. They need to understand who they are. They need to understand who you are. They need to understand your responsibility to them. They need to understand their

responsibility back to you. That has to be communicated. They have to know that. They have to understand that you are accountable to them, but they also have to understand that they are accountable to you.

There is more to this vision concept than, "Oh, I am going to teach my kids the Bible, and I am going to take them to church, and we are going to pray before we eat, we are going to pray before they go to bed, we are going to sing little songs." That is not what I am talking about. That does not do anything. That is just a lot of circular stuff that has no implementation to it that you apply into their lives.

VII. The Parent as God's Representative

Add to that another problem your child has right now: he has no concept of God. Oh, I know they are down there right now making little Noah's Ark books. They are right there right now making a little David slingshot that are going to shoot your windows out in a neighbor's car this afternoon. They are out there doing all of those things. Oh, yes, and me and little Kenzie, we got a little deal. She has got this song now. She has got this song, "I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." We have a time with it. When she comes over, she is ready to sing, and I will say, "We got the," we will sing it again, "I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." "Where?" "Down in my heart." And her favorite part is the second part, "And I am so happy, so very happy, I have the love of Jesus in my heart." And I stop, and her part is real low, she goes, "Down in my heart." That is her part. We do it 100 times a day when she is over there. I say, "And I am so happy, so very happy, I have the love of Jesus in my heart." She will stop a minute, she will go, "Down in my heart."

Now, am I dumb enough to think that she understands what the "joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart" is all about? Certainly not. Do I think that she knows that that is one of the great hymns, songs that talk about being saved? Certainly not. She likes that song not because of what it represents to God. She likes that song because she has a part that she goes, "Down in my heart." I could be saying, "I am a drug dealer on the street selling my drug, getting lots of money, killing people," and she is "down in my heart." She does not know God yet. She does not understand all the applications of it, and that is by God's design, my friend. You need to understand that.

Right now, and this is very important, you as a parent are all your child really understands about God. They see and understand. Their concept of God and who God is forms in their life by watching you in your life. You are God in their life right now, and that is by God's design. God wants you to be God in your child's life and emulate, illustrate everything that God is. At some point in your life, when he grows up and can grasp it, you will transfer that from you, the parent, to God. That is what He wants you to do. That is what your job is right now. You represent God.

I have told you this before, it is just like the people you work with. This is why you have to have your testimony at work. This is why you always, the Bible says in Romans 14:7, "no man liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself." Always somebody watching your life. Let me tell you something, where you work, and I am sure this is true in just about every one of your cases,

where the world is today, where you work right now today, you probably in many people's lives, or your life, will be all they ever see and understand of God.

Now, you stop and let that sink in. To an unsaved world who does not go to church, who was not raised in a Christian home, who did not have the benefits that some of you had, when you go to work and they look at you and they know that you are a Christian, they know you will be the only Bible they ever read. You will be the only representation of God they ever see. In that sense, it is just like your child. Through your life, through your walk with God, with your conversation about the Lord, their observation of your application, they find, though they do not find God through you.

Now, let me just take it, and I said I wanted to put this in an application to it. Let me just put it in as a pastor of a church, because someday some of you kids are going to pastor churches. Some of you guys and gals, you are going to be out there, and you are going to be doing the ministry, and you need to understand this. That same simple little format is what a pastor does. When somebody comes into this church and they get saved, they do not really know anything about God. I have had them come over to my house when they did not know anything about the Lord. They did not know anything about the Bible.

Now, this church, if you talk to enough people, this church here is a cult. This church makes people afraid because we are very vocal about the Bible. We believe the Bible in a Christianity world that does not care much about the Bible. So immediately, when something you do not understand is strange, it has to be a cult. I just have to say this, and I want to clarify this: they are not all wrong. This is a cult, but it is the same kind of cult that Paul had in the New Testament. We say the word "cult." The word "cult" comes from the word "culture." They use the word, but they do not know what it means. This is a cult, but there is a difference between this cult and Jim Jones.

You say, "Cults brainwash." Well, the Bible says, "by washing of regeneration." So what do you want me to do with that? Rip it out? Have you ever been in the Army, Marines? I think I have got one Marine in here. Are the Marines a cult, John? Sure they are. Do they brainwash you? Sure they do. Do not you ever see that? They brainwash you. They get you thinking you are so tough, you can whip the world, and you cannot. They get you out there with a bayonet course, screaming and yelling, and still the bayonet. They get you running down the road, all singing in unison, "Up in the morning where the roger and sun will run all day, napalm, napalm, sticks like glue, get it on the kids and the mothers do, hoorah!" That is what they do. At the end of eight, twelve weeks, they forge a guy who is just a normal Joe civilian into a fine tool, instrument of war, fit for the Marines or the Army. But they brainwash you. But that is okay. Try to brainwash you with the Bible to live by the biblical principles, and you are a cult. But that is just the way it is.

Here is why we are a cult, but we are not a cult like the other cults. We are the right kind of cult. The bottom line is this: yes, I want to brainwash you. I want to brainwash you to believe this book is the absolute impact of a perfect world or God. Absolutely. I want to brainwash you to the point where everything you think and do, you see it from God's standpoint, not yours. In the

early part of your life, when you just get saved, you come over to my house, you do not know the Bible, you do not know anything about God. I can tell you that God lived on the backside of the moon, and some of you would say, "Boy, Bob, you really know a lot about the Bible." I am much like the parent. I am all you know about God, and I can tell you what is right or I can tell you what is wrong. Paul said, "Be followers of me, even as I am followers of Christ." There is the key. Somebody says, "Well, you go to that church, you just follow the man." Everybody follows somebody. You just have to make sure you are following the right person. Everybody follows somebody.

My job is to take you when you first get saved, maybe put a couple of people with you. You know nothing about God. You know nothing about the things of God, and to bring you through and to tell you and show you and introduce you and to grow you and to train you and to raise you and to bring you up to the point where you get to know God. Then here is where the difference is: Jim Jones down in Guyana had, I do not know how many people drink the punch. All these guys, all down through here, they are the wrong cults because when they got you where they wanted you, they continued to say, "I am the God of your life." When I am doing my job right, I may represent God to you, but my goal is one-fold. My goal is to get you to the point, the same way you parents should be. My goal is to answer the questions, represent God in your life, but when you get to a point, you have to stand on your own two feet, and now you build your own relationship with Him. I cannot make your spiritual decisions the rest of your life. I do not want to. I do not want to get into your world and find out what you are doing here, why you are going here. That is none of my business. My job is to take the Word of God and to train you and to show you God as best as I can, and then get you to a point where you do not need me any longer. You now are on your own. You have been taught. You have been trained. You have been given all the tools not to continue to follow me, but you can cut out your own destiny for God and follow what God wants you to do. That is the difference. But am I going to brainwash you? Absolutely. Am I going to talk about the Word of God and how you have to? Absolutely. But am I going to tell you what you ought to do and how you ought to live your life? That is none of my business. Listen, I have enough problems in my own life to worry about running yours.

But that is what you have got to do as a parent. You have got to instill those. You are all of God they are ever going to see. Your life is all they are ever going to know of God, and you have to come to the point in your life where you do this.

When you get into counseling, you are going to see this. I have had many situations over the years where I had a husband and wife relationship. A particular instance comes to mind where the wife had some problems, and the husband, and they come in to see me, and the husband says, "My wife has got some serious issues here, and maybe you could help her." And I say, "I will be glad to try to help her if I can." I know going in, in any given counseling situation, no matter who says who has got the problems, they both have problems. This whole thing, "I am the husband, she is the wife, so she has got the problem. I never have any." Yeah, right. Tell me that one again. I guarantee you this, if she has got problems and she is your wife, she has got problems because I promise you, you are not doing your job probably.

Anyway, so I take them, and I took this particular couple, and I knew what was going to happen. So I started to work with her. She responded very quickly, began to really, she just needed the Bible and God in her life, and I got her to a point where she was really doing well. Then I called and I said, "I need to meet with both of you." And he said, "All right." So he comes in, and I said, "Okay, now let me just tell you something. I have gone as far as I can with your wife. That does not mean I am not going to continue to see her. It just means that right now, for the last four or five months, I have become her spiritual leader, and that is okay as long as it is temporary. But I can no longer be her spiritual leader because I am not married to her. You are her spiritual leader, and now tonight, it is time for me to transfer this to you, and I will help you as I have helped her."

I know she had problems, but I know he had problems too. So I get her to a place. Now it is time to say, "Okay, we fixed her. Now we have to fix you. And if you get fixed, she is already on her way to being fixed, and put this thing together, you have got it made." But I cannot continue to be her spiritual leader because it is all right temporarily, but I told him, I said, "From this point on, if it continues the way it is, it is only going to cause you more problems because I am going to start telling her things to do that you do not want to do, and she is going to come home and say, 'Why do not you do it?' And we are now going to find out where she is right, where you wanted to be. So you said, 'Now you need to get where you need to be,' and we are going to find out who really wants to do what is right here."

In most cases, the husband thinks that he has got no problems, and it will not work. I cannot be your spiritual leader forever. I do not want to be. You have to learn how to stand on your own two feet. That is my job. Maybe you are not there yet. When you first get saved, I work with you, do everything I know. I represent God to you, and I try to teach you everything the way God wants you to be taught. But there comes a time in your life when you have to stand out and breast the cold wind in your face of this whole world, and your child is going to have to do too. Right now, you are his understanding of God, and you have to be able to transfer that in time, teaching and training your child to have a vision.

VIII. Defining and Implementing the Vision

You not only have to give your child this vision, but you have to define it for him. I am going to give you one of the greatest passages in the Bible on defining a vision, and it is over there in Habakkuk chapter two. Habakkuk 2:1-3.

Habakkuk 2:1-3

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Now, this is without a doubt, you want to begin to understand the concept of giving a vision to your child and understanding how to do it, understanding how it works, without just getting that gobbledygook answer you give that means absolutely nothing. You want to really put a plan together and a vision together not only for your child but for yourself. Here it is.

Look at verse one first of all. This is Habakkuk, the prophet of God. He is standing watch in verse one, and he is on a tower. That tower in the Bible is one of the seven towers that are around the walls of Jerusalem. The most notable tower in the Bible would be the Tower of David. Any way you slice it, a tower in the Bible always refers to your ability with the Word of God because the Bible is the book that elevates you.

The difference is this, and if you ever hunted deer, you know what I am talking about. If you go out there and hunt deer and you just walk down the road or walk in the woods, hardly ever do you get a deer. You may get a dumb one that just stumbled into your line of fire, but you cannot see it. You get 40 feet off the ground, and you can not only see everything in a perfect perspective, you add a dimension to it. Now you see everything in a perfect perspective. That is a lot like a man without the Bible on the ground looking at life, and a man with the Bible in the tower, the deer stand, who sees the parameter of life. The Bible gives you a panoramic view, 360 degrees of life from an elevated position.

So he is on a watch for Israel in a tower, seeing the perspective of everything that God has for him. But I want you to notice here that he is watching. He is watching for the nation of Israel. He is watching. He is God's man. It is like me as a pastor, I have to stay in the Word of God, and I watch on the tower for this church. You have to do that as a parent.

But I want to tell you, verse one is a great verse. Look at this:

Habakkuk 2:1

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.

The thing that you have got to see here is the prophet is not just watching to change the nation of Israel. He knows that the change of the nation of Israel is going to only come through him. So he is watching and listening to what God will tell him about him that he has got to change to get the right message to the nation of Israel. My point is this, and it is the greatest point in this sermon today: you cannot change an effect in your child's life until you change your life. He is not standing on that wall listening to what God will tell him so he can go down and whack the nation of Israel. He is listening on that wall so he can hear what God says and how he will answer when he is reproved. Changing your child starts with changing you. It is that simple.

The first two messages, I do not know where you are at, but you ought to be looking inside yourself, what needs to be changed about you. Some things can be changed just like that. Other things may take a while, but you will never change your child until you are willing to change you first.

Then he goes on in verse two:

Habakkuk 2:2

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Write the vision. You have got to lay it out for him. You have got to take the vision, and we are going to talk about it and define it in a moment. You have got to take that vision and you have got to make it where he can, he could write it down, where he can see it, where you can lay it out for him. Then you have got to make it plain. Look what it says in verse two: "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables."

Now, tables are two things in your Bible. One of them is a table of fellowship. The other one is the table of your heart, like Romans 2, where he talks about God writing the Word of God on the tables of your heart. In other words, when you lay this vision out, you lay it out to his heart. You lay it out not only to his heart but through the fellowship that you two have together. Remember, he is all he knows of God. He finds God in you. Your job is to bring him along. Your job is to bring him to the point where he understands God because he sees God in you, and he gets God's heart because you have God's heart. Through the fellowship, you can write out that vision, and you make that vision plain to him.

What does he do? Look at verse two: "that he may run that readeth it." Proverbs 29:25 says that the run he is going to get involved in is a run for the incorruptible crown. Hebrews 12:1 talks about running with patience the race that is set before us. Where he is going to run is not away from God, but he is going to run to God, and he is going to run for God, and he is going to run with God, and he is going to run the race that God has called him to run. But as arrows are in the hands of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Train up a child in the way he should go. That is your job and my job. My job is pastor, your job is parent.

Look at verse three:

Habakkuk 2:3

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

You know what it is talking about there? That this thing has to go on for a long time. I read one time that from the time, and they figured around 20, from the time your child is born to the time they hit age 20, you have spent on that child in 20 years probably \$400,000 for one child. I mean, you figure in all the medicine, all the toys, all the clothes, all the this, all the that, and then you send them to college or whatever the case may be, and by the time you are done, you have knocked off \$400,000 for one child. I am telling you, it is an incredible responsibility, an incredible concept of having children and what goes along with that.

One of the things it takes, obviously, is patience, because this vision is not going to happen overnight. This vision, you are not going to see the change immediately. If you have not implemented this by the end, you are not going to see it. You are going to have good days and bad days, and you are going to say to yourself, "This is not working." You are going to see days

where you think that it is not working. It is just not. He just keeps doing this, or it keeps doing that. It is just not working. Here is where you turn to when those days come. It says, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak." It will happen. It just does not happen overnight. Let us face it, patience is not one of our best virtues anyhow today. It will come.

Let me begin to define what a vision is for your child, and you need to understand this, and this is a great truth. The vision is not about what your child will do for God. You have got to get this straight. When you define this vision to him, you are not defining what he is going to do for God. You are defining what he needs to be for God. You have got to see the difference. You are not defining for your child what you want him to do. You are defining for your child what you want him to be. That is absolutely crucial. He has to do what he does because of what he is for God first. That child needs a vision for all that God has for him and his life, and that vision has to come from you, the parent, built on biblical principles through the training and the teaching that you, as God in his life, are building into him.

Now, let me give you a basic, common-sense definition for a vision. Something you can relate to, something, and I know we have talked about it, but let me get it to the lowest common denominator. What a vision is, not only for your life but for your child's life, this is what it is: it is a mental picture. I am going to talk about it in your case now. A vision is a mental picture of where you want to get to in your future, rooted in the person and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of your finite limitations. It is your concept. It is a mental picture of where you want to be, what you want to go, where you want to get with God. It is a mental picture that is rooted in the Bible and in a relationship with Christ, in spite of the fact that you and I are human and we have failures and we have frailties and we blow it sometimes. You never lose sight of that vision.

That is what I mean, that it is hard for you to give a vision to your child. It is hard for you to have a plan for your child because very frankly, if I would ask you to stand up this morning from one end to the other and say, "Everybody saved five years or less, stand up," and then the ones understanding say, "Tell me what your vision is. Show me how you have taken that concept and detailed it out in the scriptures that you can give me back that you understand what a vision is." I would get the same old ring around the rosy stuff. I would get, "The vision is wanting to live my life for God." No, it is not. "A vision is wanting to stand for God in the time." No, it is not. "A vision is to know God in the Bible." No, it is not. Those are all the parameter stuff. What have you done with that concept of vision? Went home in the last five, six, seven years of your life, dug into that Bible, come out of that book saying, "I know now a plan for me and a vision for me, and I am going to live and die by this." How in the world are you ever going to transfer that to your child? You do not have it in your own heart first.

Yes, I know the vision is not about what I am going to do for God; it is what I am going to be for God. Yes, I know it is a mental picture, and I struggled with this 15, 20 years ago. I looked at that and I understood the concept, but I did not understand the application. So I had to get into the Bible.

I will tell you what a vision means to me personally. I cannot speak for you, but just so you have a point of reference what I am talking about, this is what it means to me: going through the scriptures, taking that concept, and putting it together for me. A vision is five things, and these are the five things I live by every day of my life.

- 1.) Hearing what is inaudible. In other words, my vision of God is hearing what God says when nobody else wants to hear Him. I want to hear what nobody else hears.
- 2.) Touching the intangible. I want to reach out and grasp things for God that the average person does not care about. They want to grab this in life. I want to grab what nobody else wants to grab.
- 3.) Seeing the invisible. I want to see what God sees, not what man sees. When you come into me and sit in my office, or you come down and you have a problem, we sit down, or I help you, and you know this is true if you have been into my office, I do not care where you have come from. I do not care what you have done in life. I do not care where you have been, what you have done. All I care about is where you are at right now. But I know this: when I look at you, I do not see you as Joe Schmo with problems. I do not see you as Mary with this situation. I try to look beyond that, and I try to look and see what nobody else will see, and that is deep down inside, layering back the problems, peeling back the issues, and looking right down into the heart of your soul and to see what God sees. I do not want to see your problems; I want to see your potential. We all make mistakes. We are all sinners. By the grace of God, I am no better than you, you are no better than me. Seeing what nobody else sees.

I told you the story about my father. The Lord, when he was 56 years old, had a great ministry in Ohio, training young men and preachers, to the tune of thousands in his lifetime. He had a great salary, had a great job, had all the comforts, was in the ministry. God was blessed in his ministry. But he got a burden for a church in New York City, and he left all that he had, took his wife and family, did not have a dime. In fact, just so he could prove that it was not going to be him that did it, whatever money he had in his bank account, he took it and gave it away. So he went with nothing because he said, and I remember him saying it, "God always pays for what He orders." And he gave it all away, and he went to New York.

I remember about a year and a half, Barb and I went up to New York City, and he is talking about God is giving me a church building, and God is giving me this, God is giving me that. He says, "We bought a little broken-down Roman Catholic chapel. We paid two million dollars for it." I am thinking, "Oh, two million dollars for New York City, that is nothing." So we go up there, walked into this church. I could not believe it. It was an absolute, it was a warehouse. Basement was flooded, holes in the roof, graffiti all over the place. He is walking around saying, "I like the church God gave me." I thought he lost his mind. I looked at Barb and I said, "He paid two million dollars for this?" I said, "Boy, he has had a stroke, and nobody knows. We need to get him in the hospital someplace." Three years later, we went back, same building. It was absolutely beautiful.

When I saw it, I saw it as a broken-down old warehouse. But he saw it. He saw it as the First Bible Baptist Church of Staten Island, New York. I want to see things like that. I want to look at

you. I do not want to see you with the holes in your roof and your basement flooded. I want to look at you and see what God could really do in your life if you will just turn it over to Him, and I want to be part of that process. I want to bring that to fruition in your life.

- 4.) Believing the infallible. I want to be dumb enough to believe that God wrote a book and preserved it and could inspire it and keep it for me to have. I want to believe there is a book that has not got one error anywhere in this world. That is what I am going to believe. I am going to believe the infallible.
- 5.) Doing for God what is impossible. I have learned when you hear what is inaudible, and you see what is invisible, and you touch what is intangible, and you believe what is infallible, then you are in a prime position to do for God what is impossible.

Now, that is my vision. That is my vision every day of my life based on that thing. What is yours? "I am going to live for God all of my life." Let me tell you something, the same principles I used in building a church, that is the same model you use for building your children. In fact, if you are a mom and dad here, you are the pastors of that young church.

I want to say this, I might as well get this out before I forget to say it, because you get this mentality sometimes. Dad, I know you think you are smarter than your wife, but I am going to tell you something, in most cases, that is not true. We like to think we are because we have this image in the world today that we are the macho men, and the women just needs to live in the doghouse someplace. Let me tell you something, when God gave you a wife in Genesis, she was not called a mate. Animals have mates. The woman God gave Adam was a help meet, M-E-E-T, not M-A-T-E. Animals have mates. We do not need mates; we need meets. In other words, Adam had a plan. God had a plan for Adam, and He gave him a woman to help meet the needs of that plan. So you better listen to what she has got to say, and you better not just think that you are going to be the leader here. It is a co-pastorship of your family. She has valuable things that you need to know. It is not just a fact, "I am the man, that is the way it works, you just listen to me." Your family will be really screwed up, will it not? She is a great, invaluable tool. Use her. I am not saying she is going to be right every time, but listen to her. Do not blow her off. Understand if she has got as much in stake as this as you do, probably more, and she has insight that you do not have. You have to work it together.

But I am telling you, young kids, young Christians, have the same needs. They need the same principles. They need the same vision. It is just on different levels. For you to instill the vision in your child's life, you are going to have to change four things about you. That is what I told you: you cannot change them unless you are willing to change.

The first thing you are going to have to change about you is:

- 1.) Correct thinking. You are going to have to see your child from God's standpoint, not your own. You are going to have to begin to look at the dumb things that they do, the problems they cause, and the disobedience from God's standpoint, not the fact that it is just inconvenient for you right now because you were getting ready to get in the car.
- 2.) Correct treatment. You have got to be able to deal with them in the right way. We are going to get into all these in detail next week when we start the six absolute concepts of

parenting. But you have to begin to change your treatment toward them. Right now, some of you are not dealing with them when you should, and then are dealing with them when you shouldn't. I see it all the time. That is okay, we are going to fix that.

- 3.) Correct teaching. You have got to get them instilled with a vision, a plan, a concept.
- 4.) Correct testimony. They are going to have to see God in you. They are going to have to see, because the only way you are going to build a principle down the line with God of them, you cannot read them the Bible now that they can grasp. You can give out verses on three by five cards, or they will learn little memory verses, but they will not grasp the total concepts. The total concept they have of God now they see in you and in your inconsistencies.

To change your child, you are going to have to change yourself. Remember when we started our church? Remember how it was? I had a plan. I saw and I knew what God wanted to do with this church. We only started with about 26, 27 people. I told you then what God had for us. I walked you through my vision, that thing about touching the intangible, hearing the infallible. You have heard that preached at least twice since we started our church. That is not something new. But I told you what God had for us. I taught you about you as a person, as a Christian. I taught you about who God was. I took time and wanted you to understand.

I remember teaching you about the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. I remember sitting down with many of you and discipling you one on one and bringing you through those basic concepts, those basic lessons. I brought you through the will of God in your life versus the plan of God. I showed you how the will of God and the plan of God are not the same. The plan of God is what God wants you to do. The will of God is what God wants you to be. God's plan for all of you is different, but God's will is the same for all of you. God's will for you this morning, if you are saved, is you will be more like Christ today than you were yesterday. That is God's will. God wants you to be more like Him today than you were yesterday. If you fulfill God's will for your life, then you will automatically get God's plan for your life, and that is the way it is with your kids. If you get the plan of God instilled in them, not what to do, but what they need to be, what they do for God will take care of itself. It is so simple and so basic. It is just common sense.

I talked to you about the seven stages of your spiritual growth. I talked about the seven gates on the walls and how it all went together. About three or four weeks ago, when we put our deacons in, and you saw it all coming to a point where those four years produced the leadership that we have in our church. Some of you got it, some of you did not. Some of you are here now. Some left a long time ago, and God knows where they are at today.

I carefully orchestrated and articulated everything you needed to grow spiritually and fulfill your life in Christ. I offered to give you an hour a week where you could come down and ask any question you want in your Bible. Therese Meade was telling me a couple weeks ago, and she knows how excited she gets about God and the Bible, and she says, "Brother Bob, I just do not know why every seat in our church is not full on Sunday." She says, "I do not know why people do not come." She says, "How in the world can they not come back to hear what we are getting on Sunday morning?" She said, "Brother Bob, those seats are worth one million dollars a piece."

I looked at her and said, "Sell them, get on it, sister. You sell her a billion dollar piece, you can call me Brother Samsonite, and I am all right with it." I said, "Sell them."

I know what she is saying, and I appreciate what she is saying. But let me tell you this: if these here on Sunday morning are worth a million dollars, the one in my office at home on a weekly basis are worth six million dollars. You have one hour that you can ask me anything you want to ask, that you can get any problem you have solved in your Bible. It is all your time. You can ask me, do whatever you want to do. It is yours. There is no reason why you should not be where you need to be, because that is my job. That is how we work through those things. That is how we instill the vision in your life. That is exactly what it is.

I call it, in my office, I call the middle chair the "defining chair." That is where you get it all defined. That is where you find out where you are at, who you are. That is where you get the little pieces of the puzzle that suddenly you walk out of there and a whole picture is now in view. I put a strategy, I put a strategy and a plan together for you. Many of you, we sat up in those rooms, and I said, "Okay, I am going to put a plan together for you, and this is what you need to do, and I will help you do it." I wanted to get a strategy. I gave you a vision of your goals that God had for you, always before you. At every step of the way, I was there, loving you, helping you, worrying about you, praying for you. Never once did I hurt you or take you for granted, but keeping you accountable. That is my job.

I remember I watched many of you, and like a parent with the first kid on the first date, I watched. You build into their lives, and you build into their lives, and then sooner or later, somebody knocks at the door, and a real issue comes up that you just say, "This is going to make them or break them." I remember how many of you I fretted over, worried about. Oh, I know, trust God in all things. I know the verses better than you do. But when you love somebody and you see their potential, hey, I am human just like you. Let me tell you something, I think it is a crying shame that some of you in here have so much potential for God, but you just will not get your nose out of the world long enough to do something for God. I think it is a tragedy, and those things bother me, and I worry about you like a mother hen worries about her chicken. I know I should not do it, but I am human. I make my mistakes too.

I watched you struggle with those things behind the scenes. I would call so and so and check on you and see how you were doing, and I wanted to step in and say, "Hey, let me fix this for you. Let me help you with it." But you do not learn that way. No, I brought you like a big mother eagle. You are out on the branch, and you are there, and you are teetering. Your little wings are ready to go, and I have nurtured you. I have sat on you with the eggs, and I have warmed you, and I have fed you, and I have protected you. And now you are on the edge, and you are fluttering, and mother eagle is saying, "Get a little up here, get your flaps down, get your wheels up, get up there, catch the wind, catch the wind, catch the wind." And she wants to go out, but she cannot. At some time in your life, you have to stand on your own two feet, and when push comes to shove, you do what is right. As old Bob Jones Senior used to say, "You do right till the stars fall out." I cannot go there with you, but I worried about you. I fretted over you.

That is your job with your child as a pastor or as a pastor and a parent, bringing them to the point where you do everything you need to do to give them that vision. But when they are on that little branch and they have got to step out on their own, sure you are going to worry about them. Sure, they are always your child. You always love them, and sometimes you have to go through some difficult time. But the Word of God will bring them back.

IX. The Deuteronomy Model of Diligent Teaching

One last thing, and then we are going to be done here. I want you to come to one of the greatest parenting books in the Bible, and it is the book of Deuteronomy. I want you to come to chapter six. Here is a great example of what I am talking about, and this is a great way to close this, because this is a great example.

In the book of Deuteronomy, your Bible runs Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is the last of the books of Moses. Moses writes five books of your Bible. The last book is the book of Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy is a very practical book. It is one of the really, for me, if you want to understand the concept of vision and the disastrous results of it, it is the book of Deuteronomy. Do you know why it is called Deuteronomy? It is a breakdown of two words: "deutero," "deutero" means dual, to duet. What happens in Deuteronomy is that he has to give the law. Remember in Exodus 20, when he gave the 10 Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai? Well, 40 years later, the book of Deuteronomy covers that. God has to give Moses the 10 Commandments a second time. In fact, you go into Deuteronomy, you will find that they are listed there just like they were back on Mount Sinai. At the end of that 40 years, before they went over into the Promised Land, God had to give Moses the law a second time. Do you know why? Hence, it is called Deuteronomy, second giving of the law. Do you know why? Because the moms and dads in that 40 years, one generation in the Bible, the moms and dads had failed to connect the principles that God had given them in the early part when they came out of Egypt to where they are at now, and the children had no idea of who they were.

Do you know what the vision is here in the Old Testament with the nation of Israel? It is the land. Their vision was they are going to get the land. That land was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That is the big stick with the nation of Israel. That is the controversy of the world today: who is in the land over there? That is their land. God promised them that land, and the vision for every Jew and everybody in the Old Testament was, "There is a land that God has given us, and that is our land." They did not even know about it. Now, why they are camped over here on this side before they cross over, they do not even want to go over. They had lost the vision that God had given them. So God has to get Moses before he dies and give them the law a second time.

Let me give you a great principle here, and this is true in the Old Testament and New Testament. In the Old Testament, if you were a teenager and you rebelled against your parents, they killed you. There was no league or organization that was going to pick it for you, was going to get you out of it. You could not call the ACLU and get somebody down there because your civil rights were violated. You sassed your mom or your dad. Your dad says, "Now, son, we need to fix this. You need to do what I tell you to do." He says, "Oh, Dad, you are not hip. I am doing that. I am

having a good time. I am going to go chill out with the guy down the road here." He said, "Now, I ain't going." They said, "Yeah, I am, Dad, you are so old-fashioned." Do you know what he does? He has got to take him down to the judges, the leaders of Israel. They would say, "You are having a problem with your son here? Yeah, he is just bad-mouthing and will not listen to anything." And they say, "No, look, son, we are a great nation. We are God's nations. We cannot let you do this." He said, "Oh, man, you always are all caps, are all downtown type people. You need to get down with me, man. You ain't got what you are talking about." "Well, you still a man, look at me, I am all dressed up here. I am going down with the guys. We are going to have some fun." They said, "No, we are going to have some fun, but we got a big hole dug over here. Why do not you show me?" They put him down that hole. Do you know what they did? They killed him. Every one of the judges got big stones, and they smashed his brains out, and they killed him.

Now, that sounds really harsh and hard, but that is the difference between grace and the law. But you know why God had that fundamental principle? God had a plan for the nation of Israel. Their vision was the land, and God knew that the number one thing that would destroy that nation from getting the land is that the families malfunctioned. That is why the Bible says the rebellion in the Bible is as a sin of witchcraft. That is why in the Old Testament they killed the kids that were rebellious, because God knew that if He did not quell that rebellion, it would destroy the nation, and God had plans for that nation. That is why the Bible says in the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long on the earth," because if you do not honor them, it will not be long.

Over in Ephesians 6:1-2, it says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." Do you know what the promise was? If you do not do it, we will kill you. The bottom line is this: God knew that if the family fractured in the Old Testament, the nation would fracture. So the devil attacked the family, and that is why this church, to fulfill its vision, has to have its families intact. The same way spiritually, the devil knows that if he can get your child, he will break that spiritual line of Christ in your family, and you will never accomplish what God has for you. One of them is a literal nation, the other one is your family, which is part of this body. It will be the source of contention all your life. You will never get a thing done for God because you are always going to be fretting about him or fretting about her, or always going to be some issue, or they are in some lifestyle, and you are paying the bills because you are too stupid to deal with it, and you just keep abetting them in their sinful lifestyle and letting them run out and providing them a bed, providing food, providing that, and it is just heartache to know when they do not want to do what is right, neither do you. And you will never get done in your life what you would have got done because of that, and in both cases, it gets canceled out.

Let me show you this. Deuteronomy 6:6-12.

Deuteronomy 6:6-12

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not;

And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not; and wells digged, which thou diggedst not; vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

First thing in verse seven, look at this. He says, "And teach them diligently." It is a diligent thing. You have got to diligently teach your children. Look at it says in verse seven, toward the middle of the verse, "talk of them when you sit in your house." Verse seven says, "when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up." You see a constant reoccurring of the principles and keeping that vision before them. He says, "when you lay down, when you walk, when you rise up."

Look at verse eight: "And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." Bind them not on the kids, on your hands. In other words, do not forget. Consistency is the number one thing. Your hands and your eyes. Your hands is what you do, and your eyes are the windows to your soul and opening to your mind, how you see them and what you do with them. Notice he says "frontlets." Frontlets is something that they used to put in the Old Testament that they write a scripture on it and they tie it around their forehead on the front so wherever they would go, people could see the verse, or if they looked in the mirror, they could see the verse. In other words, it simply means keeping these things before you 24/7 and understanding that it is your responsibility.

The old thing is when he says "tie up," he says, "bind them for a sign upon thine hand." What we used to do is tie a string on your finger, remember that? Somebody says, "When you got the string, are you tied a string on your finger because you remember there is something you did not want to remember what to do, so you, so when you forget, you put a string on it so you look at the string, you remember what you put the string on for." Never worked. But here they say, "bind them on your hand." Do not forget. It is a constant thing, consistency. You have to do it every time over and build the relationship with them, a constant reinforcement of the vision. In this case, it was the land. In your child's case, it will be who he is going to be in Christ.

Now look at verse 20:

Deuteronomy 6:20-25

And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand:

And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes:

And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers.

And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day.

And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

When he asks, you know what? He brought him back to the original vision that God had for the nation of Israel, the land. When your child wants to know, you bring him back to the original vision and the original plan that you have in your life for you and your wife and your family. Absolutely vital. That is why I said everything else we build the rest of the time will come right back on this. You have got to get a plan and a vision ready to be implemented where you sit down with them and they understand, and the rest of their life, it is not a mom and a dad and a son, or a mom and dad and a daughter, or a mom and dad and brother and sister. It is a team, and it all goes back to here every day. Some days they are going to have such tough days, you are going to think, you are going to say to your husband, "Will you go down to that lumber company, get a revolving door to his bedroom because we are just going in and out?" Other days it will be better. Consistency.

I am going to show you in time how to break that will. I am going to show you in time it can be done. You may think it cannot be done, but the reason why it cannot be done now is because he has no vision, she has no vision. You have not instilled one. Maybe you did not know how to do it. It is immaterial. There is nothing wrong with it. That is where you are all at. But now, like I said, you do not want to run out of here and do all this today. There are other areas we need.

X. Conclusion and Next Steps

The bottom line is this, and I am trying to build this thing all the way around. I am making some changes in the nursery. Jamie and Nicole have been in charge of the nursery now for three or four years, and have done a great job with it, just to really put that thing on its feet and really got it organized and really got it structured and just work with it. But that was a training process for them. I have talked to them a couple of weeks ago. I am moving them out. They are going to be key players in the counseling ministry for me, and I need them in there. It is a situation where I am going with the church, and where we need to get to, they need to move out. They have learned their lessons. They have trained. They have done a great job with it. Now that we are getting this done, I want to put a lady and her daughter in there that will really fundamentally be

able to work with you to help you with your children. I am going to have Barb and Olivia Christy take over the nursery here in the next month. Barb is going to work with me, and she is going to work with you, and for those of you parents that want a working relationship with the people in the nursery so you know where your child is at, that you can work together, that is what I am going to build for you. I am putting the whole thing together now in the timing of how we are going to do this, and as we are going, we are going to work with it. She is someone in there that her and Olivia, they love those kids. They work with those kids. Barb has already talked to so many of you about your own kids and helps you, and she is the lady to be in there at this point to work with me in that area and to help you with your children.

So here is the deal: do not let your kid just run wild and do, and do not discipline for anything. But if they do something in the nursery over there, and you ask them, some of you already are, and they say, "Your son shot three kids and knifed two today," do not take him home and discipline. That is the wrong thing to do. We will get there. You do not want to do more damage. If you just stay with me what I give you today, and we add to this, we are going to cover all of those things. We are going to get that partnership working back and forth with the parents and get that whole thing where you do not have to just drop them off there anymore and then wonder what happened to them, and they do not have to get cattle prods and ropes to keep them in line.

In other words, if there is anything you want to say to your child this afternoon, just smile, but then do not give him any answer. Just look at little Johnny and say, "Hey, Johnny, hey, Mary, there is a new sheriff in town." Remember, you are on a watch. The watch is to see what He will say unto you and how He wants to reprove you.

A couple of things you want to leave with here today:

- You cannot change your child without changing yourself.
- You have got to get a vision. That vision is not about what God is going to do with them, but what they want to be for God.

Next week, we are going to continue on. We are going to talk about the six absolute principles of parenting. We are going to begin to work and then tie all this stuff back together. When we work through the discipline, everything we are going to do now, we are going to come back to today. Today is the anchor. It is where we hold the line. It is where we all come back to here, and everything we do, it comes back to this concept of having a vision. That is where we are going to start. Let us pray.