

Parenting Class: The Vision of a Biblical Lifestyle

Sunday 8/19/2007

I. Recapping Foundational Parenting Principles

Not everybody understood what the vision was. That is kind of an elusive term anyhow. We talk about the church having a vision, and then you get somebody else that says, "Oh, I had a vision." We are not talking about that. We are talking about really the vision defined in the Bible, which is providing a biblical lifestyle for your child. Christianity and the way you live your lives is not just something that you do sporadically, but it becomes a normal lifestyle. That child grows up looking, seeing, and understanding the clear biblical principles and all that goes along with that.

Of course, we talked about Proverbs 22, and then I took you over to Habakkuk 2, and I showed you how the Bible says that you write that vision. You make it clear; you give that child an understanding that this is a lifestyle. It is something that he is going to be not just something that he hears about, but he actually sees it and lives it every day of his life because it is being lived within the family unit.

Then we talked about the six absolute biblical principles by which you have to build and train your children. This goes back to the vision. The vision is the anchor point for everything. We talked about how these six principles have to be balanced out with grace and truth. Last week, or the week before last, I cannot remember where it was, I think it was last week, we began to really delve into these six principles, and I have been showing you how you balance it between truth and grace, grace and truth.

Of course, the Bible says when Christ came, He came both with grace and truth. Truth, we know, is the absolute law. We know that truth is right. We talked about how you can be right, but if you do not have grace in your life, even though you have the truth, you can do some wrong things and you can hurt some people. Many, many Christians have been hurt in churches because the churches have the truth, but they did not administer that truth through grace. We have talked about that, and your children are the same way. We are trying to show you, as we go through these six principles, how you balance that out.

We talked about the four stages your child is going to go through, kind of like the four transitional stages from the time they are born up to the time that they are pretty much on their own. Those stages were:

1. The discipline stage
2. The relationship stage
3. The fellowship stage
4. The responsibility stage

I talked about the importance last week of always knowing as a parent where your child is. Basically, I have taken the same principles that I use as a pastor because we are God's children. My job as a pastor is to help you and to train you as God's child.

Proverbs 27 says that I, as a pastor, should know the state of my flocks. I should know where you are at spiritually so I can better help you. You, as a parent, need to understand where your child is. I think that is probably one of the real failures, and like I said, this is where parenting is made or broken. You lose touch with where your child is through these transitional stages, and you have some problems on your hands that are going to cause you some problems.

Last week, we began to look into these six things, and we talked about, first of all, providing a structure of authority in your child's life. Building a base foundation of authority in your child's life is so very crucial. How important it is at that early age to be able to set boundaries and limitations in their lives, building on that foundation as you grow through those four stages, using these six principles as you keep that vision before them.

We also looked at accountability. We talked about in your child's life that you first have to be accountable to them. I told you and gave you the great truth that you will never change your child's life wherever your child is. Your child got wherever they are because of the way you are. You will never change your child until you are first willing to change yourself. The best way, last week we talked about this, the best way to teach your child accountability is to be accountable to your child as a parent. Through that model and that example and that role model, you begin to show them that you first being accountable to them as a parent, and then in turn, they be accountable back to you. Later, as the stages move on and they get a little older, you transfer that accountability, as you do that authority system, to God. That is all part of that process.

II. The Wisdom of Solomon and the Conclusion of Life

Today, I want to get into the next one or two principles on our list, depending on how much time we have. We are in no hurry with this. It is not something that I want to just rush through. I want to be able to fully develop these principles because not only are they going to be beneficial to you, they will go on our website and be beneficial there. Also, many of you are going to be working with me in the next year or so when we develop our counseling ministry, where we can have an outreach through this church for marriages. We have already done the marital classes where you got the material to learn that you can help people who have marital problems. I guarantee you one of the major issues you are going to come up against in dealing with people is their children.

Now, whether you have any kids or not, or whether you are way past the childbearing stage of your life, you can still use this material to help other people. Not a week goes by in my life that we do not meet one-on-one, or you just come up and tell me how God puts you into people's lives at work, and you have to deal with some of the issues, or you have the privilege to deal with some of the issues they are going through in their life. Many times, and I just talked to a gal this morning that was going to a class with a guy who is having some issues, and she gave him my phone number and the website. That is how you want to do it. That is exactly what I am talking about when I talk about you looking at the profession that you are in as your mission field. God has called you to be a missionary. This idea that a missionary is just somebody that goes out around the world? Let me tell you something: every saved person in this room this morning is a missionary, and your mission field is your family first, your neighborhood second, and then

wherever God has given you a job and whatever you do. It is a total lifestyle of where you go and what you do. So, we are really in no hurry, and I want to be able to develop these things to their full extent because we just need at least one time in our life to put this stuff down and get it out there and show you how you begin to blend grace and truth through these concepts.

Now, before we go any farther, let us take out our child's picture. If you are a visitor here, and have not been here before, we, at the very outset, put our kids' pictures in our Bible and we pray over them before we start our classes, just as a point of reference that we are excited about it, and this is the focal point. We never want to forget our children. So, let us go to the Lord in prayer this morning, and we will go from there.

Our Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. Lord, we hold up these little ones today that are down in the nursery or somewhere in this very room. Lord, we love them, and we thank You, Lord, and we understand our tremendous responsibility. Help me, Lord, as a pastor, to be a better pastor every week, every day of my life. Help me to love You more, love Your Word more, and in turn, love the people that You have provided in this church that I am just a caretaker of. Lord, I pray that we will look at our families, our children, husbands and wives looking at their kids, with the same understanding that we are just caretakers. Help us, Lord, to do what is right, to train them, to teach them, and Lord, help us be found faithful in all that we do. Lord, as we go to Your Word now, we pray that You will forgive us where we have failed You, that if there is anything in our hearts this morning, any malice, any bad blood, any unconfessed sin, that we will take this time, that we will not let anything in our lives stop or hinder us from getting what God has for us today. We will love You and thank You and praise You. In Jesus' name we ask it. Amen.

Now today, we are going to begin to talk about how important it is to look at the next two steps. I want to talk about affection today, and if we have time, then we will move on into the appreciation aspect of it. Years ago, when I started to study the Bible, God taught me a lot of things in my early years that I did not really fully understand when I got started doing it. But the older I got in the Bible, and the more I spent time with the Lord, the more in the later years of my life that really showed me what an impact they were that I just could not see when I was a young Christian.

Solomon in the Bible is the wisest man that ever lived on planet Earth, and there is no question about that. Now, I know if you go to even a Bible college, they will not spend the time probably developing the nation of Israel to the degree that it was. You certainly will not get it in a secular college or high school. But the truth of the matter is this, ladies and gentlemen: in 1000 B.C., when the nation of Israel was at its apex, the highest point that it ever was in the history of the world, King Solomon was the renowned king on planet Earth. Everybody on this planet knew who he was, knew who the Jews were, and knew that there was a God in Jerusalem. The magnitude of his wealth, the magnitude of all that he had, the magnitude of everything, his wisdom, everything about him was set apart higher and greater than anybody on this planet. It is in that time, you can read this for yourself in the Bible, in the Old Testament, in Kings and Chronicles, you find that the whole world is going into Jerusalem because they have heard that

there is a king, and it is absolutely incredible what is going on. Of course, that has all been lost today, and nobody teaches that anymore.

But it is a true statement, and Solomon is not only the wisest man that ever lived, but he is also the most unique man in the history of the world and certainly in the Bible. He writes three books: Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. Along with Job and Psalms, these make up what we call in the Bible the five wisdom books. Those five wisdom books are absolutely crucial if you are ever going to get what I call a working knowledge of the Word of God. If there are any five books of the Bible that I wish, and I cannot do this, but this is my desire, I will never attain to it, but this is what I would like if I could have whatever I wanted today. If there are any five books of the Bible that I wish I could get into my mind in total recall, where I could understand it in its entirety and have a photographic memory, so to speak, that I could just totally remember everything in these books and every principle in it, it would be these five wisdom books. I firmly believe everything else in the Bible hangs on these five wisdom books. Three of those books are written by the wisest man that ever lived, and of course, those books are absolutely crucial in gaining what the Bible says is understanding.

The Bible teaches that there is a thing called knowledge. Knowledge is facts. The Bible says that then there is another thing called wisdom, and wisdom basically is the facts that you have being used in a way that become beneficial to you. You can find examples of knowledge and facts all through this world. An unsaved man can have knowledge, and he can have wisdom. But what an unsaved man cannot have is understanding, because understanding is the missing element that only comes from God. When you have the facts, and then you have the wisdom, then when you get the understanding, it shows you how God fits into the equation.

I will give you an example, and I use this all the time, but it is a great example, and it should be, I should use it at least once a year. When you look at the structure of the world and how the world has changed, say, in the last hundred years, we know, as Bible believers, that God has a plan, and God is on that plan, and He is right on track. When we went down to the Liberty Memorial, which was the great World War One Memorial, the greatest one in the country, if not the world, I was really impressed by the little video that they had that took about twenty, thirty minutes that, in my mind, probably I came away understanding, from the world's standpoint, what World War One was all about. It is a little easier for me to grasp World War Two because it is more relevant, and it is more when I grew up that was our war, not that I was in it, but I was just a kid then, everybody else was in it. So, it is more relevant to me. But when I looked at that, I thought to myself, now whoever did that really had the facts, and they had wisdom in laying those facts out because they took a very complicated subject and, from a wisdom in a worldly standpoint, displayed the facts that even somebody as dumb as me could grasp it. I walked out of there better understanding how the makeup and how it all started.

Now, let me take it one step farther and show you understanding in the thing. The facts and the knowledge tell us that World War One started because of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in conflict with other nations, and through the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, who was the Archduke of Hungary. The national alliances with the nations all took sides, which just automatically brought about World War One. Now, that is the worldly standpoint. I have taken

facts, now put them into a ball called wisdom, and given you some material. Let me show you the difference between what I just said and the difference when you put understanding to it, remembering now that understanding is the equation of God. When you put understanding in it, you can forget the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. You can forget Archduke Ferdinand and his wife that was assassinated there in Budapest. You can forget all of that stuff. I mean, you need to know it just for the sake of history. But when you put understanding to it and you put God in the scheme of things in the beginning of the 20th century, up through the middle of the 20th century, to where we are at now, what World War One and World War Two is simply this: in God's standard, with understanding, World War One got the land ready for the Jew. World War Two got the Jew ready for the land. In 1948, after the land was made ready in 1918 and the Jew was made ready from 1940 to 1945, they go back and become a nation in 1948, which is the greatest single prophecy in the Bible on the Second Coming of Christ. Now, that is the difference between facts and wisdom and putting understanding to it. Understanding in any event in history is seeing how God figures into the overall equation, that you understand that the whole concept is about God.

Solomon, like no other man in the Bible, does that. He really does. God allowed Solomon to experience everything that we all wanted to experience. We think about, I hear it all the time, when he comes on there with Playboy magazine, and you have to know, and what guy growing up in an unsaved condition, and probably some in a saved condition, did not envy Hugh Hefner? I mean, the Playboy Mansion. And yet we look at that and we think, "Wow, there is a guy who, from a world standpoint, hey, let me tell you something, Solomon had him beat so bad that Hugh Hefner was a rank amateur." Solomon had one thousand most beautiful women in his life. And you look at the Playboy Mansion. Hey, let me tell you something, in Solomon's Temple, in 1951, the Illinois Institute of Architecture took the things in the Bible about Solomon's Temple, took the dimensions, took everything that it had, and figured up how much gold it was worth in the temple alone in Jerusalem in 1951. There was one hundred and seventy-one trillion dollars of gold in that temple alone. One hundred and seventy-one trillion dollars by gold standard in 1951. What would it be today? And we are not counting all the other things. You want to talk about riches? Bill Gates could not even get in the race. Trump could not even make it out of the starting gate.

Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, and God allowed him, and I fully do not understand God's reasoning in this other than how it applies to us in the Bible. He allowed him to experience every pleasure, everything in life, every riches, everything that man could want. His wisdom is displayed in the book of Song of Solomon and the book of Ecclesiastes, where he literally takes every philosophy of man that has not even been written yet. He goes through in 1000 A.D. existentialism. He goes through socialism. He goes through communism. He goes through altruism. He goes through paganism. He goes through capitalism. He takes them one at a time and defines every philosophy five hundred to one thousand years before man ever thought about it in every aspect. He is the wisest man that ever lived, and at the end of his life, after experiencing it all, going through it all, valuing it all, looking at it all, tasting it all, handling it all, enjoying it all, he wrote at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes, at the end of his life, probably the crowning hallmark verse of his life, because he says in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14:

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

What an understatement: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." What matter? The matter that all his life he got to experience everything that life had to offer. The wisest man that ever lived, that had it all, did it all, went where all was, had held nothing back from him, at the end of his life, after his experience and all, comes back and says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, because that is the whole duty of man." He just summed up everything by saying, "Whatever you think is really life, and whatever you think is really good, and whatever you are playing with, toying around with, or think is really what it is, is not really what it is." That to me was one of the most impacting, life-changing principles that I ever got out of the Bible.

In that mindset, if I could make one statement today dealing with these next four, remember now, the first two fell down on the side of truth: authority and accountability. The next four, which we are about to start today, fall on the side of grace. With your child, it is a blending of these two, and with your child, it is a blending of how you do these two of these six things and blend it together with having the truth and then having grace. If I could be Solomon for just one moment in parenting classes, and I do not pretend in any sense of the imagination to be the perfect parent, but if I could give you a summation of parenting like Solomon gave a summation of life on planet Earth, I would tell you that if I could condense these four next principles down into one thought, like Solomon did, one concept, one idea, one paragraph that would translate into a single action for you as a parent. If I could give you one finalization of everything you have to get out of what you are doing, like Solomon did with life, if I could do it in parenting, I would tell you this: that you, as a mom and as a dad, need to provide and give to your child in your home, in your life, a peaceful, stable, wholesome, quiet, loving, affectionate, godly, safe, secure living environment. A place where they can see the quality of the Bible displayed in an open relationship. Something that when they go to church and they sit down there and they hear what it is supposed to be like, when they go home, they see what it is really like.

If there is one thing that I can tell you in summing up everything we are talking about, just like Solomon did, it is to give your child that peace, that stability, that wholesomeness, that quiet, loving, affectionate, godly, safe place where they can, as I said, see the quality of the Bible. The home, the mom and the dad relationship, and the home as a unit should be a happy, content place that they never want to leave, nor do they ever want to lose. An open display of affection and love, and love for the people of the world. Not a battleground, not a place where moms and dads are constantly fighting, not a place where they are constantly at odds. They learn that very quickly; they see it very quickly. Because as small as they are, they still have that old sin nature. They too, by your teaching and your training, learn how to manipulate the circumstances, just like we manipulate the circumstances.

If I can bring it down, I am going to say it one more time. If I, as Solomon, when he gave me that concept, because he said in the next verse, he says the reason why you need to hear the conclusion of the whole matter and fear God, keep His commandments, is simply this, and in the next verse, for 14, he says, "You know why you should? Because for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." He says, "You are not going to win anyhow, so you might as well understand that this is God's concept, it is God's plan, and what you think about it personally or how you want to rebel about it will never make it." My favorite verse for me in my own personal life that I keep before me all the time is in Job 9:4. I keep it before me. If you would come down and see where I study, you would see that verse on a little three by five card so I can look at it every day. You know what it simply says? It is a question, and the question is simply this:

Job 9:4

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?

Really, who has hardened himself against God and prospered? Nobody. I put that in my mind all the time.

III. The Importance of Affection and Fellowship

Your kids ought to see mom and dad in an open, loving, and affectionate relationship. Husbands and wives ought to tell each other you love each other a hundred times a day. You want to tell your children you love them a hundred times a day. I do not care how young they are; if they cannot understand that, they will grasp it by association. They will see, just like they learn to speak without you ever sending them to school, without ever buying them a reading book or a book on speech, they will learn to talk by association because they are in your family. Well, they can pick that up. They will pick up the work, the love, the care, and all of the affection that needs to be displayed.

If your child knows you love him, I am going to tell you something, and you have a deeply rooted relationship built on the fellowship concept of biblical principles, when he gets to be eight or nine, or she gets to be ten or twelve, or whatever the case, it will be a lot easier to deal with them in harsher matters that require harsh discipline or stricter discipline if you have built this foundation of love and affection in their life. I want to give you one of the greatest principles here that you just need to remember. It sounds insignificant. You are going to walk out of here, some of you scratching your head, or when I say it, you are going to say, "What is the big deal about that?" Well, I am sorry you cannot get to it. Let me tell you this: your affection toward them, displayed openly, will build your relationship with them inwardly. Your open affection through your wife, and you display to them openly, will build your relationship with them inwardly, and I am going to deal with that today in a very specific way here in just a moment.

You never want your child, and you want to remember this, you never, and this is so important, you never want your child to do right as a parent just because they fear the consequences of not doing right. If you have raised your child now, and they are eight or nine years old, and your

child does right only because they fear the consequences, you have failed as a parent. You have failed as a parent. You never want your child to do right because they fear the consequences. They should never fear the consequences of whatever they do wrong more than the fear of losing your fellowship. You have to have a fellowship. Fellowship with your child is the number one thing, and you only build that through affection and love and explaining grace in their life as you administer truth and accountability. They should never fear the consequences more than losing your fellowship, and when something happens that breaks that fellowship, it ought to be worse than any punishment.

When I was ten or eleven years old, back then, tell me you remember this, on every street corner there was a mom and pop store. Remember those days? We had one right down the street from us. In fact, I worked there. I went to work when I was in the sixth grade and worked there until I was in high school. My dad taught me a great work ethic.

When I was nine or ten years old, I stole a pack of Twinkies from the store, and the guy caught me, and he was a nice guy. Yes, I am a Twinkie addict. I have never gotten over that. Do not think I probably ever will. At least I pay for them now because they are getting too big of boxes to steal. Back then, they did not have security cameras, and I still did not get away with it. But anyway, he called my mom, and he said, "Bob just stole something from our store." My mom, and he said, "I am just going to send him home, and you deal with it." Well, I live two blocks from that store. My wife knows where that store is, or was, they tore it down now. But I walked two blocks. I will tell you what, I was dreading going home. I remember it like it was yesterday, and I will never forget. All the way home, I knew that here is how it was going to go: my mom was going to be absolutely livid with me. She was going to whack me six ways from Sunday, and then when my dad got home, and he worked at a steel mill, he was going to whack me six ways from Sunday. I figured it out: I am going to get two whacks because there are two Twinkies in this pack. I am going to get one for each Twinkie. I got it. Even at that young age, I was figuring ahead of things. So, I will never forget, I walked down there, and I went in the front door, and I came into the house, and my mother was ironing clothes. I will never forget this as long as I live. She was ironing her clothes, and what she was doing was ironing her clothes and crying. She is standing there with tears running down her face, ironing my clothes. Never said a word to me. Never got angry with me. Never beat me. Just stood there and ironed my clothes while she was weeping and crying. I do not know of anything, and I would have rather that she had been waiting for me with a two by four. I would have liked for her at that point to beat me senseless, throw me down the cellar steps, feed me to the dogs, take me up to the second window floor and throw me out the window, anything but have me stand there and watch my mother weep and cry because I knew at that point I had hurt her.

That is where you want to get with your children. You never want the consequences of what you do or what they do to be what they fear. You want them to understand that the real concept and a real benchmark with progress in your child is that they do what is right not just because of the consequences. They need to understand that there are consequences, but you also need to understand that the real issue is the broken fellowship. If you can get that across to your child, if

you can understand that concept yourself, you have made a lot of progress, and that to me is a real benchmark of progress with your child. It is just such a key.

IV. The Danger of Success and the "Me Principle"

Now, the danger in this, and another thing you have to understand in parenting, is the devil never misses any details. He never does. When we started our study a while back, I took you over to Deuteronomy 6, and I showed you a great passage there of losing touch with your child. It is very simple, another great concept: when you stop growing spiritually, your child stops growing spiritually. Your child's spiritual growth is nothing more than a reflection of your spiritual growth. When you decide in your life that you are not going to grow anymore, that you have become satisfied in your life, then your child is not going to grow anymore because they are going to get that in your life.

He says over there in Deuteronomy 6:10-12:

Deuteronomy 6:10-12

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.

Now, I want you to listen to that. God gave you, God gave these people everything that they did not deserve, and now they are full. That is the key: full. They got everything they want now. They are full. "Beware lest thou forget the LORD which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, that thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you."

In dealing in your life, in my life, with God and your children, there is a great danger. You have heard me talk about it before. The great danger is the danger of success. The danger of you having nothing and then getting plugged into God in the Bible, and suddenly God giving you what you do not deserve. God blessing you to the point where once you were almost bankrupt, and now God has taken care of you, where you lost everything, and now you have got it back. It is tough that you actually get nothing to get. It was because that you turned your heart toward God, and you stayed with the Lord, and the Lord brought you back from the brink, so to speak, and gave you everything. When we get all of that, and we get full, and we have now what we have, we forget what it was when we did not have it, and then we forget the Lord.

There is a great principle for those of you that are going to work with me in counseling. It is probably the greatest unknown principle anywhere in the Bible. I call it the "Me Principle." I also

sometimes refer to it as the "Sharp Stick in the Eye to God Principle." One of the greatest things God ever taught me was this principle about twenty, and we were talking about this yesterday in our parenting class, and God had brought back to my remembrance, and I thought it was very important, very fitting for today where we are at here, of understanding that a number of years ago, probably over twenty now, I was coming through the Bible, and God showed me two incredible principles. God showed me how God looks at things, and then He showed me how we as human beings look at things.

Those two places, one of them is found in Acts 7, dealing with the death of Stephen, and it is just one of those natural things that you really would not think much about, about how it all works. But it is an incredible place because they are getting ready to kill Stephen, and you know what Stephen does when Stephen is ready to die? He says two statements. The first statement he says, he says, "Lord, remember me," or something like that, he says, "Lord, remember me." And then he says in the next statement, "And forgive those that are about to kill me," or something like that.

Acts 7:59-60

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Now, I looked at that, and I thought to myself that Stephen, and then unbeknownst to me, I was reading over in another place in Luke about the crucifixion of the Lord, and I found over there in Luke 23 two more great statements. When Jesus died on the cross, you know what He said? He said, "Father, forgive them" first, and then said, "Into my hands I commend my spirit."

Luke 23:34

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Luke 23:46

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

You see, the Lord put man first and Himself second, but Stephen put himself first and other people second. That is called the "Me Principle," and it is an absolute truth. When push comes to shove in your life and our lives, you know who is going to always get the sharp stick in the eye? God is. I have seen it all my life. All my life, I have seen situations where God blesses couples, He brings them up, He gives them out, He brings them back, He gives them this, just like Deuteronomy 6 says. And then they will get bigger than their britches, and they will get into some kind of financial mess, and they will get into some kind of mess where they did not discipline themselves, they are unstructured, and now they have got debt. Let me ask you, when they get to that point, who is the first person they cut out? I promise you, when you get in a financial scrape, the first person you are going to cut out is God, and you are going to justify it. I

do not mind you standing on giving. I do not care what you give, but I am telling you this, this is the human principle that gets translated down to your kids: the first thing you are going to cut out is, "Well, we just cannot give to God," because why? Because we made a mistake. So instead of us looking in our own lives and saying, "What can I cut?" we go out in the backyard, we get a nice stick and sharpen it, and then stick it right in His eye. He is really the only one who got you out of it, who could get you out of this. That is called the "Me Principle."

How many times have I seen people come to the point in their life where they got themselves into some kind of mess, and the first thing they go, it is not about, "Well, where can I cut out in my life?" It is not about, "Well, maybe I will not do this, or maybe I will not go here, or maybe I will not go there." It will be, "You know what, I cannot come to Thursday night Bible study anymore. I cannot come to Sunday morning anymore." When we get in a jam, the only one that can help us is the one we drop. That is called the human principle. Every year when we go, and it just drives me nuts, every year when we go to the canoe trip, I tell you, "Hey, you know what, this is the date you have to have your money by. We have to make reservations. Look ahead, look around, look behind." Every year, and every year, four or five days before we go to the canoe trip, somebody is going to come up and say, "I ain't going." That is great. Now we are stuck for over a thousand dollars because you decided, and you are going to tell me that three weeks ago, with the cutoff day, you are going to tell me you just woke up this morning? You see, that is what I am saying. You never think about the long term. You only think about what I cannot do or what is going to benefit me. It happens all the time. Drives me nuts. But that is the human factor. We do not care about how God is affected by it. We do not care what it is going to cost somebody else as long as it does not inconvenience me. You better learn it. It is going to be there all the time.

The older you and I get as a child of God, the more God ought to be able to trust us with. If you have been saved five, ten, fifteen years, God ought to be trusting you with an abundance of things. Why does He not? I will tell you why. Just like our children, the older your children get, not more restrictions you put on them, the less restrictions as they take up responsibility. But it is never going to happen. It is never going to happen because of the "Me Factor." It is never going to happen because I am more concerned about me than I am whatever else is going to take place in my life. It does not matter who else has to pay the tab. It does not matter what inconvenience, as long as it does not inconvenience me. Your child picks up on that. He begins to see that. He begins to learn that. He begins to go through that. When you stop growing and you stop looking ahead, looking behind, and looking around, and you just live your life as haphazardly and as disorganized, and you cannot look beyond tomorrow, God is never going to give you responsibility that way, and you are never going to learn. To teach a child responsibility, it is not going to happen.

V. Three Types of Christians and True Service

You have heard me say it before, three types of Christians in the Bible. You have heard me preach on it many, many times. You get over there in Matthew 13, and He says, "And some bore fruit thirtyfold, some bore fruit sixtyfold, and some bore fruit an hundredfold."

Matthew 13:8

But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Matthew 13:23

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Basically, you can take God's people in their relationship they have with God, in the ability they have with God to do everything that God wants them to be as they build through loving God. You see, God wants to give you more, and God wants to give you more responsibility because He knows He can trust you. You know when you will get responsibility in this church to be in ministry? When I can trust you. When I know that whatever I give you to do, you are going to do it better than I would do it. That I do not have to wake up in the middle of the night and say, "I wonder if she has got that covered? I wonder if he knows about that? I wonder at this?" When you take responsibility in this church, you do not take it like your order at a Taco Bell drive-through. You take it for what it is, and that is the absolute God's job, God's program, that heaven and hell, life and death, hangs in a balance sometimes. You do it with the responsibility, with the tenacity, with whatever it takes to get that job done, that God can trust you with it. Because He knows you love Him, and He knows you love Him more than you love the world, and He knows that there comes a point in your life where nothing in that world will pull you back from what God wants you to do. You will look back and you will say, "Goodbye, world, goodbye. I am never going back." That does not mean I will not struggle tomorrow. It does not mean that I will not have some downfalls tomorrow, but it means as far as making a clear separation from what it was to where I am going and what I am going to do. When you take that point in your life, God says that I am going to give that guy or that gal responsibility. There is somebody I can trust. There is somebody that I know when I give him something to do, they will get it done. They will never come to the place where all they do is think about themselves. When they get into a jam financially, when they get into a jam, whatever the case, I will not be the first one to go, but I will be the first one they go to. This is why your children wind up the way they are.

Some of God's people, they serve God in a thirtyfold capacity, and they serve God out of fear. These are the kind of people that come to church because they are afraid they will get cancer next month if they do not. These are the kind of people that all of their lives they are afraid that if they do not do what is right, God is going to whack them. What a terrible way to live your life. They are always, before they go through the thing of life, it is always like this: they are expecting God to be around the corner like God has got a big old ball bat going to say, "Hey, whack!" That is a terrible way to go through your life, but you know what, a lot of God's people go through life just like that, and they serve God, but they serve Him out of fear. No love involved, and they serve Him out of fear, so they have to serve Him as slaves. What a way to go.

Then you have the sixtyfold, and they are the ones that serve God because of what they can get back. They do it purely for a reward. They do it purely to be looked at. They want the flash and the show right now. They want to, they fall into that attitude that is taught in lots of churches,

that you give to God to get back from God. No, you give to God, and that is the end of it. You do not expect anything back. You are not giving whatever you give, and I am even talking about money, but you do not give whatever you give to get something back. You are supposed to give it just because you love Him. But they always got an angle. They never do anything for somebody without wanting something back. You see this in pastors. If you ever see it in me, I hope you drop kick me through the goal post of Old Paths Baptist Church. What a terrible way to go through life. They do not serve God out of love. They serve God for rewards. They serve Him as hirelings, somebody that has been hired to do a job, and all they ever see is the reward.

Then you have those that bear fruit a hundredfold, and they do not serve God out of fear. They do not serve God as a consequence. They do not serve God for reward. They certainly serve God because they love Him, and they do not serve Him as slaves. They do not serve Him as hirelings. They serve Him as sons in a father's house. Your children will grow up with that same concept. You know what? They need to understand that they do not do right because of the consequences. I do not refrain from sin in my life just because of the consequences, and yet I understand there are consequences. I think everybody in this room that has probably been saved ten or fifteen years, maybe even less than that if you are a smart one, you know now that the world has nothing good out there for you. All it is going to do is hurt you. It is going to break you, bust you, and mess you up, and it is going to ruin your life, and it is certainly going to ruin anything that God has for you with the judgment seat of Christ. You probably, if you have got any kind of brain cells left after all the dope that you smoked and all the drugs that you took and all the booze that you drank, if you just got a couple of them left, you probably can figure out that life is going to treat you terribly. Absolutely terrible. But I do not serve God simply because of that. I am smart enough to know that there are consequences to this world. Anybody knows that. But I really love Him, and I work in my heart to love Him more every day.

VI. The Perfect Progression and Unconditional Love

For you and for me, when we disobey God, it ought to grieve us so desperately. When we disappoint God as His child, it ought to dig down deep where you just cannot function. It ought to be with you husbands and wives, that when you guys are out of sorts with each other, and you guys maybe have a bad morning, that your day is completely out of whack because you are not in sync with each other. So we ought to be. That is the way it ought to be with your children, just the way it is with you and God.

There is a great study in the Bible that you ought to take some time. We do not have time to go through it this morning, but it is a great study. It is built around the word "perfect," and it starts with a perfect God. Then it moves into a perfect God giving a perfect book. Then it moves from a perfect God giving a perfect book to that book giving you and I a perfect love. Then it flows from a perfect God to a perfect book in our relationship with God to perfect love to making you and I a perfect man. Then it translates for a perfect God to a perfect book to a perfect love to a perfect man to a perfect ministry, and then it translates for a perfect God to a perfect book to a perfect love to a perfect man to a perfect ministry to a perfect family. Not perfect in the sense of

sinless and perfect, but perfect in the sense that you have everything you need to please God in your life.

It is your relationship, as the Bible says in 1 John 4:18:

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

You do not serve God because you are afraid of Him. You serve Him because you love Him. When you break that fellowship, when I break that fellowship, it has to be the most downheartening time in your life and my life. Not because of the consequences, but because the One that loved you. You understand the depth of the cross, the depth of God's love, the sacrifice for you. When you understand that and you disobey the Word of God, or we disobey the Word of God, it ought to break your heart. That is where you want your children to be. At two and three, four years old, they cannot grasp the concept of that in God. But they can grasp that in the concept of you as the parent. When you cultivate that in the concept of your parenting skills, in time, as they go through that transition, you will transfer that into their relationship with God. You will build it in just like when you are building a car, you put four tires on it before you drive it.

If all they ever see and understand is your uncontrolled anger, even if it is truth, but without grace, they will develop a warped sense of authority and accountability. Somebody asked me, and I have had several people ask me this, and it is a legitimate thing. It has come up in almost every parenting class, two times, one-on-one. Somebody would say to me, and it is a common thing, somebody would say to me, "When my child does something wrong, sometimes I am so angry at that child, and I am mad because of what they have done, that I really do not want to discipline at that particular point because of the fact that I feel I am too angry. So my idea is to wait till later till my anger subsides, and then deal with them." Of course, you know what? That is the worst thing you can do. You know what the problem with that is? And this is not a condemning statement to anybody because I know that is a common parenting issue. No. You know what the real problem is with that? The real problem is that you are not correctly thinking. In other words, you are not looking at your child the right way to begin with, or you are not seeing your child the way that they are. You have got to get the correct thinking. You have got to get the correct teaching. You have got to get the correct testimony. You have got to get those things working in your life that you see that crowd correctly, and then when you have correct thinking, it automatically produces the correct treatment that you have to give them. That is what it takes. It takes you understanding that your child is having a struggle and a problem. You can look at that as an inconvenience to you because you want to do something else right now, and it is going to mess up your plans. That is how you get angry. Or maybe you have dealt with it five or six, seven, eight times a day. Well, I can guarantee you, if you are dealing with the same problem five, six, seven, eight times a day, then your parenting skills, and of course this is what this class is all about, I guarantee you by the end of this, you are going to cut that down to one or two, and in time, cut it down to nothing. It is the fact that you do not have the whole thing

working for you yet. I understand those frustrating things, but at the same time, if all they ever see is your anger, even if it is right, even if it is truth, even if they are wrong, even if they broke the most expensive thing in your house, or got in your gun case and shot the dog, they will develop a warped sense of authority and accountability.

VII. The Child as the Object of Love and the Pastor's Model

Affection from the very beginning makes the whole concept of authority and accountability easier. We talked about this before in the discipline stage when they were at that young stage, what we call the autocratic stage, where you just basically cannot reason with them, so you tell them no. A child cannot really mean or grasp what it means to be the object of somebody's love. They really cannot. They love by association. They do not have the wherewithal to just understand the concept of them being the object of your love. They do not have any ability to reason. But as you move up through that discipline stage, into the relationship stage, and the fellowship stage, when they see and they begin to understand that they are the object of your love, they begin to return the favor, and they begin to love you as you are the object of their love. In time, you take that concept and you transfer it right to God.

The problem is, in most cases, something else or somebody else becomes the object of your child's delight and passion. That is really the issue. Parents fail this. When they fail this, there is always some other guy, some other girl, somebody else that is going to become the object of their love. In most cases, it will not be a good deal for them. The devil will make sure of that. But as you move through into these stages, you have got to understand that your child is constantly going through a transition in their lives. You know what? It is just the way you have to do it. It is the same way when you build a church. Some of you guys, some of you, one of these days are going to be out pastoring a church. You are going to do, basically, if you keep on going the way you are going, you are going to, someday, God is going to maybe take you out. You are going to start with maybe a small group of people. You are going to begin the process of building a church. You are going to find that you build a church the same way you raise your children. Most of you are going to be able to relate to this because many of you have come in here, other than the original twenty-some we started with four years ago. So this is a great example because you can relate to it.

You see, you come to church. Maybe the first time you come to church, and you like what you hear. I am the kind of guy that basically, and this has been a great plus in my life, I am the kind of guy that the first time you hear me, you either like me or you do not. I have never met somebody in my life and said, "Well, I kind of like Bob." They either said, "This is what I am looking for, and he has got it," or they say, "I do not want anything to do with that guy." I like that because one, it lets you know where I am at. You do not have to wonder where I am coming from. Some guys you hear preaching, you are not sure where they are coming from. They are all over the page. They say this, and then they say that, and they contradict this with that. You do not get that with me. I will put it right across the plate, waist high, and you can swing at it. You will know exactly where I am at. Obviously, most of you, I guess, like what you heard because you stayed.

You know what happened. We began to build a relationship. I am not the kind of pastor that you cannot have a relationship with. I had a guy tell me the other day that he went to talk to his pastor, and he got chewed out for it by another guy because in this church, "How dare you go and try to talk to the pastor one-on-one?" I cannot even get there. You know, that is the job of the pastor. So, we build a relationship. We play softball together, volleyball, you know. We go out and do things together. We got out on a canoe trip this week. We will have a great time, you know. You will find that we go out to the go-karts. I will ram you in the rear end just like the other guy will. Most of the things in my life are very simple. No quarter asked, no quarter given. You know what, we will go down there, and when they throw us out this time, I will be there with you. When we go down there, and in fact, last year we went down to the go-kart place, they said, "Thanks, don't come back next year. You guys are terrible." Absolutely terrible. We went last year, we went to eat, went down there. We always go to the go-karts, you know, and after we go canoeing, we fight those go-karts. Last year we happened to find one that just opened up that year. The cars were fast, the track was fast. You know, you go down there and some old dog car had been running for twenty years, you know, and they will not go anywhere. These were fast, man. I mean, they were fast. We, you know, you had to watch these guys. They are all crooked, every one of them. They will stand out there, and they all got little numbers on the back, and they will all stand out there, and they try to figure out which one goes the fastest. Then they try to beat you in line, see? That is how it works. But you see, when you are the pastor, you can sidestep all that. You just listen, they are so stupid, they will say, "Number 28 is the fastest." "No, yeah, number 28 is the fastest." So when we get up there, I just say, "Excuse me, boys, pastoral privilege. I will take 28." I mean, hey, you know what? There has got to be some perks in this job. I will tell you what, I am just like you. I like to have a good time. I will tell you what, I mean, we get down there and we go at it, man. I mean, we do.

You know, so we built a relationship. I kept telling you about learning the Bible. So you came over one-on-one, and we started going through the Bible. You started coming on Sunday morning, you showed up Thursday night. You said, "Wow, I got a great chance to learn the Bible." Then you heard me say, "You can come over to my house, and I will sit down with you and work through anything you want to learn in the Bible." Bang! So you started coming over. We spent time together in the book. You know what that does? It allows you to see if I am real or not. That is why most pastors will not spend time with you in the Bible. Because the Bible is the only book in the world when you start reading it, it starts reading you. If you want to find out where somebody is at, from my standpoint, just have you come over on a regular basis, and we will find out if you really want to learn the Bible or not. If you want to find out how real I am, you just come over and spend an hour a week with me, and you will find out if I am who I claim to be or if I am not. Because that Bible cuts it all out. That Bible lays everything bare. You cannot hide in the book. You can hide around the book, but you cannot hide in the book. That is a lamp unto my feet, light unto my path. That is a laser beam. That is a searchlight. It searches everything out, every crack and every crevice. You can fake Christianity. You can fake being a pastor. You can fake being a Christian outside that book. When you get into the book, it is all laid bare. That is it. That is the great thing about it.

So we get into the Bible. You see my heart. I see yours, and God knits us together. We go through some fires together. We go through some tough times. We develop through that tough time a trust. You get to see me with my guard down. I get to see you with your guard down. We bond around the Word of God for the work of ministry is conceived, and off we go. Once we get to that point in life, you, as your pastor, will allow me to get into this pulpit and say some hard things, some really hard things. I think last week was one of the probably the hardest messages that I preached in a long time. You allow me to do that. You allowed me to get into the pulpit and say some things that very frankly, they need to be said. Most pastors will not say them because they do not want to lose you because you are income. Well, you can stick your income as far as I am concerned. If you do not like the way I said that, that is why we designed this building with two doors, and you can go out either one of them. I am not interested in what you give to this church money-wise. I do not care. It does not impress me a bit. What impresses me is that you want to love a book and love a God of that book. You want to get into a foxhole with me, and you want to take these last days and take a stand for Him. So when we get there, He looks at us, gives us a salute, and simply says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." That is all I am interested in. That is all I care about. You have got to go through people to find the right kind of people that will do that.

Because you know me, you allow me to stand up here and say some things to you that need to be said that most pastors are afraid to say. The reason why they are afraid to say it is they do not want to lose you. I do not want to lose you either. But the bottom line is this: if it comes down between you and the book, there are some things you do not have to pray about. Because I have learned through almost forty years in this book that this thing here is safe. Where you will turn your back on me, or I may turn my back on you in your life, this book never will. Love it more than you love anything. Love it more than you love me. Love it more than I love you. Let the love that you have for me and the love I have for you be through this book, not around this book. That is what you have got to do. When you see and understand, you will know that no matter what I say, you will know that I am never going to hurt you. I will never take sides in any issue against you. You can come to me with whatever problem you have. Whatever you have done, whatever you are into, I cannot care less as long as you want to fix it. I love you unconditionally. I want to help you unconditionally. Because if you have got a desire to serve God here, then I have got a desire to help you do that.

I do not claim to know all of the Bible. I put myself way out of touch. There are a lot of people that know the Bible better than I do, and I do not ever make any apology about that. But I will tell you two things that I am absolutely sure of, and this is absolutely true. First of all, there is not another pastor in the world that loves his people more than I love you. I will stand on that. You say, "Well, you do not know." I do not care who they are. I just know me. I know my job, and I know I love you. I will tell you something else. There is not anybody in the whole wide world that loves, I do not know it, but there is not anybody in the world that loves this book more than I do. You say, "Now, how can you say that?" Because the answer is, when God wrote it, He did not write it to you anyhow. He wrote it to me. He did not write it to you. You do not have a Bible. When He wrote it, He says, "I am writing this for Bob Xander." Now, some of you out there will say, "Well, you know what, Bob, that is wrong. He wrote that for me, not you." And I said,

"Okay, praise the Lord. I cannot claim that for you. I can only claim it for me." Now, I know God wrote the Bible to everybody, but as far as I am concerned, how I study it, how I read it, I look at it this way: the God of heaven, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God that made the universe, the God that made the planets, the God that made the galaxy, the God that made everything, the God that has got a plan for eternity, and He is going to go out into eternity, and He carved a little six thousand years of time in eternity, the God that did all of that, He did that for only one person on this planet: me. I am sorry for you today. I am sorry that He did not do that for you. Now, some of you should stand up and say, "Bob, I am sorry He did not do it for you because you got it wrong. He did it for me." And I say, "No, He did not." You say, "Yes, He did." I say, "Mikey, you are nuts. He did it for me, not for you." Mikey says, "You are nuts. He did it for me." I will say, "Well, I will take you outside and show you who He did it for. Let us go." It is real tough when you know I have got to finish this message. You will see how smart you are afterwards. I am bad, I am bad. I said, "I ain't afraid of you. I know kung fu." I said, "I ain't afraid of you. I know kerchink." He says, "What is kerchink?" I said, "Nor is my 45 makes when I walk and load one into your head." Oh, I love some of those things I say.

Anyway, you want to have that attitude. It ought to be your book. Absolutely yours. You ought to look at that book and you say, "You know what? God wrote it to me personally. He made all that out of eternity for me personally." When everybody in this room claims that, we are going to have a knockdown, drag-out, Pier 6 drunken brawl because everybody is going to take the position, "No, it is mine. It is mine. It is mine." Truth of the matter is, He wrote it for everybody. But most of God's people never take the time to claim it like that. I love it. I am telling you, I do not always do what is right. I always obey it. I do not always, I know I do not even pretend that I get up in the morning and just walk with God all day long, but I am telling you, I love it. I know what it is. So you take what I give you. You take when I stand in here and say some hard things because you know that deep down inside, I love you. I am not going to hurt you, and because of the relationship of the Word of God, that you go past the human man, past the human relationship, and it is based on spiritual things with the Word of God and our relationship with God. Not only do you take it, but you get to the point like Solomon said in Proverbs 27:7, that you even enjoy it.

Proverbs 27:7

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

He said in Proverbs 27:7, "The full soul loatheth the honeycomb." The full soul, that means you are filled up inside with everything else. The full soul, you loathe the honeycomb. Honeycomb in the Bible is the Bible. You ever see a honeycomb? A honeycomb is filled with honey. But did you ever see how it is filled with honey? A honeycomb will have twenty thousand little chambers, each one of them having honey in it. You do not go to a honeycomb and just dip down inside and dip out the honey. You have got to get the honey out of every single little compartment in that honeycomb. If it is big, there could be ten thousand little compartments with honey. That is the way this book is. You cannot just reach down and dig it all at one time. You have got to get the honey out one little chamber at a time. But whoa, when you get it. But do you see, "the full soul loatheth the honeycomb," but the Bible says, "but to the hungry soul." Yes, yes, yes, to the

hungry soul, to the soul that says, "I love God. I want that book. I want God. I do not care what it costs. I do not care what I have got to change. I do not care what I get about. I want it." To the hungry soul, "every bitter thing is sweet." Oh, that is what I am talking about. I am talking about the hard things in this Bible becoming the honey in your heart and your soul. Why? Because you love God. You do not want to disobey. You do not want to disappoint Him. So when He rebukes you, you love it. Just like when you get the good stuff you like to hear.

VIII. The Honeycomb of God's Word and Parental Stewardship

The same way with your kids, ladies and gentlemen. If you train and teach them to see and understand your accountability and authority to them through your love and affection by grace. If you make them feel like they are the only one in your world. If you have got two sons, and one of them is a year older than the other one, here is what you do: you say, "You know what? You are my favorite, favorite, favorite. You are my favorite six-year-old. And you, you are my absolute favorite five-year-old." If you have got twins, then it is, "You are my absolute favorite first-born, and you are my absolute favorite second-born." Make them feel like they are the only thing in your life. Make them the object of your love and affection, and in time, through association and through relationship and through fellowship, you will become the object of their affection. They will want to please you and do what is right, not just because there are consequences, but they will understand that they will do it because they never want to disappoint their father or their mother. They will do it because the farthest thing from their mind is breaking your heart. They will do it because the farthest thing in their reasoning power is to see your heart broken because they have not done what is right. In time, you will transfer that to God, that they will walk with God and love God not because they fear the consequences, not because they are going to serve God out of fear or serve God for reward, but because they are going to serve Him because they love Him. The only thing that will take precedence over your love and relationship and fellowship with them is their love and relationship and fellowship with God, and that is the way it should be.

Your children, as I said, are in a constant stage of transition through the discipline, the relationship, the fellowship, the responsibility. Caring words, loving action, a wholesome home of mom and dad, everybody loving everybody, showing a deep affection for each other, working through it. I will tell you, and I am done when I give you this. Here is another verse for your three by five cards. This is mistranslated in every version of the Bible outside of King James 1611 Authorized Version. Psalm 127:3. Another great verse for your three by five cards. It says:

Psalms 127:3

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Every new translation on the market today translates it this way: "It says that low children are the heritage from the Lord." They are not your heritage. You have children in your life. They are not a heritage to you from the Lord. They are a heritage *of* the Lord. They are to be a continuation of what God started in your life. When the Bible says, "He hath begun a good work in you and

will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," that includes your children. That includes you building into their lives. They are not a heritage from the Lord. They are a heritage *of* the Lord, that unbroken chain of ministry that flows through your family. Look what it says: "The fruit of the womb is his reward." That is Christ. They are the Lord's reward. They are not yours.

You know, most parents, and I do not, it is not taught anymore today. When a pastor gets up in the pulpit and starts to talk about stewardship, he wants your wallet. He wants to put a double hammer lock on you to get money out of you. So he is going to beat you up about stewardship, make you feel like a dead dog in the sun, and then try to squeeze every dime he can out of you because he wants to tell you that being a good steward is about you giving all your money and giving money and do this and do that. I am not saying there is not a stewardship for your finances. But if you just stop there, you are a crook. I guess I did answer that case for most cases, did I not? Let me tell you something. There is a stewardship of your finances. But there is also a stewardship of your time. When you go over to 1 Corinthians 4:1, you will find it is a pastor hardly in the city that understands this. You will find that there is a stewardship of the mysteries of God, and you could not give me ten preachers in this town that understood what the mysteries of God are in the Bible. You could not give me many Christians on planet Earth that understand that, yet the Bible says, "My God, the Bible says we are to be stewards of that."

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

If you have been saved five, ten, fifteen years, and you cannot open up that Bible and lay out the mysteries that you are to be stewards of, no wonder God cannot trust you. He entrusted with you some great treasures in that book that you and I are to be stewards of, and then He says that, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." Let me tell you something, in parenting, it is the greatest, as far as I am concerned, put everything else aside, in parenting, understanding Psalm 127:3, what I have given you today in the last couple of weeks as parents. They are not your kids. They are His heritage for His ministry, for His reward. You and I are just stewards of them. We are stewards. They are not your children. God has made you stewardship of His children. They are for His reward. They are for His heritage, not yours. Therefore, what He wants to do in that unbroken chain of God's ministry and God changing the world through men and women who believe in God and take that Bible, those kids are not yours. You just have stewardship of them to continue on God's heritage.

At the judgment seat of Christ, what they, what we have all done, you and your kids and their kids, go down through the whole scheme of things. It will become Christ's reward. Revelation 4:10-11, that great verse that shows us that at the end it all goes back to Him anyhow.

Revelation 4:10-11

The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O

Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

He says, "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." You know what that is? That is at the judgment seat of Christ after you and your family, they all get the rewards, and we have what we have, and we have got the rewards now because you stayed faithful down here, and you got into the Bible, you gave your life to God. Oh, you got a millennial inheritance, but there are two different things in that Bible. There is the rewards and there is the inheritance. The inheritance deals with the Millennium, reward deals with what you get at the judgment seat of Christ. At that day, when you stand there, you take as a family, as a generation after generation of a family, you take those rewards, and then you lay them, cast them at His feet. You know why? Because it all goes back to Him anyhow.

Kids are fun, are they not? Grandkids are really fun. The difference between grandkids and kids is when you have your grandkids and having fun, when you do not have them fun, you can send them home. We enjoy our kids. You should. You say, "We got married, and we wanted to have kids because we wanted to have family. We wanted to have little kids running around. We want to enjoy them. We wanted to have a family home." That is everything about that is okay. Just do not forget the One that gave you the ability to procreate and create those children told you just now that they are for His pleasure, not just yours. You better do what is right with them because they are His heritage, not yours. In exercising authority and accountability, the truth side, you have to bring in grace, and the first area of grace that you bring in is affection. You help build those kids into their lives that they know you, they are the object of your love, that they would rather do what is right simply because they do not want to lose what they have. The home is everything. Mom and dad are everything. The warmth, the fun, the enjoyment, the laughter, the good times, the just being together, and the times that we have are more important to them. As they build down through that, you can build into their lives that they will become everything that God wants them to be.

Next week, we will look at the next one as we move right through here. Remember, there will be no Bible study Thursday night, and also please remember, as soon as we are done here, immediately, I want everybody on the canoe trip going up there, and then everybody that is after that, that is in Barb's meeting, can go to her. Let us ask God to bless you this morning and thank you for being here. Hope you got a blessing out of it. If you are a visitor here this morning and you would like to have a copy of today's thing, just walk over there, and Barb, you take care of it over there, or whoever, and just make sure that they get one this morning. Put them on the top of the list, and thank you for being here. Let us pray.

Lord, we do thank You and praise You for all that You do for us. Help us to understand our tremendous, tremendous responsibility in our children, and help us to be everything to them that we need to be. Help us as parents. Help us to see that building a family is like building a church. Help these young men see that someday down the line they are going to be faced with building a

church, and when everybody out there in the world tells you this is the way to do it, you go back to the basics and you do it the same way you built your family. The reason why most men cannot build a church is because most men have not built their families where they need to. That is the model. We thank You and praise You for all that You do now. In Jesus' name, for His sake, we ask it. Amen.