

Proverbs 11:1

Sunday 1/25/2015

That was great, guys. Now I know why you wanted me to be down there. I loved it. That was absolutely great. Well, if you have your Bibles today, we are in Proverbs 11:1. We have been camping here for a couple of weeks, and I think probably this has been one of the premier series that we have ever done, not necessarily because I am teaching it, but because of what the content of it is.

This church strives to be here to help you be better. That is our job. Many churches lose that in everything they try to do. They think building great things is what it needs to be. I am not arguing or fighting with anybody, but I know from my own time in the ministry and from people who invested their life in me that the ministry is people. We exist for one reason: that is to help you be better. We do not do anybody any good if we build the greatest buildings on the planet if God's people are not getting what they need to help them be better.

Some of you are single. Some of you are married. Some of you are engaged. Some of you are single parents. Some of you are young people, young couples. Some of you are older couples. We all have needs, and the Word of God is what will supply those needs to you. That is what this church, really any church, should be about.

Today we are going to look at the final phase of having a biblical balance. Even though it is the final phase, we will still be here for several more weeks because there are some things here that I want to take some time with and talk about. As just a short review, in case you have not been here for the last couple of times we have talked about this, we have looked at Proverbs 11:1. We have looked at three fundamental balances so far that I think it is vital that we as Christians understand.

The first one was God and how He is such a balanced being, and then the Bible that He gave us and how the Bible is such a balanced book. I took you through those and showed you how that all worked. Then the second week, we put our own church under the microscope. As I have said many, many times, if you are afraid to look at your own church in light of the Word of God and scrutinize it, then probably something is wrong with it. So we looked at our own church and our own ministry. Is it based on the Bible? Is it run on biblical principles, or is it not?

Last week, we began to talk about your own relationship with God and His Word. Today, I want to look at a fourth one, or at least begin to, and getting on a personal level in your relationship with God as it relates to all that is involved in your life. The first three balances will begin to dovetail, and you will see as we talk about the fourth one today, you will see how they all begin to balance and inject themselves to form a perfect balance.

I. The Perfect Storm Analogy

I like movies, good movies, and one of my favorite movies. I like movies that are based on true events, by the way. We are going to go see American Sniper tonight. I think that is a great, I love

movies that have a sense of truth to them of what happened. By the way, you better get there early. Six o'clock, it is going to be packed out, starts at six.

But anyway, The Perfect Storm. To me, that is a great movie. Probably many of you have seen it, some of you have not. The Perfect Storm is about a true story of an event that happened back in the late 1980s. It took place up in Gloucester, Massachusetts. If you have never been to Gloucester, Massachusetts, oh boy, it is a postcard place of the old seafaring days. It is absolutely incredible. It is a great little town.

This story dealt with a boat by the name of the Andrea Gale, which was a fishing boat, a tuna boat, that went out with many other boats. They made their living by catching tuna and swordfish and all of that, and then bringing it back and selling it. The boat went out on a day and it went right into the worst storm in 200 years in the New England area. It was called a Perfect Storm. The reason why it was called a Perfect Storm is because four major storms converged from four different angles and all came together at a center point of about a hundred-mile radius and literally tore the New England coast and the Grand Banks and all that area there. That little boat, the Andrea Gale, was caught right in the middle of it.

They never found out what happened to the Andrea Gale. They take you through the movie. Obviously, this is where Hollywood takes over and gives some reason to the events of what happened to them. But nobody really knows, other than the fact that that great storm swallowed them up. I have always looked at that and thought about that Perfect Storm concept of four major storms converging on one area that brought about that Perfect Storm. I always looked at it in a biblical way, because the same thing happens when you put the Bible into your life. When you get the four major sections of a balanced Bible in your life converging on your life from four different areas, it will produce the perfect balance in your life.

Just as the Perfect Storm tore apart New England, devastated the shipping industry, the perfect balance in your life, if you ever get it, will bring you to the point where you will tear this world apart for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an incredible concept when you look at it and understand it. Just as the Perfect Storm did damage in New England, your job and my job as a church for the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to do some damage in this whole world for the cause of Christ. There are some things we are to preach. There are some things we are to say. There are some things that we are trying to get done.

II. The Three-Fold Structure of Balance

When we talk about a balance, the key ingredient of a balance is one concept: the concept of structure, a biblical structure in your life that allows the perfect balance to form in your life exactly the way God intended it to. Three things form the balance of that structure. You have heard me say what I am about to say many, many times, but there are new people here, and the price of learning anyhow is repetition.

When Christ went back to heaven, He replaced Himself with three things:

1. The Holy Spirit of God. In Acts chapter one, the great day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit of God came and indwelt men for the very first time.
2. The Word of God. The Word of God by 90 A.D. John is on the Isle of Patmos and he writes the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, around 90 A.D. that completes the Bible, and now the Bible has been given to man in its completeness.
3. The New Testament local church. God gave us the Holy Spirit of God, He gave us the Word of God, and then by giving us the Apostle Paul and his commission in Acts chapter 9 and from then on out, the third part of that structure that He gave us was the New Testament local church.

I have always looked at it that the structure, the three-fold balance of a structure in my life, simply runs like this: The Holy Spirit of God is my guide. The Bible says that He leads and guides me into all truth. The Word of God is the road map of my life. The Holy Spirit of God takes this book and shows me exactly where He wants me to go and what He wants me to do. But the local church becomes my vehicle by which I get there. That forms that balance of structure in our lives.

A couple of weeks ago, I told you that the number three in the Bible always completes something and it forms the balance in our life. If I would take a magic marker and I put a line across this wall here, a black line, there would be three parts to that line. The line would have a length, the line would have a width, and if you put a microscope on it, it would have a depth; it would have three dimensions to it. You know that if you take any one of those three aspects away, you cannot have a line. The line has to have three parts, and I say that as an illustration that you have to have the three-fold structure working in your life to have a balance, or you do not have a balance.

We are all human and we are all famous for liking to have one or two of them. I have taught people that love God and talk about, "Oh, the Holy Spirit of God is great. Yeah, I got a Bible," but they never go to church. Yet I have found people who go to church every Sunday but they do not have anything they believe about the Bible. We as human beings are famous for having one, for shaking two, or having two, and for shaking one. But you know what? To have the right balance and the right structure, you have to have all three. When it comes to a balance or a structure, it is all three or nothing. It is as simple as that.

Our verse today, for the last couple of weeks also, is Proverbs 11:1.

Proverbs 11:1

A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.

Father, we thank You so much for what we have seen today and what we have heard today and all that You have blessed us with, and the singing and the music and just the good people that are here today and the warm feeling of fellowship and love that exists here for one another. Help us, Father, today to move into this lesson and to help us leave today understanding some great things that we need to see. We will give You all the honor and the praise in Jesus' name and sake we ask it.

When you get the first three down that we have already talked about, you are going to be doing pretty good in your life. There is a process to get there. Then when you add this fourth one into your life, now you have the basis of a foundation that you are going to build something on the rest of your life. As I said, this is all part of a biblical growth process. We start people out here when they get saved with Discipleship One. That gives you the basics and you get the chance to just sit there and listen. But then we move into another level where you get to actually do the work in the Bible and you learn a little more on another level.

Then obviously we have Thursday night Bible study where you can ask any question you want to ask. We have Sunday morning where we basically preach and teach the Word of God. We have special teaching times all the time, sometimes on New Year's Eve, sometimes we just call a special time and do something special like we have done on Bible study. You always have the one-on-one time with me. I have a policy in my life, I have always had it, that you can spend an hour a week with me coming over and you have got questions in the Bible or you want to do a study in the Bible and you want to lay something out in the Bible and bring it over to me. We do that all the time. That is how you do it. So on all spiritual levels, we do that so you can continue to grow and get better at what God has called you to do by perfecting the balance. Because if you do not have a balance in your life, you are going to be out of balance. It is just that simple.

Your balance forms around three key principles in the Bible. We have talked about these before, maybe not in the context that we are going to put it in today, but we are kind of pulling a lot of things together here. Once you get these in your life, your life will basically be a changed life because you will look at things differently. When you get these things down, you begin to get, as the book of Proverbs says, a balance in your life of knowledge, a balance in your life of wisdom, and a balance in your life of understanding.

When you get that, you have the ability through this perfect balance to see, first of all, ourselves, other people, your situation that you may be in or a situation that you find coming your way, your issues in life, your wife, your husband, your children, your job, everything. Now you begin to see it in a perfect balance of God's understanding. You no longer have to look at it and wonder what it is. Now you have the ability to see it for what it is. Believe me, it makes life and its issues a lot less complicated.

III. The Biblical Balance of the Christian Family

Today I want to talk about what I think is a vital issue in any church, but especially in ours. I have laid this, what I am about to talk to you about this morning, I have laid it out around nine vital, or I consider them vital concepts or principles. I will tell you when I hit them so you remember to write them down or get it. If you do not get anything else out of what I say, I ask God to help you go home with these nine concepts, but I hope you get more than that out of it.

Today I want to talk about the biblical balance of the Christian family. Last Tuesday night, President Obama gave a State of the Nation address, or they call it the State of the Union. I guess you could say today that I want to give you a State of the Family address based on the Bible. By

the way, they are both in shambles, the nation and the family today for most cases. But I want to show you a biblical concept of a biblical family having a balance.

Our church is very unique. It really is. It is very unique because of the fact that if you just look around you, all of the young people that we have. Most churches today are dinosaur graveyards. They are going to die by attrition. No young people in it, no young couples in it. You have people who are all in their 80s or their 70s or their 90s who have been there forever. The pastor does not have any motivation or understand, bless his heart, maybe how to breathe life back into it. I looked at that and I think to myself, you know, God has got something going on here that is very unique because 85% of our church is probably 40 and under. You can look around. It is a very young church, young in the sense of young people.

I understand the process. I thank God for the older folks. I think the older folks in any church are a stabilizing factor. I like young couples coming into our church all the time, but I also like older couples coming in all the time that have a good stability because they are the ones that really help the younger ones come along and it is a vital process. But there again, you have to keep it in balance. You do not want all young and no old, and you do not want all old and no young. You have to find a balance in there because the lifeblood of any church will be the young families, the young couples, the young singles. But that alone will not do it. You can have all the young couples, all the young families, but if they do not get a balance in their family from the Bible, it is never going to go anywhere.

I am going to spend quite a bit of time on this because I want you to get at least an understanding. Understanding your family from a biblical perspective. Just having kids does not make you a father or a mother. Any two people can go find a husband or a wife or find a girl or a guy and have kids. That does not make you a mom or a dad or a husband or a wife. What makes a husband and wife, what makes a father and a mother, is a couple that takes responsibility for the kids that they have, understanding that there are some things that those kids need.

As it appears, the complete family will be three things. We look at a family and we think, okay, it is a father and it is a mother and a child or children. So now they are complete. But when you look at it from the Bible standpoint, the Bible says in Ephesians chapter five, when the husband and wife get married, the two, they become one. So if you just have a mom and a dad, they are now one, and add a child to it, you are still incomplete. So to make the family complete, here is what you have to have in getting that balance in your family:

4. The mom and the dad become one. There is your first component.
5. You have a child or children. There is your second component.
6. The third component has to be the Word of God. You have to put that in your family.

So a perfectly balanced family will be a father and a mother (they are one), a child or children, and then the Word of God. Then it is within the biblical structure of the New Testament: Holy Spirit, Word of God, New Testament local church. We know from just what we know about the Bible, the father is the spiritual leader of the home. The mother is the support base for the family. They work together as a team, very clear. But the Word of God has to be the standard by which

for the family, through the father, obviously, and the mother working together. The Word of God becomes the standard.

Now let me give you another key component that must be here in your family if you are going to have a biblical balance and a biblical concept. Turn over to Proverbs 29:17-18. This is where we really get into the nitty-gritty of it. A family to be balanced not only has to have the structure, a family to be balanced not only has to have the things that we have talked about so far, but a family to be balanced has to have a vision.

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.

For time and eternity, I have heard that verse is always used in relationship to a church and a church needs to have a vision, and that is absolutely true. I agree 100%. God's people always need to have a vision of what God is doing and what He wants them to do. If they do not, then they die spiritually. I know that you do not get to see things maybe from my perspective because as a pastor I interact with other pastors or see things on a larger scale sometime, but do you realize that churches across this country are closing their doors? They are absolutely folding up the doors.

I had a call from a friend of mine last week that he says, "You know, I am just letting you know that my pastor called me the other day just a couple hours ago and this is his last Sunday. He is folding it up and he is not going to do it. He cannot do it anymore and he is just going to shut the church down." I asked him, we talked about it, and he says he does not know what to do. He told me, he confided in me, "I do not know what to do. I do not know what to do for these people. I do not know how to get them where..." The bottom line is churches fail when they do not have a vision.

I want to tell you something. The vision has to start with the pastor. So last week I went out and bought a 65-inch vision. I can see clearly now. He has to have the vision. He has to be the one. If he does not have the vision, then the church is not ever going to get the vision. All this is true for a church. It has to have a vision, but did you see the context of that passage I just read you? Look at Proverbs 29:17. I know it fits for a church and I have used it many, many times and it is a true principle. But look at the context of Proverbs 29:17.

Proverbs 29:17

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. The idea of a vision has to do with not just a church. It has to do with your family. It has to do with your children, the parents, the mom and the dad, the mother. They need to provide a vision for their children of what God is doing and what He is going to do and how we are going to expect all to get there. You need to use the guide, the Holy Spirit of God, the roadmap, the Word of God, and the vehicle, the local church, to get your family there.

Mom and dad set the structure of how the family is going to run, not the kids. I do not know how many times today I have seen where literally the children run the family. They tell the parents what they are going to do, when they are going to do it, and the parents seemingly are helpless. If the parents try to lift a hand or say, "You cannot do that," then they threaten them. I have had parents say, "Well, I threatened to spank my child and my child said, 'See, but if I did, they were going to turn me into the family service at a school and I would go to jail.'" Now, you know what I would do? I would give that child a whipping and I would say, "You go ahead and tell them because if that is the bottom line and you would rather be with the family services down there than in your home, then that is where you need to be."

But you know how a child gets to that point in their life? Parents did not provide any vision. They do not see the family structure of what it is. So now the kids, they do not see their role in it. They do not see their part in it. They do not see how that is a team together to accomplish something for God. They do not understand. Mom and dad set the structure. The children do not have any say in how the family is going to go. It is something that you have to do.

Parents who provide no vision for their children will lose them just as a pastor who has no vision for his church will lose his congregation because both the family and the church are dependent on a vision.

We have a church here and this church is made up of families. I do not know if you know or not, but the family unit has always been one of the key concepts of anything, even in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, but certainly in the New Testament church. The concept of a family is absolutely incredible. The bottom line is for a mom and a dad, your family is your first church. Just as I as the pastor have to keep a vision before you, I lay the vision out of what this church is. If I just got up here and talked about sushi stuff and nice flowery stuff and never gave you any direction, we would just be a bunch of flower children just hanging out here just having a good time in life, but no direction. If God's people need anything in life, it is a vision that is clear of where they are going and what they need to try to accomplish. If anything that a family needs is that vision of where they are going and what they are trying to accomplish.

IV. The Balance of a Vision

When you have a vision, there needs to be a balance in that vision. That balance is found in the book of Habakkuk. Let us go over there now. Habakkuk 2:1-3. Here is the balance on a vision. Everything has a balance. When you get the balance in your family, then you go through life balancing the balance, tweaking the balance, but everything has to have that biblical balance. When you use the Bible as your final authority, it becomes pretty easy to put it all together.

Habakkuk chapter two. Yes, that is in the Old Testament. I used to say it is right next to the book of Hezekiah, but I have had too many people spend all week then trying to find Hezekiah and calling me all week on it when there is no Hezekiah in the Bible.

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 reprov'd.

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.

In this passage, there are three parts to the biblical vision that I want to talk about today. I want to spend the remainder of our time talking about this and showing you how this gets a perfect balance in your life. I want to talk about them today and I want to give you the key components.

1.) First of all, I want you to look at Habakkuk 2:1.

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 reprov'd.

As parents, you need to know where your children are at. You need to know what is in their life and what they are into in life. You need to know who their friends are at school. You need to know what internet access they have and what they are on. You need to monitor what they do on MySpace, Flash Face, or whatever those other goofy places are called. You need to understand and know who they spend time with.

This church is on my watch, and someday I will give an account at the judgment seat of Christ for my watch. The Bible says that as a pastor, you need to look well-nigh to your herds and understand where your church is so you can better help them. I understand that, but your children are on your watch. Just as I am going to give an account someday for my watch with this church, you will surely give an account someday for your watch with your kids.

Any pastor who makes any decision in church about anything at all, some people will like it and some people will not. I have never been in a church where anybody was 100% happy with any decision that was made. But when a vision is clear and you have to get somewhere to do what you have to do, you have to make decisions. You know when you are making it that you are not going to make everybody happy. That is true in a church, but my friend, it is also true in your family. You are going to have to make some choices and some decisions that are not going to make your children happy. They are not going to like it, but that is okay. See, one little kid already said amen back there. He is with me on it, but that is okay. You are responsible. It is on your watch.

I will tell you a second thing. There is no perfect parent. I am certainly not a perfect parent. There are no perfect parents. It is a thing where I have seen parents, and this is what he says here. He says, "I am going to stand upon my tower and I am going to watch and I will watch to see what He will say unto me, God to me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd." You are going to make some mistakes as a parent. The problem with parents is they cannot admit their mistakes when they make them. That is a dangerous situation. A parent who just simply says,

"Well, I do not make any mistakes," or "If I do, do not worry about it. Just do what I tell you to do." That does not work.

I have seen parents put their child in a situation that that parent never should have put their child in. They elect something in their life or do something in their life that they never should have done because they were putting their child in a no-win situation. Then when the child failed, the parent wants to punish the child when they are the ones that put the child in the situation they did not have a chance in the first place. Parents have to realize that sometimes we do not handle everything right the way we should. Just as a pastor, when I blow it, I will stand up here and tell you I blow it, and you have to humble yourself before whoever you are dealing with. Parents have to learn that with their children because it is a situation where you can blame your kids, but when they screw up, if it is a situation that we allowed in their life when we should not have, then how do we get upset with them? A teaching tool for your children, one of the greatest tools you can use, is when you are wrong, let them know you are wrong.

What I am about to show you is a balance that has to be in your family as to God and the Word of God and getting those kids through the issues that they are going to face, and they are all going to face issues. This is Kids Sunday, last Sunday of the month, and I am glad all the young kids are in here today because kids, I want you to hear what I have to say because I am going to talk about your parents, but I am also going to talk about you. Your parents have a responsibility to do what is right with the Word of God, but I want to tell you, you as kids have a responsibility to do what is right with the Word of God because it is a team effort. A family should be a ministering unit together. It should be a team, and mom and dad are going to have to make some hard calls in your life, but you know what? As you get to be an adult and you grow up, God is going to have to make some hard calls in your life. You have to learn and understand that your mom and dad have to submit themselves to a higher authority, and you have to submit yourself to a higher authority. That is how it works. That is how it works.

You cannot change your children without changing yourself.

Some parents just will not do that, and the kids will always pay the price.

Psalms 127:4

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

Just as a mighty man can take a bow and arrow and put three arrows through that clock back there on the wall, or he can shoot a deer running, or he can put it wherever he wants to go. You, as parents, and I, as parents, we launch our children in life in the direction that they are going to go.

2.) Habakkuk 2:2 says this: "First of all, it says, write the vision. This is our first component."

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.

Your children need to clearly understand where your house stands and where your family is going. Joshua was a great example of this, in Joshua 24:15.

Joshua 24:15

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

That needs to be the hallmark of every family, but just saying it does not make it happen. You have to set the guidelines of a biblical vision for your family. The parents in the early years go to work and lay the vision of who we are as a family and where we are going. You write the vision for them. They will never figure it out on their own. They will never figure it out just taken to the church in Sunday school. They figure it out when you sit down and you explain to them, "This is who we are, this is who your mom is, this is who I am, and this is who you are going to be, and we together are going to be a family, and this is what our family is going to do." Mom and dad, it is your house, just like this church is my church as far as responsibility for it on a watch. You set the goals, you set the rules, you set the parameters, you set the guidelines, but on a biblical foundation and a vision.

Most kids have absolutely no idea where their parents stand.

They go to church all the time, they go to Bible study, but they have absolutely no idea where their parents really stand because the parents do not really know and understand where they are standing. They are in church every Sunday. Listen, going to church does not give you the vision. The church is only, as I said, the vehicle that gets you to realize all of that vision that God gave you and to help you. We have a great elementary department. Barb does a tremendous job in Olivia. We have a high school class that is great, a junior high group that is taken care of. Those people are not, but those people as good as they are, they are not responsible for giving your child a vision. That is not their job. Their job is to, and they are responsible for helping your child achieve the goals and the priorities that you as parents, by giving them a vision, have set down. We are here to support what you are doing, not to take over and do it for you.

Second thing, he said, "write the vision." Then he says, "make it plain upon the tables." Now you make it plain to them in life because they see it in you. That is how it works.

Parents are the role model in their children's lives for the vision.

All my life I have heard about having good role models. Many times famous people, kids look up to them, and sometimes they are good role models and sometimes they are not. Sometimes sports figures, they are good role models and then sometimes they are not. But the thing you have got to realize is parents do not give their child a vision. I want you to hear me on this. Parents do not give their child a vision. Parents are the role model in their children's lives for the vision. They have to see it in us. They have to see it in us first.

He says, "make it plain upon the tables." I love that. That is the kitchen table, the supper table. That is the table where you sit around in fellowship. They see it in you around the table talking

about what God did this week or what God is going to do or we are praying for so and so. "Oh wow, that was a great Bible study the other night. Oh wow, we had a great time over here." If they do not hear that, then they are going to hear mom and dad complain about everything they do not like in the church. That is the way it works. He said, "write it upon the tables." In the first aspect, that is a literal table. In the second aspect of tables in the Bible, the tables of your heart, putting the vision in your children's heart, putting that vision and giving them a vision for what they see and where it is going to go.

The vision in your family becomes the base for all issues that you will deal with them in life. It becomes a point of reference. I cannot tell you how absolutely vital in your family a point of reference is. When something goes wrong and you have to deal with something, you simply take them back to that point of reference. "You know what, Johnny, this is God's house and we are God's family. We love you and we want the best for you. We work hard and do everything we can to make you the best. We realize little Johnny that someday we are going to give an account for you and we are going to do everything we can. But I want you to understand what you are into and where you are going is non-negotiable. We are not going to put up with it. We are not going to tolerate it. This is God's house. We are God's family. We are going to stand by the Word of God. Just as your mom and dad someday are going to be accountable to the Word of God for how we train you, you, the children, will be accountable someday to the Word of God too. So we are going to do our part, but we are going to make sure right now that you do your part."

It will never be plain in their life if it is not clear and plain in our own lives first. A couple of years ago, as the church got to a certain level, I wanted to take a group of people, and it was all voluntary. I did not go and pick some and not others. Everybody had the opportunity. I wanted to start something which I call the People Ministry, and a People Ministry was a process by which I took a group of people that were at a certain level. I wanted to take them well beyond and teach them every aspect of dealing with people and talk a systematic trust process of going through and showing you the cause and the effect of every problem a person gets into in life and showing you how to get the Word of God. I told them up front that it was going to require more from them. I was going to hold them more accountable. I laid it all out. You can get the tape back there and listen to it if you want. I mean, I told it, and you know what else I did? I made every one of them sign a contract. I listed on that contract everything that I expected of them, and they kept that contract, gave them a week to decide if that is what they want to do. They signed it and brought it back to me.

You know why I did that? Because I know how it goes. Everybody wants to be in it when it starts. "Oh, work with people. Oh, learn the great things of the Bible. Oh yeah, I mean, I am in," until you have to start the daily drudgery of being part of it. When they dropped the ball, when they did not do what they were told, they would be held accountable for. I know how it happens. You ever have to deal with your kids and your kids when you start talking to them? "Well, I was not sure. I did not hear exactly what you said." Well, now you are caught in the middle because maybe they did. Maybe they did not. You, being the loving parent that we all are, you do not want to whip them if they really did not hear. Maybe you did not make it clear. See, they are a lot smarter than we are. They will play that card. "I did not hear you say that. Well, I

misunderstood." I mean, how do you whip me for misunderstanding? See how it works. So I know how they do it. And I know how you do it. So I got a piece of paper that every time I had a problem and I had to sit down with somebody, I just pull out their contract. It has got their signature on it. And I asked him, "Is this your signature?" "Yes, it is." "Delano did not forge it?" "No, he did not forge it." "No, it is your signature?" "Yeah." "Then what part of this did you understand when you signed it?" Point of reference.

When you have a point of reference in your child's life that you sit down and declare what the vision is going to be, whatever happens, you will always come back to that point. Maybe not as harshly as I just laid it out with them, but you guys are adults. I can whack you. But you bring in a point of reference. "Hey, we told you this is what we are going to be as a family. Now what do you not understand about that?" There is no, "You may have misunderstood what I said here, but I knew you understood what I said here." Point of reference. Make it clear on the tables.

I know that when you get into this, it can seem confusing because every family has its own set of circumstances that make it appear that it is different, but it is really not. Biblical principles are biblical principles. Now some of you find yourself in a situation where you are married and your son or your child is by either your wife or you, and they are not the biological parent of it. Many times parents are reluctant in that kind of a situation. You say, "Well, he is not really my child or she is not really my child, so I do not know. I am limited to what I can do." No, you are not. You are not limited at all. It is still your home. You may not be their biological father, but you can be their spiritual mentor. You can be the spiritual leader. Shoot, I got 50, 60 people in this church that call me pops and dad all the time. And I am not their biological father. Promise I am not. I am not their biological father. Got to clarify some things sometimes. I am not their biological father, but I am their spiritual father in the Lord. Same thing. Same thing. You are still the spiritual head of your home. You shut down the vision from day one and then you minister to them. Not by yelling, not by demanding, not by screaming or yelling, not throwing up your hands and walking out, but by patiently leading them once you have given them the reference point of the vision. You minister to them, the Bible, the teaching, the living, the consistency of a balanced life, molding and guiding them through the vision of your family where God wants them to be. And they will adapt to it. They will adapt to it.

Consistency.

One key word in balance that is absolutely, I think, important, and this is your fifth thing here, is the word consistency. You know why it is so hard for us to have a consistency as parents in a family? Because consistency does not start with your family. Consistency starts with your own personal consistency in your life, and it breaks down there and it breaks down everywhere.

3.) The third part of the balance that he talks about here, he says that he may run that readeth it. It is a safe bet that when your kids grow up, they will be exactly what their parents trained them to be, good or bad. Know this, at a certain age, your child will begin to run on his own. He is going to be on his own now. She is going to be on her own now. She is going to get 18, 19, 20, going to get a job, going to get an apartment, going to move out, going to do their own thing. At a certain age, your child is going to run. Now, here is the deal. They will either run after God or they will

run away from God. There are only going to be two choices. We as parents are the builders of the racetrack. We as parents, we built them, made them, set them on a course in life by the vision we provided.

You have heard me say it many, many times, and I will not go into them in any real detail this morning, the five stages of training up your children and getting a vision in their life:

7. The discipline stage.
8. The relationship stage.
9. The fellowship stage.
10. The responsibility stage.
11. The ministry stage.

These five stages cover the life of your child from the time they are born to the time they die. These are the internal inner workings of a structure in a biblical balance of a family. All five of them will basically be based on the vision that we provide.

Courtney and Will are down in Wichita today. She came over to see me last week, as you can all know, she is going to have her first baby. She asked me a couple of questions. Women moms always do it. Dad, they do not think that way, but women always come in and before they have a baby, they want to make sure they do everything right. She said, "You know what? I just got a question." She says, "I have heard you talk about the concept of insulating your child versus isolating your child." And she says, "We have been talking about balance. What is the balance in that? How do I know when to insulate versus when to isolate?" That was a great question and a great example of how to use the balance.

I have talked about many, many times that there are things that the parents want to isolate their kids from. One of them is the world, and parents make a tragic mistake in trying to isolate their kids from the world. You know why? Because your kids live in the world, and sooner or later they are going to hit the world full force. You can have them in your home and you can put them in an incubator and keep them from ever seeing anything bad or ever hearing anything bad. Then you turn them at some point when they go out on their own, they are going to hit that thing and they are going to fold up like a broken accordion because they never trained. You cannot isolate your kids from the world, but you can insulate your kids from the world.

I told her, I said, "You know, you have to have a good concept in your life of things that you have to do and you have to understand." This was the movement behind the Christian school movement. The Christian school movement was, and I am not a big proponent of Christian schools. I like the concept. I do. I like the concept of a Christian school. I really do. But you realize that there are no Christian schools. You realize the same sin in public schools as in Christian schools. You realize girls get pregnant in Christian schools. It is like they are doing public schools. I mean, it is not a lot. I understand the concept and I like the concept, but here is where I have a problem with it.

I know parents, I have been around them all my life. Parents will send their kids to the Christian school and they think that the Christian school will do for their kids what they do not have to do

anymore. And they will not. The parents think that when you send your kid to a Christian school, that there is a big sign across the door. You cannot see it. I cannot see it. But the devil sees it. And that sign says, "Devil, you cannot come in here." So the devil chases your kid up out of the bus. He chases your kid. And when he gets to the door of the Christian school, he cracks back. And then goes to the next public school. That is not how it works.

I like the concept of kids being taught the Bible. I do. But I want to tell you right now, nothing, nothing, I mean nothing, will ever take the place of the Christian family. When God put the three institutions in this world that formed the balance of society, it was:

12. Family in Genesis 2 and 3.

13. Civil government in Romans 13.

14. A local church in Acts 11:13.

You will never improve on those three. When I came to Kansas City, there were seven major schools. This was back in '75, '76. There were seven major Christian schools in the Kansas area. All gone but one now. All gone but one. The bottom line is they could not afford it. They could not sustain it. But just Christian kids. So they start to say, "Well, we will bring in other denominations." They are all saved, they love God. I went Christian school, Christian school even brought Mormons in. Because they believe, "Well, they got great values and they got this and that. They will fit in good here." So your kid goes to Christian school to get a Christian education. And then the doctrine that is in there is bad.

Somebody asked me one time, "Would you rather have a liberal church next to your house or a bar?" I said, "I will take the bar." He says, "What? Why would you want a bar next to your house instead of a liberal church?" I said, "Because I know what goes in a bar. I know what happens there. It is very clear. You do not always know what is going on in religious organizations. It can get confusing, but you will never beat on the family, civil government, and the local church. You simply cannot improve on God's structure. You just cannot."

Now I told Courtney, I said, "Look, Court, follow just three basic things here to form this balance."

15. Before your kid goes to school, age one to six, build that foundation of discipline and structure of a vision in your child's life. Become their hero, become their best friend, become their role model, all based on an instilling of vision. I know Will will not be able to do it, but you can do it. Make it plain. Write the vision. Cement in those first six years before the world ever gets them. Cement in their world, the relationship that you have with them. Make your family a vision, a lifestyle that they do not know any other way.

16. When they get to public school, use it to your advantage. Use it as an object lesson of what not to do. Use the system against itself. Paint it for what it is. Prepare preparation for life. Learn, teach them that when they run home and Susie or Johnny was mean to me, or they will not sit with me, or she was my friend yesterday and not today, and she will not sit with me on the bus and you come home crying. Get them to realize that when Susie and Johnny grow up, they are still not going to get to sit on the bus with them. The problems will still be there. We as parents get the idea that when my kids are going through school right now, when

they get adults, they will be able to handle it. Susie and Johnny are going to be idiots just like they were when they were 30, like they were when they were nine. Deal with the issue. Show them. It is a process. You have got to learn how to deal with it now. You have got to understand how to deal with it now.

Do you ever notice it in the Bible? Some of the most vile acts that man ever committed are found in the perfect holy Word of God. You ever notice that? Who would ever thought that a holy book like this would have several cases of incest? Whoever thought that a holy book from God would ever have homosexuality in it? Whoever thought that a holy book like this would ever have bestiality in it or necromancing in it? Who would have thought that? Why would God write a book that is so holy and put these despicable things in? Because the way we learn in life is through contrast. He shows you what is wrong and despicable with man and then He shows you by contrast what is right and holy with God. When I preach, when I want to give you an example of what is not right, where do I go? Facebook? I go to God's book and I will show you Lot versus Abraham. I will show you Jacob as the schemer. I will show you Absalom who stole David's throne at the gate. I will show you all the wickedness and then I will contrast it. Use the school system the same way. Use the problems your kids deal with the same way. Do not think, "Well, what am I going to do for my little child?" You are going to give them a vision, keep that vision before them, make it a point of reference, and everything they struggle with in life, you are going to bring them back and say, "Sweetheart, I know it is tough. I know it is not fair. I know it is not right. But what are you going to do when you go in the army?" I used to say that to my kids all the time. They would come whining to me and I would say, "Really? Well, what are you going to do when you go in the army?" Not saying you say that, my kids, both of them went in the army. But anyway, you have got to keep that point of reference. You have got to get it to the point. It is just that simple. They are going to hit the world system someday at full speed. And you have got to take right now to give them the proper preparation to withstand. You have got to insulate them. You have got to know that my family stands for this. My mom and dad are my best friend. I do not care what any teacher tells me. I do not care what any of my friends tell me. They want to look back to mom and dad and say, "Mom and dad, you are my source of truth." Where there is no vision, the people perish.

3.) Then the third thing I told Court, I said, "You know what? When you get those two plates spinning, like we talked about last week, then you add the third one. You take ages one to six and you just invest, invest, invest in that vision. Then you get the public school. You use it for what it is as a teaching tool, just like I use the world as a teaching tool here. And then the third thing is you get them into the New Testament local church.

You know, I do not know if you ever thought about this or do not even know if you even think this way, but your final goal for your child is only one thing: and that is to reproduce them for the work of the Lord for the ministry. That is all it is.

But at the end the vision will speak and not lie.

First Samuel chapter one, two, and three, you are defending the passing on it. Hannah, Samuel. Hannah wanted that boy, had that boy, and she got that boy. God finally gave it to her. She

nurtured that boy. She brought him up. She trained that boy up. And then what she did, she took him down to the temple, which was God's concept back there of structure, and turned him over to the priest. That is how it works. Just as you have taught them all areas of their life, I have seen dads spend hours coaching their kids on ball and soccer and tennis, driving a car. I have seen moms take them how to cook, teach them how to sew, teach them how to ride a bike, put the training wheels on. They fall down. You pick them up, you get them going again, how to shoot baskets and do all of those things, coaching them all through life. Well, now you teach them also by example, the ministry, the ministry by your side with you and your New Testament local church, laying out the vision, sealing the deal. Take your child under your wing and ministry, their best friend, your ministry partner, your ministry team, keep building on that original vision of the family, but now expand it to their own personal life and the plan of God as they get a little older. Use the threefold structure of God provided for the balance in your family. You write the vision, you make it plain upon the tables so that when they read it, when they get older, they will run with it. And you do it through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and a local New Testament church.

Why do you think that I have created the same things for your children that we do here? You saw the prayer groups this morning, the kids have their own prayer group. We started a youth evangelism this year and it is an incredible thing to go and be there. You ought to hear some of your kids get up and teach the Word of God. You ought to see some of your kids, how they interact with other kids. Last night I sat there, and I just listened to him and Jack did a marvelous thing. He is having some of the counselors give their testimony. As I said earlier, Kelly gave hers last night. Your kids need to hear that. These workers, they are not much older than your kids and they can sit there and relate to them more than many times that I can. And they are telling there about how the world pulled them and how they were in the world, but what then God did and God brought them out and how God used people. That was incredible, absolutely incredible. I put those things in their life that teach them now at 14, 15, and 16 that they begin to learn the responsibility of ministry, and it is a tool for the parents to use. It is not going to take the place of you, but when you are doing what you need to do and you put them in that, we support that. We get it going the same way. We have an outlet that you do not have. We let them teach. We let them preach. I just set it up this morning that now they are going to take their own little guy and they are going to disciple him as a youth group. That is what you do. That is how they get the vision.

Now look at the last part of Habakkuk 2:3.

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.

Wow. What a great promise to us as parents. What a great promise to me as a preacher for our church. For the vision is yet for an appointed time. You see, the establishment of a vision of God and the Word of God in your family is a long ongoing process. You do not get there in a hurry, but you get there by being consistent through time. Making Bible Christianity a complete

lifestyle, not just injecting God in your family when it is convenient or it is Christmas or it is Easter or there is some tragedy now, but an all-encompassing culture and a lifestyle that your kid grows up and does not know anything else or any other way. By the example of getting that vision through the role model, now here is the seventh thing that I want to give you.

It says in Habakkuk 2:3, "but at the end the vision will speak and not lie." I know all through my life I have seen parents in the ministry, in my ministry, and though I do not have a lot here at this point in time this way, but it happens and it could happen. I have watched parents make and hide and ignore their out-of-balance children, but you can only do it for so long. Then the vision you had or the lack of vision you had, one day it will speak. The older they get, the more it exposes the whole corrupt system of no balance. You can go through life when they are eight or nine or ten or twelve or fifteen or sixteen and you can blame it on this kid or you can blame it on now or you can blame it on this church or this teacher or this situation or the pastor or the youth pastor. You can blame it all they want, but when they get out there, boy, and they are on their own and they just screw life up, that vision speaks and it speaks louder than any excuse or rationalization that mom and dad can come up with because at the end, at the end their spirits are conditioned at 15, 18, and 19, at 20, 30 and 40 will just be what the spiritual condition was of the lack of a vision or vision that they had because the Bible says the vision will not lie. You either have one or you do not.

The single greatest promise in all the Bible to parents who do it biblically and get the balance in their family is simply, "if thou tarry wait for it because it will surely come." God's promise to us as parents if we do our part and establish a vision through the structure with your child that it will take away and make sure that child gets exactly where he needs to be. I am not saying you will not have some issues with your children. I am not saying you will not have some major problems you have got to deal with. I am saying the vision will come and bring it to light and bring it to pass.

What really destroys kids are the parents and a lack of vision.

Now the eighth thing. We like to think, this is all of us, I am preaching to me, we like to think that when it comes to our children and damaging our children and taking our children and destroying them, that it is the world. We like to think that it is the public school. We like to think that it is the wickedness. We like to think it is other kids. We like to think that it is teachers or evolution or that sex education classes they are teaching in church or in schools. We like to think it is drugs and alcohol and sex and all we talk about the peer pressure how it just destroyed my kid. We like to bolster ourselves in thinking, "Well, my ex-husband and my ex-wife caused this. My child was abused and my child had some terrible thing happen to them that made them this way." We even like to go to the extreme and say, "Well, you know, it is inherited his problem. His father was a drunk so he is going to be a drunk. In his genes is drug history so he is going to be a drunk." Do not let him wear jeans. I do not know what to tell you. The bottom line is and the honest, awful truth is what really destroys kids are the parents and a lack of vision. Parents who will not change themselves to be able to change their children. Parents who under a cloak of denial pretend that everything is fine when all the signs around them tell them that it is not.

As parents, you will be the best thing in your child's life or you will be the worst thing in your child's life as far as the vision of God is concerned because nobody, I mean nobody, should ever have more influence in your child's life than you. No teacher, no coach, nobody, no boyfriend, no girlfriend could ever be able to pull away your child out of your world that they always look back to you because they got a point of reference of a vision.

I know that there are many different scenarios in dealing with family, but there are the fundamental biblical principles of getting a balance in your family. I know some of God's people they get a late start in life after their kids are already up there. I get it. Some of you got saved later in life and your kids were already 10 or 12. I get it. I understand it. Some of you are single parents and you struggle with this. You lost your wife or your husband one way or the other and you are handling it all by yourself. So you are sitting there saying, "Well, how do I do that?" I understand it. There are a thousand different scenarios, but there is always, no matter, listen to me, whatever your circumstances are, whatever your situation is, I do not care because there is always a set of biblical principles that can be hand-fit to help you wherever you are at, whatever you are doing, if you want to get there. That is the job of the church. That is my job. That is the job of everybody here that is on any level of teaching in the Bible. That is our job. That is the job of a church is to take you as a single parent, to take you divorced, to take you when you are hurting, to take you when you are struggling through things. And we do not want to add more weight to it. We want to take the weight off of you. Our job is to help you get to where God wants you to be. I say it all the time. I do not care where you have been. I do not care what you have done. I do not care the mistakes you made. All I care about is where do you want to go from this day forward and if it is to put the vision in your life and help you get as a single parent or an adult or whatever your situation is to get it there, there is a way to get there. That is what I am telling you. That is what I am telling you.

Lending them to the Lord for ministry or whatever they do in life.

Well the last thing, the ninth thing I want to give you here, going back to Hannah and Samuel. Hannah got little Samuel and she put the vision of God for Israel in his early years. She taught that little guy and trained him, and when she got him ready in 1 Samuel 2:20, she takes him down and gives him to the priest in the temple, which is a lot like bringing your child and getting him involved in church. The church is the New Testament structure of the temple with the Old Testament structure. She says this, greatest line in all of the Bible for your children, 1 Samuel 2:20, the Bible says she takes that little boy down and she lends him to the Lord. She trained him. She got him ready. She did everything in her life to make that boy exactly what he needed to be and then she takes him down and lends him to the ministry to the Lord. That should be the goal of every Christian parent on earth when it comes to the vision of your child, lending them to the Lord for ministry or whatever they do in life. But it only happens when the vision of what God wants your whole family to do gets implemented in their lives at an early age.

Remember, it does not matter what your situation is. It does not matter if you are single, married, divorced, it does not matter. Those things do not really enter into it because there is always a way to accomplish what the right thing in your life is to do. You just have to get some help in doing it

and that is the structure of God in your life. But you have to remember where there is no vision, the people perish.

V. Conclusion and Warning

Years ago, a lot of years ago, I did a funeral for a young man who at the time, if I remember right, had to be around 26 or 27. He came from a Christian home. Mom and dad went to church. If I remember, I think his dad was even a deacon. But he was a wild kid all of his life. He dropped out of church shortly after getting into high school, went with the wrong crowd, always in trouble. Mom and dad could not get him to do anything, got into alcohol, got into drugs and all the things that go along with it as he got older. Mom and dad always defended him, always tried to make excuses for him. Many times I would hear his mother blaming it on somebody else's kid, being a bad influence on my kid when it was probably just the opposite.

One night about one o'clock in the morning as he roared down the road on his motorcycle, he had been out drinking and partying on drugs, going too fast on a wet road. He went around a corner and missed a corner and on a motorcycle, went right into a bridge in Butman and was killed instantly. I had to preach his funeral. As I stood about the family at that funeral, everybody was blaming everything and everything that happened on everything and everybody else about his untimely death. One guy over here said, "Oh, you know, that booze, we ought to just take all the booze and just put it in the pit of hell." Well, I agree. I agree. "Well, the drugs, you know, I had to get the drug dealer to show them those drugs and they had to put him and give him a capital punishment." Well, I agree. "Well, you know, he ran with that crowd over there, you know, from that bar over there and they all had those motorcycles, you know, motorcycles are out of the pit of hell and all that stuff, you know, and they got him going the wrong way. And, you know, it is just he never should have bought that motorcycle in the first place." That is a long silence.

Never forget this. His dad stepped up and he said, "No," he said something I never forgot. He says, "You know what, guys," he says, "I appreciate it, but you are all wrong. Those things did not kill my boy. I killed my boy. I never provided for him what he needed in his life. He got into the world because I failed as a father. He got in the world. Instead of holding him accountable, I made excuses for him. He got into the world because I did not have the courage and I did not do what I was supposed to do. I was a deacon. I was in a church. I have been there every week, but I could not get my own child grounded in the Word of God." He says it was not the booze that killed him. It was not the drugs that killed him. It was not even the wild crowd. "I as a father failed and that is why my son is dead today." Tears streaming down his face. I sat there and put my arm around him and boy, I tell you what, he just cried and cried and cried and cried. If he could have got that boy back, I am sure at that point in time, he would have changed about himself, whatever he needed to change, but it was too late.

Someday, dear friend, it will be too late for you and your children. If you do not become the number one influence in our life, I guarantee you the world will. If you do not be their best friend, the world will. If you do not take that little gal now and make her the number one thing in daddy's eye, some boy will come along, make her the number one in his. If you do not train that young man up to love God and to be strong in the family and be your ministry partner now, he

will be a partner with somebody else at some point and it will not be the ministry. For where there is no vision, the people perish. There is always something you can do, but it requires you as a parent to change yourself, to be able to change your children. The last thing he said, crying with tears, almost uncontrollably, he said, "Son, I love you. I am sorry that I did not love you enough to change for you." I closed that lid down on the ground.

See, life is real and your children, your family, mom and dad, it is on your watch. Just like this church is on my watch. You do not like every decision I make. Your kids are not going to like every decision you make. So what? Who is in charge? Who is on the watch? The tower, stand upon my watch on a tower. That is the high tower talking about in Psalms where you get up higher and you can see in the 360 all that is going on in your children's life. That is where you need to be. They are on your watch.

The balance of the family is crucial. President Obama got up there the other night and tried to paint a picture of America being great and wonderful and how much progress we have made. I looked at that and I thought to myself, all that is is a mortician trying to put a smile on a dead man's face. You can paint any picture you want. But at the end of the day, without a vision, they perish. The families in America are fractured. They are gone. The only thing in the Old Testament, this is why God had such harsh punishment for your children in the Old Testament. Your children lip off to you and tell you to go this and go that and tell you curse you out. You put up with it. In the Old Testament, they took them out and stoned them. They did not get away with that. You know why? Because God knew that when the family breaks down, the nation broke down. And when the nation breaks down, it all breaks down. In the New Testament, when the family breaks down, the church breaks down. And when the church breaks down, the world breaks down.

Next week, I will get back into carrying it farther and I am going to show you how in your own personal world, another area, how you are going to keep that balance. We will play this thing out and give you the best shot I can at it. That is my job. You may not like everything I said today, but I will guarantee you one thing about everything I said today: it was the truth. It was the truth. And now you are responsible for it.

Let us pray. Father, we thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We do love You. Lord, there are some great, great, great families in this church. I look at the families that are moving across this country to come to be part of this church because they want to build their family right. I think Carolyn and Rob coming down here to bring their kids to part of this and what a great family and how unique that family is. Lord, what You are doing with that family and how much I love them and how much they mean to this church. Lord, it is just everything You are doing. Lord, but it is what we do. It is what we do. We are here for people. I do not care what color they are. I do not care how rich they are, how poor they are. None of that matters to me. All I care about is people. Black, yellow, red and white, they are all precious in Your sight. We just help people. We help them in their need. We help them get where they need to be. We thank God that You have given us a Bible that provides this church a vision. You have given me as a pastor some of the greatest couples, some of the greatest singles, some of the greatest young people, some of the greatest older family people in this church that a man could ever want. I am the luckiest guy

on the planet today. But Lord, help us to not take all that for granted, but to take all of that and to focus it into other people. Because families are hurting today. They need direction. They need people to put their arms around them and help them. Good families, people who are good people that are just struggling to try to find the answers to some things. Help us. That is our job. That is what we do. And help bring more people here that will stand by our side and work with people. Train them up. Lord, protect us from those that would hurt our people or take our people or hurt this work in any way. But Lord, this is Your work and it is Your people. Help us to be found faithful in all that we do for You. Lord, pray again, Lord, for Kyle and his family. Pray for him today and for Sam and for his mom and his stepdad and for his brother. We just love them, Lord, and the rest of this week and put Your arms around them. Let them know that this church stands behind them a hundred percent in everything that we are here. They are ours. They belong to us. And we covet them and we take care of them because that is what we do. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name for a sake we ask it. To God be the glory in all things. Amen.