

Proverbs 29:18

July 10, 2022

I did not see them come in back there in all the crowd, but Nikki and Michael are here with their new baby back there. It is Connor, right? Good to have... Now, you did not have twins, did you? No, you are having twins. I get confused sometimes. Good to have you here today, little Connor back there.

Years ago, I had a couple that I had known that had twins. For whatever reason, I never really found out the reason, they decided they better not keep the kids, so they gave them up for adoption, which I did not really agree with. The one boy went to some family in the Middle East, it was Pakistan or someplace, and his name was called Amal. The other boy went to some Spanish family in Spain, and his name was Juan. It was a weird deal, believe me. But I will never forget, the mother years later had gotten a letter from Juan and a picture of him. She showed it to me, and her husband was looking at it, and she said, "Boy, I would love to have a photograph of Amal." Her husband looked at her and he says, "Well, honey, they were twins. Once you saw Juan, you saw Amal."

I. The Foundation of Biblical Parenting

Last week, we started our countdown to camp. I talked about some great verses last week, Proverbs 22:6, where the Bible says,

Proverbs 22:6

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

I really talked about that you do not raise children, you train children. Then I gave you, which I think is one of the great verses in the Bible in Psalms 127:4, where it says,

Psalms 127:4

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

We, as parents, literally take our children, just like a marksman would take a bow and arrow, and launch them toward a target in life. We have been talking about taking this month and preparing the parents of our church for what God is going to do with our children at camp. We looked at the definitive passage on what I call biblical parenting, and that will be 1 Samuel chapters 1, 2, and 3.

We saw and we looked at Hannah, and how she saw her child as Psalms 127:3 says, as the heritage of the Lord. The Bible says in that great verse that the fruit of her womb was God's reward. In other words, what God was going to do with her child was going to be a reward for God based on that child being God's heritage. I talked about the ability as parents to see your child and see what God sees.

I understand as they grow, they can be a challenge. They really can. Children as they grow up, they go through emotional changes. They go through physical changes. They go through spiritual

changes. The parent needs to be in tune with all three of those. As a child is challenged with those things, the real key to it is to never lose sight of the long term, the big picture, the process of growth that goes through a child as he grows up physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

It is a lot like what I do with you and you do with others in helping establish you in this church and within ministry and helping you as an adult get to where God wants you to be. I do not care how old you are, when you either get saved or you get plugged into God, at that point you begin the same process as an adult that your child goes through as they begin to go through life. You too are going to have some challenges. Where I am here for you and other people are here for you and this church is here for you, we help you through those three stages of development. We, as parents, need to do the exact same thing as our church.

Real Bible-based spirituality has always been a process. It has been a process of molding and shaping and sharpening you through your physical and spiritual and emotional growth, and through the good times and the bad times. Do not forget Romans 8:28 says,

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

When God calls you, He has a purpose. All of the things in life that you go through, the good things and the bad things. We live in a Christianity that likes to think that all the good things are from God and all the bad things are from the devil. That is not necessarily true. I want you to understand that the Bible says that it is all things in your life that God takes. It does not matter whether the devil clobbers you or the world clobbers you or who clobbers you. God will use it if you allow Him to do that as you look at the big picture of your own life, what God is trying to do. As parents, that is exactly how we need to look at our children.

I never, as your pastor, take my eyes off of what you can be. I look past where you are at. I look past what you have done in the past. I look past your struggles. I look and see what you could be if you really see it for yourself. Then we looked at chapter 1 and chapter 2 at her prayer. What a great model for prayer that is. I talked about the four partitions or the four parts of her prayer. We talked about the sorrow that she went through. We talked about her promise to God if God would give her that man child. We saw her life through the third part, her surrender to God. Then we saw the victory that God gave her. Then we saw chapter by chapter how that she did everything she could to get her child to be God's man.

Really, as parents, that is where we start today. That is really what we are going to build on as we move on down through here today: doing everything that we can to get our children in the right place that they can be what God wants them to be. I told you the great concept of how one man, one young lady sitting in this room today, could change everything for God by what God does with them. How that down through history with Martin Luther and all of the great men that God used to change the course. Every one of them started out as a little child and God developed them. We want to take these next three or four Sundays and prepare our heart for what God is going to do with our kids.

Right now, as I said earlier, we have got over 70 kids signed up to go to camp. Many visitors, many unsaved. It is going to be a great year for us as we go there and I am excited to be there to be able to preach.

II. The Anatomy of a Successful Camp

When it comes to camp, there is an anatomy to a camp. I have held camps and preached camps for 40 plus years. Some of you older folks here today were with me and got your life right or got saved through one of those camps. I have told the story, Steve Bracken was 14 years old when he first went to our first camp down at Beth Eden. His brother Bruce also. Michelle was not even born yet, but she grew up under our camp. Penny Hansinger has been with me for 30 plus years in working with camps, as Anita Poole was and all that we did over there.

Most of you know Jim Bruce. We do not know where Jim has been for the last six or seven weeks. Nobody ever knows where Jim Bruce is at most of the time. But you know Jim is somebody that came into my life probably 40 years ago. I buried his mom and dad, did their funerals. Jim, I have always felt a responsibility to try to take care of Jim. If you know who Jim is, you know that he has some special issues and he has some special needs. Jim is the kind of guy that you have got to kind of watch out for. I remember one time Phil asked him not to sit where he was sitting and he looked up at Phil. Phil, look at Phil. That is Phil right there. Phil is a pretty good sized guy. Jim is a little stick of a guy, you know. Phil says, "Would you please not sit there? We are trying to save that." He looked up at Phil and said, "I do not take orders from punks." That is Jim.

Jim taught me one of the greatest lessons of life at my first camp. We were down at Beth Eden. Remember that place. I always took Jim with me because Jim had nobody and he always was my friend and he was always there. I always gave Jim something to do. But Jim taught me a lesson. When you tell Jim to do something, you have got to be very specific. It was one night about 10 o'clock and the camp had closed down. I always gave Jim, you know, him and I were always kind of on a military basis even though he had never been in the military. I told Jim, I said, "Jim," I said, "I am going to, you know, I always gave him something to do, wanted to make him feel special because he was important to me." I said to him, I said, "Hey Jim, I am going to turn in, buddy. Son, you watch, keep an eye on camp tonight." He said, "Yes sir, I will." I got up the next morning and he had stayed up all night long walking around that camp because he thought I meant stay up all night and take care of the camp. I mean, that is the kind of kid he was. But we have been in a lot of camps together.

Later on in life, we went to Old McDonald's Farm. Remember that deal? That is where John and Sharon, Jan and John, John and Pam, you know. There are so many of the Amaros, the Angel, Anita again, Scott Schenkel was there, Nancy, Scott and Rose, just all of you were part of that. The key to successful camp, understanding the anatomy of a camp, is keeping a good balance. Most people think that camps are just where you go and have fun. Unfortunately, I think a lot of people look at camps that way. I want kids to have fun but there is something you want to accomplish at camp. You have got to realize that even though you take them to a secluded place

where they do not have any influence for the world, and you are all locked away for a week or so, let me tell you something, the camp bus, the devil is riding right in the front seat.

There is always a balance within a camp with what you want to accomplish. You have to have a plan in place in each phase as the week goes by day by day. The theme of our camp this year is going to be Mighty Man of Valor at 1 Samuel chapter 23. I showed you the t-shirts that we are going to have, really good stuff. Camps have to have a balance in really four areas.

1. You have got to have kids to get out and have fun and do something. They play ball, they do all that stuff and it is a great time.
2. You have got to feed them. Believe it or not, bad food at camp can really tip the balance because you want kids to be fed. You want them not to be hungry. As you all know, some of the camps we have had in the past, the food was a little less than desirable. I remember throwing out some of it at night and watching through my telescope at night, five raccoons come up, they would not eat it. So I get it. I understand it.
3. You have got to have a balance to sleep. They have got to get some rest. The last thing you want to see in a preaching service is half the front row sleeping on you. That is a tough balance because you know they go to camp, they want to have fun. You counselors know you do not sleep for a week. It is like Bud's week for the seals. You do not sleep for a week because they are up half the night and all those things and it is a tender balance.
4. The fourth thing is you have got to have the preaching. You have got to have that. The first three are just really a means to an end to getting accomplished what you want to do.

I want to tell you very frankly, most camps are very short term in their nature and most camps are very short sighted in their nature. I understand why. They get into a kid's heart and when that kid goes home, that kid is excited. They maybe have just gotten saved. I have seen this happen. Or God has begun that process like we talked about Thursday night to really begin to reveal Himself to that child and it is lost in two or three weeks. The reason is simple. This is not a criticism. Please understand. I am not criticizing anybody. I am just telling you the facts of life here.

You get a kid saved or right with God and on fire for God and at the end of camp they go to active parents who do not understand where they are coming from. They worked all week. They did all this and too many times it is like hearing the greatest sermon you ever heard in your life and then going trying to explain how great it was to somebody else. It is that old saying, you just kind of had to be there. For a kid to come back and tell mom and dad all that happened that week, mom and dad are here and they are over here and sometimes all the kid gets is, "That is good son. I am really glad. I am glad they had a great time honey. That is super. Praise the Lord. That is good." That is all the farther it ever goes.

This year our church is now at a level to squeeze every drop out of camp for the kids and for the parents. I have told you before my watch and my goal as pastor is not to lose one more child to the world. Now we have the ability to get the parents on board before camp knowing what to expect, knowing how to be ready for when their children come back home. Our whole camp will be right around not just the kids but also mom and dad. At the end of camp, we are going to have

something that we have never had before. We are going to reunite prepared kids with prepared parents. The last day of our camp is not going to be that Thursday night, though that is going to be a great time and everybody is invited to come because we are not going to have Thursday night Bible study that week. We are going to ride down to the Salvation Army camp and I am inviting everybody to come that night for that last night of camp. It will be a great time. But we are going to officially end camp that next Sunday on the 31st of July where parents and children are together in this church after what God has done in the kids' lives and after hopefully what God has done in the parents' lives and now we can bring it all together.

If you have ever wanted your child to be everything you ever wanted them to be the right way, I can guarantee you they will be 100% on Thursday night at the end of camp. But you must be ready to take them back and train them and lead them to keep them that way. I have the long term plan to do that based on 1 Samuel chapter 3 like we saw the other Sunday and Thursday night, but you need to be the key element in that process just like Hannah was with Samuel.

Then you remember last week I gave you the verse that we will build everything around the next few weeks and hopefully for you and your child the rest of their lives and that is found in 1 Samuel 1:28 that Hannah when she wanted this child when she finally got it she said,

1 Samuel 1:28

Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there.

Lending your child to the Lord. You remember I told you, you will lend them to the Lord and keep them or you will lend them to the world and you will lose them. There is a process to accomplish that.

III. The Importance of Vision in Parenting

Today I want to talk about probably what I think is probably the number one issue with parenting. What I am about to say today is not a criticism for anybody or anything. I am trying to give you information and to do that I am going to show you some things today and one of the things I want to show you I think is probably the number one key in successful parenting and bringing your child to the place where you train them up and that is having a vision for your child.

I want to look at a verse out of Proverbs chapter 29 and that is where we are going here. Proverbs chapter 29 and it is a verse that honestly I have never really heard preached or taught in a proper context. I want to take this today and I want to build on the foundation of last week and then every week continue to build that on. Now the Bible says in Proverbs 29:18 it says this,

Proverbs 29:18

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

Drake, would you stand up and ask God bless him on the sermon for us today please.

[Prayer]

All my life I have heard that verse used in reference to getting churches to have a vision and I understand that and I am not saying there is anything wrong with that. Churches to be successful have to have a vision. If you are ever going to pastor someday, you need as a pastor to be clear to your people in three areas. Your people need to know first of all who we are. Most of God's people today have no idea who they are and they have no idea who they are because in most cases the pastor does not understand who he is. The second thing that a church needs to understand is not only who we are but they need to understand very clearly where we are going. The third thing they need to know and understand is how are we going to get there.

The trouble is today that most pastors and most churches, they do not know who they are. They do not have any idea where they want to go and they cannot unite the people because they themselves have no vision of how to get there. I have watched the phenomena in church building over the years. I have watched young men go out and start a church. For about the first five or six years you start a church, you can hitchhike off the excitement of a new church. Everybody is excited, everybody is happy, everything is going new, it is new, do that, everybody. For five or six years you can hitchhike off that excitement. But I want to tell you something. There comes a point in time with every pastor in every church and every congregation that the excitement wears off. If that pastor does not understand where he wants to go and communicate it clearly to the people and how they are going to get there and who they are, your church is going to fail. It is just that simple. These three things are imperative.

In most churches, they will hire some new staff guy that is exciting or they will start some new program that they are going to have. They will build some new building someplace. They will change the name of the church and they think that that is going to give them a new identity. We are not talking about a new identity. We are talking about understanding the three areas that you have to be clear in giving your people a vision.

You look at the context of chapter 29 verse 18 and you look at the verse before it, it becomes clear that the direct context of these passages is to your children. He says in Proverbs 29:17-18,

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.

Today, out of this passage I want to begin to show you how to provide that vision for your family and in particular your child. A father and mother's vision for their children. I want to show you the absolute importance of it and the absolute disaster you will face as a parent if you do not do it.

Just like a church, a child within any family has to know and understand the same three areas as a church does. Your child growing up needs to understand who he or she is in Christ. You know why? Because the first thing the world is going to do is try to get them to be somebody they are not. The first thing the world is going to do to that loving little child at five and six and seven,

eight, is to turn them into a foul mouth, beer drinking, crowd rousing, a young man or young lady when they hit 17 or 18. He is going to change who they are. It is up to you to provide the vision and keep that vision in force that they never forget who they are.

The second thing that that child needs to know is the same thing that this church needs to know: where they are going. God's will versus God's plan in their life. What God wants to accomplish with them. What He wants to do. The purpose for them being saved in the first place. The third thing, he or she needs to understand how they are going to get there. The way. They need to understand that in the Bible like I gave you last week, you have the family structure, which is the foundational core. Then you have the church structure, which is the asset to the family. You provide the vision.

Now we are going to talk about two words today that I want to keep using back and forth. This will be the foundation of that. We are going to talk about in building a vision, but the two words are simply this: vision and envision. You are going to provide a vision for your family, your children. In time, that vision that you give them is going to give them the ability to envision everything they see the right way. Two key words. You provide the vision for their life by the leadership and training you give them as parents keeping in mind your vision for them that as we saw in Hannah's life last week, she did.

You need to develop as a parent for your family a mission statement. Years ago, I went to get a job at a place and I was an older guy and it was obvious that everybody that was applying for the same job was a lot younger than me. I needed a break. I needed a break to get this job. So they are up there and the boss came out and he welcomed everybody and he said, "I would like to know why some of you, why all of you want to work for us today." I knew at that point I had it made because I knew what these young kids were going to do. One young kid, he said, "How about you?" He said, "Man," he says, "I want to get a new brand new car." Another guy said, "Well, you know what? I want to do this or, you know, I want some money." Everybody wanted something.

I am sitting there and right behind this guy was the company's mission statement. Now I may not be the smartest guy in the world, but I am the fastest guy in the slow class. As I, he came to me and he says, "Why do you want to work for me?" I said, "You know, I had been sitting here and reading your mission statement. That mission statement is exactly the kind of goals that I have in my life. I think that I would be a great asset here because your mission statement basically is my mission statement." Guess what? Go ahead. You bet I did. He looked at all those young kids down there and, and, you know, and you know what that is called? That is called just being smarter than a problem. I knew what those kids were going to do. Those kids were going to talk about what they were, because they did not have any experience in life and all they knew is what they have. So they wanted a new car. They wanted this. They wanted pocket money. They wanted a guy wanted this. He wanted a boat. I simply looked at what their desire, their heart was for their company and gave them what they wanted. You need to have a mission statement for your family. Your children need to know what your family stands for. It is part of the concept of understanding the vision you need to provide for them.

IV. The Role of Parents in Establishing Vision

Let us begin to examine the details of a vision for your family or for your children. First of all, in any family there will be a definite role for the mother and the father. There is a definite role in the Bible for a husband and there is a definite role in the Bible for the wife. A husband and a wife is a different role than a mother and a father. You need to understand that. They are different, but you are going to find that they will cross over each other in almost every single thing that you do. Without a doubt, the father figure in any family will be the key to everything. When it comes to the vision being established in your child, in your family's life, the father, he will be the key factor.

In a Christian marriage, the key to any successful marriage and in time of family will be one word. It is found in the definitive chapter on marriage in Ephesians chapter 5. It is the simple word of submissiveness. Chapter 5, as I said, in the book of Ephesians is a definitive passage on the role of the husband and the role of the wife. If you ever look at Ephesians chapter 5, you will find that that whole chapter deals with the husband and wife relationship. But then if you go to Ephesians 6:1, you know what it says? It starts out by saying,

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

In other words, it simply works like this. When mom and dad accomplish Ephesians chapter 5, Ephesians 6:1 takes care of itself. You want your children to obey you on all things, practice Ephesians chapter 5. That is how it works. Whoever said it was hard. Understanding this verse, chapter 5 verse 21, which is the key to that chapter and key to a successful marriage and a family is simply this,

Ephesians 5:21

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

A husband and a wife submitting themselves to each other. What does that mean? How do you do that? The understanding of this verse will be the key to one, a successful marriage and two, establishing a successful vision for your children.

A lot of things in the Bible, and most people do not know this, a lot of things in the Bible, there is two different definitions for the same word. You take the word damnation. You know there is two types of damnation in the Bible. There is a spiritual damnation that is going to hell and there is a physical damnation for Christians that is of the flesh. You realize there is two different temptations in the Bible? The Bible, and this is always a stickler with so many people, the Bible says God tempts no man with evil. Then it says back in Genesis, God did tempt Abraham. Somebody said, "Oh, two different definitions of the same word." That is not hard. It is not hard at all. You take death. There is a physical death and there is a spiritual death. You take saved. There is a definition that deals with your salvation and then the Bible says over there when Paul is talking to a husband and a wife, he says that your wife may be saved in child bearing and

everybody says, “Oh, does that mean if a woman dies giving birth, she goes to heaven?” No! There is two different definitions for the word saved in the Bible. You need to learn these things.

When it comes to being submissive, I am going to tell you something. There is a submissive role to the wife, to the husband, and there is a submissive role to the husband, to the wife. The quicker you learn that, the better off you are going to be. Yes, she submits herself to the husband for leadership. No question about that. But the husband submits himself to her to love her unconditionally. He submits himself to her to put all the qualities in that loving relationship. He submits himself to her and the family that he puts him or her and the family first and puts himself second. It is a dual submissiveness. The father must lead the way in being submissive. When he does, then the wife and the family will follow through their submissiveness as he provides the balance for all things to accomplish the vision.

Let me give you an easy example. This is really easy. If you have a son, talking about a vision, if you have a son, the way you treat your wife will form the vision of how that boy looks at women. When he gets older and wants to get married, he will treat them based on what he saw in the vision that you gave him and now how he, second word, envisions women. He will follow the mission statement. When you treat your wife like a queen, hold her in a high place, love and cherish her and treat her with respect and lift her up and praise her, nourishing in her, cherishing her, Ephesians chapter 5, then you provide a vision of how in that loving, kind, nurturing environment that your boy sees and views women. When he gets older and picks a wife and has relationship with women, he will have that vision of a woman established in his life. You dad, by submitting yourself to your wife in that aspect.

Hey, let me ask you a question. Men, if you are married, do you ever just sit down with your wife sometime and ask her how you could be a better husband? Do you ever sit down with your wife and say, “Honey, I know you have a lot of things on your plate and you know what, I want to do the best I can, but let me ask you, what can I do better?” We use that as a launch pad that when she comes back and she actually tells you something that you blow up and say, “Oh, I do that.” Listen to what she says. There are things that a woman has inside that she wants to cry out to somebody. In most marriage relationships, she knows she cannot cry out to the husband. He blows up all the time. Teach yourself that a fact, you want to change your wife? You want to change the way she is? I will tell you how to do it. Listen to her and change yourself.

You know how you got saved? Everybody in here, do you know how you got saved? You got saved because God changed who He was. He left the throne of glory. There was a day when the angels walked into the throne room and God was gone. They said, “Where did He go?” They said, “God manifested in the flesh.” He changed who He was. He came down to this earth as a man so you and me would have the ability to change and be who we are today. He was submissive to you. He was submissive to your sin because the Bible says,

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

That Bible says when He endured the shame of the cross, hey, that was my shame. When they beat Him on the back, pulled out His beard, that was mine. The Bible says in Isaiah 53:5,

Isaiah 53:5

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

You know what He did? The God of the universe submitted Himself to your sin and my sin, changed who He was, came down and became a man in the fashion of a man that you and I would have the ability to be changed. You want to change your wife? Change yourself. Change who you are. Do what God did. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church, gave Himself for it. I know when it comes to your wife, you think her favorite hymn should be, "How Great Thou Art." God submitted to me in my need. He heard my cry, Psalms chapter 40. He saw me in my destitute of sin and He that was holy and perfect changed who He was to come down and give me the ability to change who I was. Oh, what a model. Oh, what a beautiful model. How incredible that is. My sin. He submitted Himself to my sin. He became sin for me who knew no sin that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He took my shame. The Bible says over in Hebrews chapter 11 that the great contradiction was God coming down and taking my sin debt. The most perfect man who ever lived is now acquainted with my sin and if He would not have changed who He was, you and I would have never been able to get changed. You better write that down. Christ is the greatest example of Romans 15:1.

Romans 15:1

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

He bore my infirmities. Your boy will see how you treat your wife and he will see the vision that you provide when you disrespect her, beat them up emotionally and physically, always tearing them down, belittling them, accusing them in front of people or in private. Most husbands demand submissiveness for their wife but they will never give it back. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. You do not get to take the verses you just like. So then your boy will grow up and treat and view women the same way. You know what? Generation after generation unfolds itself, it will only get worse. It is called the second law of thermodynamics. But you father, me as a father, provide the vision for him.

When was the last time you ever sat down with your kid, dad? And simply said, "You know what? I love you guys and I try to do everything I can for you. How can I be a better dad? How can I be better for you?" You know how those conversations with your wife and your kid always turn out 100% of the time? It is always the wife coming back and saying, "Well, how can I be better for you?" It is the kids coming back and saying, "Well, dad, how can we be better for you?" That is the vision you want to instill. That is the process you want to get moving into your life. You provide the vision for him, how he envisions women, the mission statement.

Okay, now let us talk about this flip side. Dad, you have got a daughter. Let us talk about the vision for your daughter you provide for her. How you treat your daughter and your wife and interact with her will be the exact vision she gets on how she will look for a husband. She will

have the mission statement from the family of how to find a guy. Let me tell you something, dad. You should be your daughter's hero. You should be your daughter's knight in shiny armor. You should be your daughter's first boyfriend. You should be Christ in her life. She should look to you for every decision she has to make and trust you explicitly. There should be no man, no woman, no teacher, no anybody who will ever have more influence in her than you because you formed the vision for that. No guy will ever get her unless he is the right guy and you both agree on it. You will want a man just like her father because you, dad, were the model for it and she envisions in a husband what she sees in you.

When you treat her with loving kindness, you instill in her all the loving qualities by your example with your wife that are found in the word of God. When she gets to the age of looking for a boyfriend, she knows no other concept, no other way than the vision of the love, the respect, the kindness, the goodness that you have put in her life. She submits herself. When that boy comes knocking on her door to date her, he has a tough act to follow. He is just not going to walk in and sweep her off her feet. This girl has a vision. She envisions in a husband what she saw in her father. She envisions a man, a real man, God's man that you have envisioned in her life and she will measure her prospective husband by you and the vision you provided for her.

Hey, I am going to tell you something, Mom and Dad. We set the vision for all things with our children. The Bible says where there is no vision the people perish, a verse before that is saying correct your child. It is your children. You will set the vision they have for ministry, for the Bible, for soul-winning. I have that guy who has asked me all the time, "How do you get your people excited about the Bible?" It is so simple. You will never be excited about the Bible if I as your pastor am not excited about the Bible. Your child will never be excited about the Word of God if you are not excited about the Word of God. It is so simple in relationships, in walking with God, in relationships with others, in faithfulness, in honor, in character, in attitude toward church. That is all set by us as parents instilling a vision based on what we saw last week, how you see them.

You know our church, like when Herb comes in or the guys at New Year's came in, Jim and I, anybody who comes in from the outside and preaches to you guys and hangs out with you, they all say the same thing. They say that this is one of the most amazing churches that they have ever been in. I understand this church has got issues just like every church has. But they see something here they do not see. Most of you do not get this. In most of the Baptist churches today, the average age is 96. If you are 80, you are in the young marriage department. If you are in the 50s, you are in a high school class. They are dead and dying. To have a church with this many young couples and this many young singles is unheard of. They always ask me, "How do you get those people to do what they do?" It is an amazing across the board how many people are involved. They actually say, "Man, how do you do that?" The answer is, I do not do it. I did one thing here. It is all I have done. I gave this church a vision of what a New Testament Bible-believing church based on the Word of God by the model and Antioch ought to be.

Almost every one of you here came into this church young and were unsaved. You were in the world. You never were in a thousand different Baptist churches. You were in the world. You came in and you got saved. This is all you have ever known. You have not had to deal with the

corruption of many churches. You have not had to deal with the politics of churches. You have not had to deal with the deacon trying to run everything and run the path. You have not had to deal with any of that. You did not know anything about anything about God. You got saved, came in, and all you have ever learned is the Bible, how a church should be. The other 5% who used to be, you were so sick of it, you are just glad to be here. That is exactly the way it needs to be with your kids.

You see, I have given you a vision of what a New Testament Bible-believing church is. I have given you a vision of it. That is the only vision you know. You do not know about being a Southern Baptist, an Independent Baptist, a GRB Baptist, a fundamental Baptist. You do not know about being a conservative. You do not know about independence. You do not know. All you know is the Bible and what a church is supposed to be. No politics, nothing. Just the Bible. You earn your way. Nobody gets a status because of how much money they got. You earn your way. That is all you ever knew. The rest of you, you have been in it, you are so sick of it, you just do not want any part of it.

Your family ought to be that way. Your family ought to grow up not knowing anything else other than the vision that you and your wife have put in their lives. They ought to grow up and be 20 years old, 25 years old, never know what a taste of alcohol is like. Some of you do. It is okay. But you should train up your children. They do not understand the world. When they see people out there, kids out there doing this, they ought to come to you and say, "Dad, I do not get that. Why would they want that when they could have what we have here?" They ought to grow up in your family and all they know is a warm, loving, kind, God honoring mom and dad, husband and wife, relationship, submitting yourself to each other and it is you to the Lord and you just let God bring that environment and that becomes their vision. In life when they get older, it is all they know. It is all they know.

V. Five Key Aspects of Establishing Vision

The definitive passage on having and giving a vision is going to be found in the Old Testament book of Habakkuk, Habakkuk chapter 2 verses 1 through 3. In our remaining time, I want to look at this. It is an incredible chapter. This is the definitive passage on how to get the vision to, first of all, for me to you, the church, second of all, moms and dads to your children. The context historically is Israel is in its darkest hour right before the captivity. Habakkuk in chapter 2 and really the whole book, he is trying to give them back the vision of, hey, guess what? The same three things that I do for you, you need to do for your child. He is trying to get them to see who they are. They are God's people, the nation of Israel. He is trying to get them to see where they are going and he is trying to show them how they get there, but they reject it. He says in Habakkuk 2:1-3,

Habakkuk 2:1-3

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

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

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

There are five key aspects in these three verses for a parent establishing and getting the vision to their children or for me as a pastor getting it to this church.

5. I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower.

The first thing I like here, he says in verse 1, “I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower.” Then he says this, “I am going to see what he will say unto me and what shall I answer when I am reprov’d.” You know that is a good question. I want to see how some of your fathers answer what was laid out this morning. I want to see what happens. I want to see the answer now that you have seen it with your family.

Mom and dad, your child is growing up on your watch and you are responsible for them on your watch. What do you see? Do you see what God sees? I am going to tell you your children will have challenges. My children have challenges. All children will have challenges. I mean you teach them to bat when they play ball, you teach them to shoot hoops, you teach them to kick a soccer ball. When was the last time you sat down and prayed with them through a tough time? When was the last time they were struggling with something and you just said, “Come on over here, let us sit down. Tell me what the issue is. I will tell you what. Let us just go to the Lord. I will tell you what. You pray first, I will pray second.” See that is submitting yourself to them. You want your wife and your family to follow your leadership. When you do the same thing that God did, when He submitted Himself to me, how do I not submit myself to Him? That is how it works. When was the last time you just sat down and prayed through a tough time with them? I mean you yell at them to get right. You yell at them to do the right things. When was the last time instead of yelling you just sat down and opened up the Bible and said, “Hey, let us pray together.” You know when you get two people praying together, your problems pretty much can get resolved.

It says a tower. That is a high place. You know what a tower does for you with your children? It gives you a three dimensional perspective of where they are at. You know the three dimensional perspective every child has? It is just emotional, it is just spiritual and it is physical. You stand your watch. You watch their lives. You watch them go through the things that they go through. You are there for them. You see them and you help them keep in perspective through all that they struggle through their growth process. When you are on the watch and you are looking in a perspective higher than their issues, they will see their issues one way. You are supposed to see them another way. They see them as, “Well, my person at school does not want to be my friend.” You are supposed to look beyond that and understand how to use that. Why? Because you are higher looking down on their issues. You help them through whatever they go through to keep the perspective who they are, where they are going in life and how they are going to get there and why even though right now this may seem like it is a monumental thing in your life, honey it really is not compared to what God has got for

you. But you know what? Let us pray about it together. I do not want to ever blow off what you are going through. If it is important to you, it is important to me.

6. Write the vision.

A child needs to have the vision made clear to them to keep that vision reinforced in them. The key to training up children, really the key to anything whether it is the ministry or whatever you are doing is one word. It is consistency. Understanding the vision yourself, laying it out clearly and using it as a tool in training them, in disciplining them. “Hey look, I am not going to allow you to do that. I am not going to allow you to act that way. I am not going to allow you to go around biting people. I am not going to allow you to kick the preacher. I am not going to allow you to do this. I am not going to allow you to do that. I am not going to allow you to steal. I am not going to allow you to lie. I am not going to allow you to beat up your sister.” You know why? “Because God has something for you and if I do not deal with you on these things now, you will never find the purpose that God has for you. So I am going to deal with you on this because I love you. I am not going to deal with this on this because you are my child and I do not want a hectic household though that may be true. I am dealing with this long term because if I do not correct you now, nobody will correct you later.”

And praise. “That was great what you did. I am so proud of you. You did an incredible job. You know what? That is the exact kind of attitude, work ethic and what you did right here that God will bless and use you when you get into the ministry down the line someplace.” How do you use those things? In accountability. “Son, you are going to finish what you start. You know what? You went from here to here and you never did anything. You know what? God has something for you and I have got to help you. You know what? I am not only going to make you finish what you started. From this point on, you and I are going to work together that we make the right choices about the things you get involved in so you do finish what you start.” How do you use it? They are tools. You can scream and yell at them and call them stupid. Surely they are. They are kids. Where were you at when you were that age? Were you with Einstein?

In school work. I was a terrible student. I am not proud of it. I am not telling you this kid so you can be a terrible student. I am telling you, I was a terrible student. I was in the sixth grade so long the kids brought me the apple. They thought I was the teacher. I had to bribe my civics teacher to get out of graduate from high school because I was not going to pass. I went to him and I said, “Look,” he was a nice guy, a safe guy. I forget his name. I went to him and I said, “Look, I am going in the Army as soon as I get out of school. I need to pass. What can I do? I am not trying to bribe you. I just said, what can I do to get the credit, to get what I need to graduate?” He said, “Okay.” He said, “Here is what I need. I need a copy of a model state constitution for Missouri.” I never heard of a model state constitution. I knew model airplanes, model cars. I did not know what a model state is. Is it something you put together with glue, what is it? Remember the mission statement? I called my state representative. I said, “You know what?” I said, “I am trying to do a favor for my government teacher. He needs a copy of a model state constitution for Missouri.” He said, “Give me your address, son. I appreciate that. I will have it to you in the mail.” Got it? Took it in? He said, he gave me a D. But I passed.

School is important, kids. The things you learn in school, you may not see it right now. I am going to watch. I am higher than you. I can see what you cannot see. You down the lines someplace and you really want to learn the Bible, it is going to be the skills you learn in school and how you study reading composition, understanding a story and how it composed after you read it. Those things are invaluable. Do not worry about math. You can get a calculator. History, absolutely vital. Biology. Do not miss cutting up frogs. Get one of still alive. You cannot understand how important doing in school good now is going to be used down the line when you really, when God reveals Himself to you. What do you do with these things? You just scream and yell and throw up your hands and say, "Well, I do not know what to do." I am going to be on your knees with them, helping them see and instilling a vision of what they need to do. If you do not give them the vision of what they need to do, somebody else is going to give them the vision of what they do not need to do.

In sports, most kids play sports. Why, sports is the most natural teaching element about the Bible that you ever saw in your life because the game of life is like a baseball game and the devil is pitching. First base is temptation. Second base is sin. Third base, right around it. Your goal is to be safe at home. You know in a baseball game, you have got an umpire. He is the final authority. You know that you may not like all the calls you get playing ball, but the final authority says you are out, you are out. You know in the Christian life, you have got a final authority, the Word of God. You may not like all the calls, but what it calls it, it calls it. You can use it. You can use it.

7. Make it plain upon the tables.

Here is the time you spend in the Bible with them, making it plain, sitting down with your child and making it clear to him and her that they are God's heritage and our family is going to be different. This is why I do not allow you to hang out with some people. Do not just say you cannot go be with that person. Tell them why. Give them the vision. Make it plain. Our family is different. It is not that we do not like them, it is just the fact that I do not like the influence of them and I am not going to have you be under that influence. God has got something for you. Setting the vision for them plainly. Who we are as a family, where we are going as a family and how we are going to get there as a family. Does your child have your family mission statement? Do they understand it? Do they even have one? Making it plain.

You know, my preaching, my preaching is not great. I am terrible with grammar and English language when I preach. I am never politically correct. But it is plain. My goal in preaching has always been one thing, put it right across the plate waist high where you can swing at it. It is too plain for some of God's people, but that is okay. The good is something that somebody just said if nobody understands what they said.

8. That he may run that readeth it.

Paul said run the race. 1 Corinthians 9:24-25. He says in 2 Timothy 2:5, 2 Timothy 2:5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. Paul said in the book of Hebrews chapter 12, he says, Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Now your kid is in sports, is he? Every one of your kids

should know the six rules of running a race. In the Bible? They in sports? Some of your kids run track. Alex ran track. Jack ran track. William stole cars. He is in jail this morning. He is not here. He is a witch doll. But you know you have got your kid in those things, use it. Use whatever they are doing. You are on a watch. You are on a tower. You have got a different perspective. You are the parent. If my kid was running track and out there I would come out that night and we would sit down and I would say, "You know what? You did a great job. But you know what? Running a race for Raytown South or Raytown or wherever you go or Alabama or KU, it is just like the Bible, man. It is just like life. Now son, let me give you six rules for the race of life that line up to the race that you just ran. And you did a great job." My little girl's granddaughters ran track this year. Maddie jumped a high bar, 27 feet. I would say, "Son, let me give you six rules and run in a race. And you do this when you run next week, but you also do this when you run the race of life. Because you know what, son? You know what, honey? I want to help be your coach for sports, but I also want to be your coach for life. So let me give you six rules." Run as hard as you can. Give it everything you have got. When that gun goes, cracks, and that break out of those blocks, you run with everything you have got. When you get into the race of life and you start running for God, honey, son, you give it everything you have got. This messes up more runners than you ever know. When you start to run the race, you stay in your own lane. You stay in your own lane. You focus on yourself and your race. Do not get in somebody else's business lane. Son, when you are coming around there and you are jumping over those things, every good runner who runs the race and jumps the hurdles will tell you when you are running, do not look at the hurdles. Look beyond them. You look at the hurdles, you will smash into it every time. Look beyond the hurdle. In life! Do not look at the hurdles. Look beyond the obstacles that are in your way. Son, I will tell you the fifth thing. When you are running that race and you are running with everything that you have got, do not be looking up in the stands to see who is watching. You run for your own purpose. Son, I will tell you something else when you get in that race. You get down in that position, they are ready to go. When you are on a swimming board, John knows this, and you are going to dive in, no false starts. Do it God's way. No false starts. The sixth thing, son, is probably the most important. You run as hard as you can, you stay in your own lane, you do not look at the hurdles, you do not worry about the crowd in the stadium. No false starts. And son, run lawfully. Do it by the book. No shortcuts. Use the two things that God put into your life as structure. The Word of God and the local New Testament church in your family.

9. 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.

There is that short term, long term, the vision for an appointed time. The day God reveals Himself to that child, we saw it in 1 Samuel chapter 3. We talked about it Thursday night, how we laid that chapter out. What you do in providing a vision, a mission statement, will be the foundation that God will use to develop them to become His reward, the fruit of the womb, is His reward. God's heritage. Being patient with your child. Hey, they are kids. They do dumb things. All kids do dumb things. But you stay consistent on the long term vision. Keep that vision reinforced in them. They will get out of their stupidity. They will get out of their stupid things. The problem is that most parents never get out of theirs. It will

come at the appointed time. It will come in your time. You may have to go through some hard times, some tough times. They may struggle with some things. Your job is to stand on your watch, look at those 3 aspects and reinforce through the vision, who they are, where we are going, and how as a family we are going to get there. You are to submit yourself as the dad to the wife and to the kids. Sit down and ask them, "What can I do better? How can I do this?" You want them to follow you? Then you submit yourself. Listen to what they have to say. Correct to what you have got to correct. Drop the pride act. Do what God did for you. Came down and bore everything that was for you and for me.

Mom and Dad, your job is simple. Stay consistent. Stay consistent. Hold the line of consistency when your child is not. It will always bring about the right consistency in time and their life. It is short term and long term. Do not just focus on what is going today. Look where it is going tomorrow, next year. Stand on your watch, beyond that tower. Get the three dimensional perspective of where your child is, who they are, where they are going, and how you are going to get them there. Stand your watch. Understand where they are at physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Now I guarantee you, maybe up to this point you have not provided a vision for your child the right way. It is okay. I told you when I started, this is not a condemnation to anybody. I am here to help you. I am doing my job. I am here to do whatever it has to be done. I do not care if you have been the most miserable failure with your family that the world has ever seen. Nobody has, but I do not care if you would be. It can all change. In three weeks your child, many of you, will come back from camp with a fresh, renewed vision. I will do all the work for you. That is my job. I am here to help you. It is okay that you have not been able to do it up to now. I do not care. Nobody cares. It is all right. But now is the time to pick up your responsibility in keeping that vision, that he will come home with alive for the rest of their lives.

I promise you, I will hit every aspect of his life that week. Danny, Zach, and Joe are going to come after him on the Mighty Men of Valor for the afternoon sessions, and I am coming back, and I am going to build on what they did, and I have got four messages that I am going to drop on them. I am going to build them into you, you into them. I am going to tell them what you mean to me, how important you are to me, and how their failure in your family is a disastrous, I am going to do everything I know how to do. I am going to give them talk about the Bible. I am going to talk about God. I am going to talk about respecting the parents. I am going to talk about the balance, service, ministry, the world. I am going to talk about their friends. I am going to talk about relationships. I am going to talk about school. I am going to cover everything, but you must be ready to take up that vision and run with it when they come back so they can run with it. I can only do so much.

VI. Practical Steps for Parents

My suggestion to you is the next three weeks you do three basic things if your kid is going to camp.

10. Start praying with them about what God will do at camp. Let them know that from this point on it is going to be different.
11. Sit down and talk to them about your family mission statement. It is okay if you do not have one. Make one up. Just go to the Bible and say, "Hey, you know what, do what I have already gave you, you know, our mission statement is to make you strong spiritually, emotionally, and physically, and this is what we are going to do." My mission statement for our family is going to be that we are going to give you just take it from what we talked about today.
12. Start preparing yourself for a new child by giving them new parents.

Your child in sports, I think that is a great thing. As I have already said, so many lessons to learn in winning and losing. We live in a world now that wants to take out the losing aspect. You do know that. Everybody gets a medal for just participating. Nothing destroys a child's ability to recover from a, from, I know, I have lost at almost everything I have done in life in sports. We won one game this year. It would not cause my pitching when they are, I want to tell you something. All my life I have had failures. You know, you can look at that and you can say when your life, you struggle with things and your child fails and you fail, you can look at it one or two ways. You can look at it, you know, Edison one time, who created a light bulb, he failed a thousand times before he got a light bulb that worked. Somebody said to him, "Mr. Edison, do you feel bad that you failed one thousand times in building a light bulb that would work?" He said, "Not at all. I just found out one thousand ways how not to make a light bulb." It is all how you look at it. We learn from our mistakes. Part of the greatest growth process that you will ever have are the dumb things that we do if you approach it the right way. I am not telling you to go out and do dumb things. I do not have to do that. We will do those on our own. It is what you do with it.

Many of your dads coach these teams and I think that is a great thing. I think in the world of sports, especially Little League and things like that, some of those guys out there are just absolutely horrendous. I think your being part of that is like mom being part of your kids going to school. It provides a real balance and stability. I think that is great. But let me give you some advice. Do not be their coach in sports and never get to the place where you are their coach in life. You stand your watch. You wait for the vision. You write the vision. You make it plain so that he or she can run with it. Be patient. It will come. It will come at the appointed time. Our job is to get these kids to the place where when they come back that we do not lose it like so many times in other camps they have been lost. We now have within our church the ability to do this because your kids, as I said the first time I preach, are the most important asset of this church. It is the most, their most important part. I am enjoying, cannot wait to go just to be with them. I want to tell them how much I love their mom and dad. I want to tell them. I see them all the time and hug them and talk to them but I have never had a chance to look them in the eye and tell them what you, mom and dad, mean to me. How that I could not do what I do without you. That you are just part of everything in my life that you have just sacrificed to make this church what it is. You do whatever is asked of you. You never complain. You just do whatever. I cannot wait to tell them how important every one of you is to me so through that they will understand how important they are to me. They are your kids but they are my kids too because you are my kids and I am responsible for you. You are responsible for them. Together, just as I will submit myself

to you and you follow my leadership, you submit yourself to them and they will follow your leadership. It is just that simple.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you and praise you for the Lord Jesus and we do love you.