

I. Introduction and Camp Preparation

They had the question out of Genesis 24 about Rebekah, Isaac, and Eliezer. Now you understand a little bit better how that song was put together years and years ago. Somebody saw the message of the Gospel of Christ coming to find a bride for His Son through the Holy Spirit of God, which is typified in that great story. That is my favorite song in the whole wide world, so I appreciate that.

Camp is just two weeks away. We are on a countdown to camp, you might say. I know that next week is the Republican convention, but we have more important things to look at: camp and what God is going to do.

We have been taking this month before camp to prepare parents on how to keep their child where God wants him or her to be when they get back. I told you last week that so many camps are short-term in their impact. Children go there for a week, and I am not saying you do not get some good things done, certainly you do. However, kids go to camp, they get excited, God does something, but then they come back and the impact is lost. Understandably so, parents have been working all week, dealing with problems in the home that they had to fix, and things that go wrong, so they are not on the same page. We wanted to change that this year. We wanted to talk about how everyone will be on the same page before you go to camp, so you know what to expect, and everyone will be on the same page when we come back from camp. This year, we can not only see the short-term, but also the long-term.

Last week, we added to our study. We started in 1 Samuel 1-3, which are the definitive original chapters on parenting in the Bible. They show you from the beginning to the end how to truly do what you need to do with your child. It is an incredible study, and it is all built around the life of a woman named Hannah.

Then I showed you last week how a camp works, its inner workings. I took a few moments and talked about the anatomy of a camp, how it is more than just taking a bunch of kids and having fun and doing a lot of things that kids love to do. It is more than that. There is a strategy behind it. There is an anatomy. There is a tender balance that has to be kept the week of a camp.

II. Providing a Vision for Your Child

Last week, we started a study on probably the key element in the family and training up children: providing a vision for your child. As far as I am concerned, last Sunday was the anchor point for your family. It was the absolute anchor point by which you must anchor your family to be everything that God wants it to be. I gave you two definitive verses in the Bible on providing a vision for your family, emphasizing how important the Father is in the family, that He has to see Himself as the key player and the key to it all.

So that we can get ourselves on the same page, allow me to give you those two verses again today, even though I will not be preaching on them. The first was 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.

Then I took you to the book of Habakkuk 2:1-3, and I gave you the vision defined.

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.

I told you last week how this is true of a church. A pastor has to provide a vision for the church. A pastor has to know who he is, where he is going, and how he is going to get there. He needs to take that vision and get it to the people. This church needs to know who you are, where you are going, and how we are going to get there. Fundamentally, we use that verse all the time, as I told you last week, in providing a vision for a church. But it is also, in this context, true of a family. Your family needs to have a vision. Your family needs to understand who they are in Christ Jesus. Your family needs to understand where you are going as a family under the guidelines of the Word of God. They need to know how they are going to get there. That is your responsibility. Mom, it is your responsibility to follow that and lay that out.

When I gave you Habakkuk 2, I then gave you five key areas out of this verse that you want to really focus on. First, it says, "I will stand upon my watch." I talked about how, as parents, you have the watch care of your children. The Bible says, "I stand upon my watch at a tower." A tower is an elevated position that gives you an advantage point to see things in a three-dimensional aspect. If you are just on the ground level, you only see one dimension. But when you get up higher than the surroundings around you, you now have the ability to see three dimensions. I talked about the three perspective dimensions that a parent on their watch on that tower needs to look for:

1. Their physical well-being.
2. Their spiritual well-being.
3. Their emotional well-being.

Those three areas will be in constant change as your child grows: from the time they are little kids, to the time they are adolescents, to the time they are teenagers, to the time that they are adults. Those three areas are absolutely crucial. When I talk about providing a vision for your child and you standing on your watch on a tower, I am talking about you, through the Word of

God and His principles, watching your child in these three areas. They will have physical challenges; yes, they will. They will have emotional challenges; certainly, they will. And they will have spiritual challenges. They will have things come into their life that they are not ready to handle. That is why God gave them parents. The problem is that most parents do not handle them very well either, so the whole system breaks down.

The second thing is to write out the vision, the mission statement for your family. Does your family clearly understand? I understand that a lot of times this is not a document that you write down, although it can be. Many families, just because of the impact of the mom and the dad and their involvement in the things of God, have a very clear mission statement for their family without ever writing a word down. Their children understand that and go along with that. But your children need to have and understand the mission statement of your family. Is your family just here to exist, have more kids, and have family reunions that go on through generations? Why did God choose the family unit? Do you even understand why the family unit is central to God's evangelizing the world?

Then we talked about the third thing: making it plain upon the table. This will be the reinforcement of the vision. Throughout the early years, throughout the teenage years, they never lose sight of who this family is and where we are going. I have built myself into many of you young men and young ladies. The leadership capacity of our church is off the charts, as far as I am concerned. You say, "Well, that is just your opinion. I would have a different..." Well, mine is the only one that matters this morning, so just stay with that one for a little bit. The potential of leadership and maturity in this church is off the charts. I have purposely, from day one, the day we started, in my mind, my plan was to build men and women so that if the Lord tarries and I would no longer be able to do what I do, this church would go on, this church would continue. You have to realize that there is a reason for your family, just like there is a reason for a church. I get it. Most churches go around in a circle, just like most families do, and neither one of them understand what they really are in the Bible and how God is going to use them. It is a crucial thing.

The fourth thing is, "that he may run that readeth it." We talked about the race of life. We call it the human race, but life is a race. Paul understood it in 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 and again in 2 Timothy 2:5. I remember I told you that you ought to sit down with your child and talk about the six rules of the race of life. There will be some uphill battles in life. There will be uphill roads they will have to go. In life, there will be many twists and turns that they will have to negotiate. They need to understand that this is a race where the winner receives, the Bible says, a crown of righteousness at the judgment seat of Christ if he finishes. But he must run lawfully.

The fifth thing is that the vision is for an appointed time. You do not always see what God is going to do when they are growing up. You are caught in the middle of the physical, the emotional, and the changes between the spiritual. Your child is an imperfect little kid, but at the time they hit junior high age, you scratch your head and wonder how they turned into a three-headed monster when they hit those early teens. Everything about them is changing: their relationships, their own physical body, their emotions. They are being stretched and pulled. Now they have to face things that they are not prepared to face, but the parent ought to be prepared.

One of the ways you do that is by giving them the vision. Get them the vision, realizing that "we are going to stay with this. We are going to help you. I am not giving up on you. We are going to get through this." This involves dealing with the issues they struggle with, you as the parent getting on your knees and praying with them, being their best prayer partner in whatever they are struggling with. We saw how the vision is for an appointed time: the process of God revealing Himself to your child and their development as they grow and mature. We saw in 1 Samuel 3:19 how Samuel grew and was established to be God's prophet. The Bible says that He let none of His words fall to the ground. 1 Samuel 2:26 says that as He grew, He had the favor of God and man. We build it around 1 Samuel 1:28, where Hannah looked at her boy. Through prayer, she asked God to give her a man child. Then she said, "God, I am going to lend him to You. For the rest of his life, I am going to lend him to the Lord so that God can do with him what He wants to do." She did everything she knew how to do to get her child where God could do something with him.

III. Life's Simplicity: The Three Life-Altering Days

Today, I want to give you another level on this vision: preparing parents for prepared kids. I want to give you another angle, another aspect on the vision for your family and your children. One of the simplest ways to look at what God calls life, and it never ceases to amaze me—the longer I am in the ministry, the longer I am a Christian, the longer I am hanging out with people—is how the number one thing we all do is take the basic, simple things that God has for us and make them so complicated. That is our nature; that is what we do. We just cannot look at things in their simplest form. Our society is so complex, our lives are so complex, that sometimes I really think we just cannot identify with something that is simple anymore. We work to make hard the things that God works to make so simple. I want to talk about the next level of this vision: preparing your child for life and how it can be so easy if you just follow what the Bible says.

Yet, I have to tell you, most people I have met in my life have never stopped and looked at life in its true basic format. They all look at it with all the relationships, jobs, bills, cars, houses, pets, everything you have, and all the extracurricular activities you like to get involved in, which there is certainly nothing wrong with. To them, it adds up to being very complicated. To me, I have never looked at life that way. One of the things that God has given me, and I do not know why He did, is to be able to look at something that is completely complicated and then break it down into its simplest form. It is the way I have to do this. It is the way I did the Bible. It is the way I teach you the Bible. I do not just stop there; I look at everything in life. When couples come in and they have marital problems, though they could go on for hours, days, weeks, months with all the issues, I see it as a fundamental, very simple problem. I know they have to get it out of their system. I know they have to talk about it; that is what I am here for. But I also know that every problem we have has a very simple solution to it. The problem is people will not do that simple solution. That is the issue. Of course, we have all seen that in dealing with people.

To me, Psalms 90:9-12 has always been a great passage. I want you to look at it for a moment. It has always been a great passage for me; it has always been a great passage that I have applied to my own life in a number of ways. Psalms 90:9 says:

Psalms 90:9

For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

You know that is true. Long after you are dead, we do it now. You will gather with your family, and somebody in your family—an uncle, an aunt, or a parent—who has been dead for 10 or 15 years. You will gather and say, "Oh, wasn't Uncle Fred really a fun guy?" And you will get this, or "How about whoever over here?" Their life has now come down to a tale that is told. We talk about them. We talk about what they did, how they impacted our lives, funny stuff about them. Then Psalms 90:10 says:

Psalms 90:10

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

You know what he is saying? He is saying this thing we put so much emphasis on in life is an average of 70 years. After that 70 years, which we put all the focus on as Christians, after 70 years of a tale being told, we get cut off and we fly away. Seventy short years that we put all the emphasis on. If you are saved, you have a whole eternity ahead of you that you know nothing about. Strange, isn't it? It has always been strange for me. The days of our years are threescore and ten; that is 70. He says, "Yet if by reason of strength," some people endure longer than others, he says, "if you go to 80 years," the end is still the same, and at the end, you fly away. Psalms 90:11 says:

Psalms 90:11

Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

Then in Psalms 90:12, what a great verse Psalms 90:12 is:

Psalms 90:12

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

That verse says that when it comes to life, you and I are to stop and consider some things. Psalms 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." I am going to tell you something: there is something about life on planet Earth that is more important than just all the fun things that we do. There is something about life that he says we should number our days and consider what these days are, applying our hearts unto wisdom. It goes without saying that most people, God's people, never do that. You cannot get into the Bible and not think about life. For me, when I looked at this years ago, when I was breaking down all the complexity of life, I came to the conclusion, based on the Bible saying that we are to number our days, that life is about three days. I took that a little farther than just looking at the days and counting the days that I am alive, or how many days I have left. I went a little different than that. I found out that life, in its simplicity, is about three days. He says, "Number your days." I did: one, two, three. Life on planet Earth, if you want to get life down to its basic common denominator and you want to understand it and get prepared and prepare your kids for it, number

your days. I am telling you right now, life on planet Earth is just about Day One, Day Two, and Day Three. I am going to walk you through that in just a moment.

It was an amazing thing that I found out because I began to realize that these three days, when you number your days and apply wisdom to it, are the three days that come into our life that change everything about us. When Day One comes into your life, you will never be the same again. When Day Two comes into your life, you will never be the same again. When Day Three comes into your life, your life will never be the same again. I want to talk about preparing your child for life. I want to talk about preparing your child for what is coming their way because 85% of you will experience these three days. I want to prepare your child at camp for life by getting them to understand and teaching them to number their days. You want your kids to do right? You want your kids to love God? I will show you how easy it is. Can you count to three? That is all it is. It is not about "oh, this and all that." It is just one, two, three. Can anybody here not do that? Count to three: one, two, three. Life is contained in those three days. Those three days are absolutely life-changing days. I want to talk to you about it today.

The parent's job is simple. You say, "Well, I have this and I have that." No, you are making it too complicated. The parent's job is to number their days, apply their hearts unto wisdom, look at these three days coming into your child's life, forget everything else, and prepare your child for Day One, then Day Two, and then Day Three.

In your physical world, I love it when I do things like this because I have your attention; nobody is sleeping yet. In your physical world, most of what we go through are temporary changes in life. They really are. You get a new job; it is new for a short time, and then it just becomes routine. You go into the military, you go into the Army; it is a two-year, three-year, four-year enlistment if you just go in for a short time, and it is a change, but it is temporary. Sooner or later, you come back home, go back to work. You go to college after high school; that is a change, but it is temporary. You move back home or move somewhere; it will be over at some point in life. You will get over it. You find a new boyfriend, congratulations, but in many cases, those things change. You find a new girlfriend, hey, great, but in most cases, those things change. Young kids get boyfriends and girlfriends, and you deal with it all the time in my ministry. They get hooked up with each other, and then they break up and stuff like that. I know it is a terrible time. I know it is a hard emotional time, but it is part of life. I broke every girl's heart in the sixth grade, I understand. But these things are temporary in life; they are changes, but they are temporary. Sooner or later, it all goes back.

But for a child of God, everything you face in life will revolve around just three days. I want to tell you something: the success of your Christian life will revolve around these three days. I will tell you something else: the success of your marriage will revolve around these three days. And I will tell you something else: the success of your family will revolve around these three days. You say, "Oh man, I have marital problems. I have kid problems. I have personal problems. I am going to go see a psychiatrist. I am going to go see a psychologist. What can I do?" Just learn to count to three: three days. I want to tell you something else: you have total and complete control of these three days. They are not three days that just open the door and jump on you. You see these days coming. You have total control in your life over these three days. Again, I must

confess to you, I have not met very many people who ever saw these. Certainly, not many ever numbered them, and not many could apply their hearts unto wisdom in this area. Life has three life-altering days. There are three changing days that will change life forever, and 85% of you will experience all three days.

I want to talk for a few moments about giving your child a vision of these three days. This takes the vision we talked about last week to the next level. I want to talk about giving your child a vision for these three days, preparing them for what is coming. I want to tell you what these three days are, and then I am going to walk you through them.

4. Day number one that will change your life: the day you got saved.
5. Day number two that will change your life: the day you get married.
6. Day number three that will change your life: the day you begin to have a family and have children.

John Jo, would you stand up and ask God's blessing and pray for us this morning? Amen.

Over the course of your lifetime, when these three days happen, I am going to tell you something: everything in your life will never be the same again. Everything else in your life, except when you die, will be temporary. When these three days come into your life, they will change and alter everything about you. You will no longer be the way you were. These three days will demand that. I get it. There are some folks that get saved and they never get married; I understand that. There are some folks that get saved and get married and never have a family; I get that. Some get married and do not have children. I understand that, but I am going to tell you that 85 to 90% of you sitting here this morning will not be in that category.

IV. Day One: Salvation

Let us talk about Day One, the life-changing day: the day you got saved. Needless to say, your life will never be the same again. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

We have in our church what we call Discipleship One. Discipleship One is where you sit down with somebody or a small group, and they bring you through and teach you the basic fundamentals of the new Christian life. We have developed over a period of time what we commonly, lovingly, affectionately call Discipleship Two. Discipleship Two is the next level, and it is based on a study that we did a while back that simply says the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. When you got saved, seven things changed about you, and your life will never be the same again. I mean, it will never be the same again. I do not care what you do. I do not care if you follow God or you do not follow God. When you had the life-changing experience of salvation, your life changed. You got a new heart. You got a new song. You got a new mind through a new birth. You got a new nature, and you are going to spend an eternity in a New Jerusalem. It is all new.

On this new day, you begin to build the most important relationship you will ever have. This is why this day is life-changing. This is why you will never be the same again when this day comes, because now, as a new creature in Christ Jesus with old things passed away, you will begin to build the most important relationship you will ever have: a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. In time, as you build this relationship based on this life-altering day, nothing or no one will ever be more important than this relationship that has changed you completely on this day. Once this day is recognized in your life, once you as the parent prepare your child for this life, once you parents recognize it in your own life, you will realize that the greatest relationship you will ever have is one through which all other relationships will be viewed—not around, but through. This lesson will answer so many questions. Out of the darkness, into the light. A life of darkness into a life of light; they do not go together. This day has a three-fold concept: you got saved from your sin, you got sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption, and now you are sanctified. You are set apart from the world to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing will ever be the same in your life again. You may have been happy in life, or thought you were, before you got saved, but after you get saved, you have no idea the happiness that will come into your life because of that relationship with Jesus Christ. If you get saved this day and you do not let it do what God wants you to do, you will have no idea how miserable you will be. Your life changed. Before, you would go out and do all the things in the world, and you did not; you just went home and slept like a baby. Now the Holy Spirit of God is inside you, and when you sin against God and go home and try to sleep, that old Holy Spirit just works you over. It is not the same anymore. It changed. Oh, it changed.

I want to tell you the "tech talk" of Day Number One so you can see how complicated this can become if you do not learn these days. The day you got saved, you became two people—an old nature and a new nature. Do you understand? Could you explain that through the Bible? Not only that, the Bible says now you became one with Christ. Can you take me in the Bible and show me that? If not, then you do not understand Day One. Now Day Two compounds on Day One. Now you are one with Christ. Now you are two people, old nature and a new nature. Now you are a man and a woman who want to get married, and the Bible says when you get married, now the two become one. Well, if you are both saved, you are already one with Christ. How do you get a second 'one' out of one? How did you become one with Christ here, but now you get married, you two become one when you were two before, and yet you are still two people in old nature and new nature? It gets very confusing. But I want to tell you something: if you do not understand those days and the importance of those days and how those days impact you and change everything in your life, you are headed for some trouble.

V. Day Two: Marriage

I want to tell you something: if you are single, take it from us married guys. When you get married, your life changes. Paul made the reference in 1 Corinthians 7 where he said, if you stay unmarried, you care for the things of the Lord. If you get married, now you have to care for the things of the world. Those are the worldly things you have to take care of with your wife. It all changes. Before, you used to say, "All right, I will be there in 20 minutes. I will shoot some hoops." You go out the door, and now you say, "Yeah, I will be there in 20 minutes. I will shoot

some hoops." Your wife will say, "The grass needs to be cut." Your life changed. "Yeah, I will meet you down at Table Rock. We will take two days and fish." "Mama is coming over for her birthday." Your life changes. Your wife will never be the same again.

In the Bible, there is a definite role for a husband. In the Bible, there is a definite role for the wife. I am going to tell you right now, most of God's people that are married have no idea what those roles are. Getting married before you understand your roles will 100% of the time lead to a disaster. If you try to get into Day One before you fully understand and can appreciate what happened on Day One, you are headed into a mess. God has a reason for marriage. God has a plan for marriage. It was not that in caveman times, the guy came out of the cave and had a big club and saw a woman over there that he wanted to be his wife. He walks over and whacks her on the head, drags her by the hair into his cave, and that is the way it is. That is not how marriage starts. It did not come down through a line as we got more civilized. We thought that hitting them with a club was not a good idea and that we should ask them and give them the option. So civilization came up with the idea of holy matrimony. No, no, no. It was never the world's plan; it was always God's plan. The Bible makes it very clear that God gave marriage to men and women so that God's plan could be enacted through that plan. Marriage was not given so you could do what you want to do. Marriage was not given so you could have relationships and intimacy without feeling guilty about it. It was given because it is a plan of God to establish God's concept to take it to the world. Look at Genesis 1.

Without a doubt, 100% of the marriage counseling that I do, the problems start right here. They got into something that God designed, and then they try to run it by another set of standards that God never intended to run by, and they actually wonder why it does not work. The definitive passage on marriage, we gave it to you Thursday night through Linda's question: Genesis 24. Nineteen principles on how to find a spouse. Nineteen principles to tell you when to get married, what to look for in somebody. Do not allow yourself to get caught into something before you see these things. There are three absolutely key ingredients in marriage. If you do not have them, if you do not see them, if you do not understand it, take my advice: do not get married until you do.

Here is the number one problem that people get into: they get saved and then they actually think that as long as they find somebody else that is saved, "Oh man, that is all I have to do." You are out of your mind. You have missed Day One, and now you are again going to add more weight to Day One by entering into Day Two. You are going to have two life-changing days in your life that you are not ready for. Your kids sitting here this morning are headed for those days; they will never figure it out on their own. It is your job. It is different after you get saved. After you get saved and you are figuring out Day Number One, let me give you Rule Number One you follow. I say this all the time; if there is anything that people get upset with me about, it is what I am about to tell you. I have never figured it out. Well, I have, but I just do not tell everybody. But here it is: if you just got saved and you are trying to figure your own relationship out with God, and you do not have it there yet, and you cannot explain these things of Day One, here is the rule you follow: you cannot build two intimate relationships at the same time. You cannot build a relationship with God while you are building a relationship with a guy or a girl on a serious level. You cannot do it because God demands your attention. God demands your intimacy. God

demands your total attention to get that relationship established. Let us just be honest. You are a young Christian; you do not know anything about the Bible; you do not know anything about God. God is some concept of a disguise someplace in a place called heaven, and you have Susie Q over here or Johnny Guy over here, and you can see them. You can talk to them. You can call them. They are right there where you can see them. God is a Spirit. You have not yet learned how to worship Him in spirit and truth. God is going to lose every time. You are going to look at her; you are going to look at him, and you are going to look over here and see nothing. You cannot build two intimate relationships. You have to learn how to look and to see Him who is invisible. Rule Number One: I have had people get up and tell me all the time like I am trying to take something from them. I am a lot of heartache. You have to establish the one with God first before you marry or even get into a consideration of marriage.

Tech talk: the last time, Day One, you became two people—an old nature and a new nature. Do you understand? Could you explain that through the Bible? Not only that, the Bible says now you became one with Christ. Can you take me in the Bible and show me that? If not, then you do not understand Day One. Now Day Two compounds on Day One. Now you are one with Christ. Now you are two people, old nature and a new nature. Now you are a man and a woman who want to get married, and the Bible says when you get married, now the two become one. Well, if you are both saved, you are already one with Christ. How do you get a second 'one' out of one? How did you become one with Christ here, but now you get married, you two become one when you were two before, and yet you are still two people in old nature and new nature? It gets very confusing. But I want to tell you something: if you do not understand those days and the importance of those days and how those days impact you and change everything in your life, you are headed for some trouble.

VI. Day Three: Family

Day Three, the day you start a family, it all changes here. Now you understand your favorite verse, 1 Corinthians 13:11. Paul, speaking, said:

1 Corinthians 13:11

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

My suggestion is to get a toy box when you have to do that, because most of your life is going to be picking up after your children's childish things, because you become a man and now you have a family, and now you have something you are responsible for. Before Day One, it was just you and your relationship with the Lord. Now, does it get complicated! Now you are married on Day Two, you have your wife. Now you are married and have a family on Day Three; you have added a family to it. Does this answer a lot of questions? Just as there is a role of a husband on Day Two and a role of a wife on Day Two, when it comes to the third life-altering day, Day Three, there is a role of a father and there is a role of a mother, and they are not the same. They are not the same. Now your life becomes a real balancing act. Maybe you can begin to appreciate the issue of not understanding these three days. Maybe you can see better that these three days are

headed for your child, and they are right down the road. They are going to go into Day One—most of them are already past Day One, probably—but they are going to in time enter into Day Two without any understanding of what happened on Day One, and they are going to add that weight. Then they are going to go into Day Three, and they are going to add that weight on the weight that is already there, with the weight that they got by not understanding. Oh, what a mess it is going to be!

Now your life becomes a real balancing act. Day One, salvation: you are one with Christ, but now you are two people, old nature and a new nature.¹ John 3 says that you are a son of God, but yet it does not appear what you shall be. You do not even look like what you really are. Can you explain that? Day Two, you get married. Now, the two people married, but they become, two become one. Now they are husband and wife, but the two become one. How can you have a marriage without two people? If you have two and the two become one, you are short somebody in that marriage relationship. Can you answer that question? Yet you have two become one, yet you are still two people from Day One, you are still one with Christ. It becomes so complicated. Then you add to that, now you are a mom and a dad. Now you have to figure out the role of a husband and a wife, and now you have to figure out the role of a father and a mother—two different roles. Now you are given the responsibility of being a steward to God's heritage. What He clearly tells you is the reward of your womb, or the fruit of your womb, is His reward. You are going to take on that awesome responsibility, not understanding Day One, not understanding Day Two, and now you are just going to walk into Day Three. How is that for a tough balance? For you, your children, you are just going to walk into these three days—salvation, marriage, and the family—and never find out why God gave us salvation on Day One, marriage on Day Two, the family on Day Three. You are never going to figure it out, see the vision, get the vision, provide the vision, give the vision out as His plan for planet Earth's redemption. You wonder why your family is going to have issues, you wonder why your family has issues, and you are going to now pass that on, that lack of vision, to generation after generation of your children, while the devil will have a field day with you at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

VII. The Critical Order of the Three Days

Here is the next thing about these three days: these three days must be looked at and understood within the right and proper biblical order of their importance. You do not, listen to me, write it down, you do not want to get these days out of order. Kenzie, you do not want to get these days out of order. Maddie, you do not want to get these days out of order. Wherever you are, you do not want to get these days out of order. When we go to camp in two weeks, do you know what it is going to be about? Keeping these days in order, because I am telling you something: Day One, you got saved, you build a working relationship with God. When it is working, Day Two, you get married, and you build a working relationship with your wife based on Day Number One. When you get that working, the third day, you now have a family and build a working relationship with your kids based on Day One and Day Two. You want issues? You want problems? You want heartache in life? Just get these three days completely messed up and out of order. Man, those answer a lot of questions.

Just get saved on Day One, do nothing with it, never really learn how to build a relationship before you get into Day Two or even contemplate Day Two, and go ahead and get married without understanding your real fundamental number one relationship with God. I want to tell you something: I have seen moms and dads, and I never understood this. All my life in the ministry, I have seen moms and dads encouraging their daughter or their son to marry somebody before those kids had a clue. I have never understood it. I have never figured out why a parent who claims to be saved, who claims to love God, who claims to have some kind of marriage relationship themselves, would ever encourage a child to get involved with Day Two when they know nothing about Day One. My response to that is, "What planet do you live on?" Putting your child in that kind of situation. You, the parent, do you know what that is? Lack of vision. Trying to get their kids into a relationship of husband and wife when they do not even understand a one-on-one relationship with God.

I will tell you something else I have seen: get these days out of order. I have seen them get saved, not understand Day One, and then get married too young on Day Two. After a year or two years, either the husband or the wife, who knows nothing about a marriage, knows nothing about it with God, now they got married when they were 18 or 19, and now they are 20, 21, and they are saying to themselves, "Reality. Man, I missed all my fun days. All my friends were out doing their fun things. I am married. I am stuck. I have kids. They are going out tonight on Friday and Saturday. They are going here; they are going there. Me, I am here. I gave up all my fun years when I could have been out there. I could have waited and got married when life was over at 25. Now here I am, I am 18, 19, 20 years old. My life is gone. It has passed me by, and I am just gruddled." No, you are stupid.

I have seen them get married, not understand Day One, not a thing about it. No real working relationship. Oh, they are saved. Yes, they go to church. Yes, they even got the right Bible. So what? They have no—they never built a relationship with God. They have nothing to solve with God. Here comes Day Two. Oh, how many times I heard this? "Well, I have been married now for four or five years, and I have come to the realization that I do not really know this person. He is not who I thought he was." "I have been married now for three or four years, and she is not the same person I married. This is not what I thought it was." No, no, no. It is exactly what it was. It is exactly what it was. I call this, for you people in the counseling ministry, the Jacob-Leah syndrome. Jacob wanted a wife, did he not? Do you know who Jacob is? Jacob, the schemer who schemed for everything in his life, even schemed to get his wife, but then he met a guy who out-schemed him, and he worked seven years to get Rebekah or Rachel. On the wedding night, he is saying to himself, "Oh, that afternoon, Rachel is coming tonight. I am going to have my wife, my dream woman. Oh, yes, I love her. I have watched her. I know her. I have talked to her. I love talking with her. I love being around her. I just love her so much. Tonight is my night. I am going to get to have Rachel. I am so excited." Laban had different ideas, and he said, "You know what? You have to take Leah first." So he goes into the tent that night. Do you really think—I am just asking now—do you really think he did not figure out it was Leah until the morning? What do you think, Bubba? What do you think, Big Steve? Do you really think all the activity that went on that night on a wedding night, because that is how it constituted a marriage? And then he comes out the next morning and calls Laban on the cell phone and said, "Hey, she is not who I

thought she was." He knew the first words out of her mouth. He knew exactly that that was not Rachel; it was Leah. But Jacob is so in the flesh. Jacob is so out of touch with God. Jacob is so all about himself. Do you know what he did? He went through the fleshly act with that woman and said to himself, "Oh, figure it out in the morning." Do you know how you got in the mess you are in? One word: your flesh. You did not care about two years from now. You did not stop and think about three years from now. You did not stop and think about six months from now. It was the moment of your opportunity, your flesh. Do not kid me, man. This is not my first rodeo. Sometimes you have to break the ice, Bob. It was colder in here than in our guy in February. He was speaking on Mother's Day one time, and they had this dear, sweet old lady, about 86 years old. She was a widow lady. The pastor said, "Whoever is the oldest lady here today on Mother's Day, we are going to give you the honor of picking three hymns today." This little old lady, a widow lady, 66, stood up, and nobody was ordering her. He says to her, "Hon, what three hymns would you like?" She looked around and said, "Him, him, and him."

I have seen them not get married. You get this day out of order. Have one, two, three kids out of wedlock? What a disaster that is going to be. Kids growing up in a total life of confusion. A mom and dad who are not married. So, not really a mom and dad. A mom and dad who have no real commitment based on the Bible to each other, just to their flesh. How do you think that is going to play out? That will be exactly what happens down the line in families, why it just keeps on continuing: kids without a spiritual base, kids without a real mom and dad. Chicago. In Chicago, we have one of the worst crime rates anywhere in this country, if not the planet. There are so many gangs and so many shootings. So many absolute—I mean, by this time of year already, almost 2,000 murders in Chicago. Precedent. Young men, black and white, running in gangs; Hispanics, running in gangs; Japanese, Chinese, running in gangs; Koreans, Salvadorians, Guatemalans, running in gangs; gang warfare among each other. Do you know what the statistics say? 75% of those guys, no matter what their race, have no father at home. No discipline structure in their life. No accountability in their life. There it goes. Mom does the best she can; she gets them to the point, and then they roam the streets. If you get these days out of order, it will ruin your life.

You kids have a little song. I tried to get Macy to come up and sing it with me today, and none of my other grandkids would either. I hear them singing around the house all the time. Yes, it is a good one; I hope they take it. How many of you kids know this song? Raise your hand if I am talking about it. Yes, Macy sits in the house, and she has a little rhythm to it. It is about when somebody comes up to you to ask you for a date or whatever as a kid, and they walk around and say, "My name is no, my sign is no, my number is no, you need to let it go." I hope you keep that forever. Well, that may not be strictly biblical, but that is a vision right there. "My name is no, my sign is no, my number is no, you need to let it go." I was showing it over at John Knox Village last week and walked into a bunch of these old folks. I can see that old folks, they get to be 75, old folks get to be 90, and they get up in years and they go into these places. They do not have much of a social life, and it is not unheard of for romances to develop in places like that. It does not matter. Just because there is no smoke in the chimney does not mean there is no fire in the furnace, I want to tell you that. I saw these two people, and this old guy—I overheard what

they were saying—a guy in a wheelchair. He says, "Hi, are you new here?" She says, "Yeah, I just came in this week." He says, "What is your sign?" She said, "Blue Cross." All right.

Then I have seen this: I have seen them get married to an unsaved person. What planet do you live on? Christians being married into the devil's family. As in 2 Corinthians 6:14-16:

2 Corinthians 6:14-16

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hey, marry an unsaved person. What fellowship does righteousness have with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness, he says. And what concord? Concord means togetherness. You build a concourse; it bridges two things, concord together. Christ with Belial, Old Testament name for the devil. And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of God. And the great verse of Amos 3:3:

Amos 3:3

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

You will not. And your marriage, your life, and then when you have Day Three, the kids, now you have a saved spouse and an unsaved spouse, and if something does not change, brother—and it can change, I understand, but I am talking in cases that, in most cases, it does not change—now your kids grow up in that. They lose the whole vision of what God is doing. I have seen them getting married and not understanding these three key days that all your life is built around and will change every aspect of your life. Listen, for the most part today, Christian marriages are an absolute disaster. If there is anything anybody ought to be able to work out and solve any problem, it ought to be two Christians. Christians lose their kids to the world today at an unprecedented rate. Three absolute key days that will change everything about you and that your children need to have a vision on because it is coming to them. Getting these days out of order, getting them messed up, and not understanding will never get the right vision for your family unless God comes down and does something, and I know He has done it in many of your lives. Praise the Lord for it, but you are the exception to the rule. Without these three days being understood and the wisdom applied, the idea of a vision for your family simply becomes a pipe dream.

VIII. Parental Responsibility and Vision

These three days form the platform, the foundation of a stable Christian home by which a mom and a dad, within their roles of a husband and wife, can provide the vision. Habakkuk 2, building on these three days, preparing your kids for these three days, it is coming. A vision of how to use

all the things in your child's life right up to and including their adult life. Building and developing the Christian, godly character in their life, giving them a value system, giving them the ability to make the right choice in life, the right relationships in life. Getting your child saved, and I know you think this way because you all want your kids saved—God bless you, I am all for it—but I want to tell you something: getting your child saved is a great thing, but it is not the last thing you have to do. It is only the beginning of what you have to do. You have two more days coming. Most parents get so caught up on the first day, they have no clue about the other two. They do not number their days: one, two, three. How hard is that?

- Shaping their will. Some of your kids will be strong-willed children when you have them in your family. You have to break that will, and there is a way to do it. This is not a parenting class today, but there is a way, biblically, that you do that, called 'whale blubber.' You whale on them until they blubber; that is how you do it. But that is all about shaping their will; there is nothing more than getting them ready for Day Number One.
- Molding their spirit. Keeping them tender to the things of God. Ecclesiastes 12:1 says: Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; Building, after Day One, their relationship with God, the most important relationship they will ever have, and they need to understand that. They need to realize that they are not ready for Day Two until Day One is 100% in their life.
- Developing their mind. Their patterns of thought based on biblical principles, their ability to make good choices, the ability to think the way God thinks, getting and preparing them for Day Two, getting the right spouse based on the right understanding of marriage, based on their own understanding of the relationship with God. Seeing the difference between the role of a husband and a role of a wife, and a role of a mom and a role of a dad, and their own individual role with the Lord.
- Establishing them in ministry. God's heritage, the fruit of the womb, His reward. Leading your child, not sending your child out into ministry, but leading your child into ministry. Getting them ready for Day Three. The number one ministry of mom and dad is your family. That is your first ministry. You prepare them by teaching them to number their days: Day One, Day Two, Day Three. And son, honey, keep them in the right order. Let us go through these time and time again. Let us reinforce this vision, giving them the vision of how important these three days are and how they must keep them in order with right wisdom and understanding.

These three days will not only affect and change their lives, but will affect everything that God wants to do with them. As you, as a parent, stand on your watch, stand on your tower. Most parents just look short-term: what they are dealing with now, the process of their growth and maturity, the physical issues they have, the mental issues they have, or emotional issues they have, and their spiritual issues. But you need to look long-term. You need to get on that high tower, and you need to see it in perspective. These three days will change everything they know, and they must understand these three days. They must always be prepared for Day One, and then know that Day Two and Day Three are coming in their lives, and get them ready for it. You do not manipulate behind the scenes just so your daughter can get married or your son can get

married. What a disaster that is! The success or failure of everything in their life will depend on numbering their days: one, two, three.

IX. Conclusion and Call to Action

In just two weeks, we will go to work asking God to do in our kids' lives what He needs to do. I am going to lay the groundwork for you, the parent. Every child will come into camp at a different spiritual level, but I am going to promise you right now, they will all come out on the same spiritual level. They will be ready to go. The only question is, will you be ready to go?

If I did not know the Bible was the Word of God any other way, if I did not have any books on manuscript evidence or did not know a thing about church history, I would know it was the Word of God because of how God's people rejected it, how they get an attitude toward what it says when they want to do their own thing. If I did not know the church was God's structure and of major importance in life, without ever looking at church history or reading Acts 13 or any of those places, I would know it was by the way that God's people keep finding reasons not to be here on Sunday. If I did not know that the family was the key to God's redemptive plan for planet Earth through the church, I would know it by the way that parents will deny their responsibility in training up their kids right.

A father and a mother will teach their son or daughter to fish, teach them to hunt, teach them to play sports, teach them to drive, teach them to park, teach them to play golf, teach them to play soccer—all the things in life. But they will never sit down and be ready to win him or her to Christ when that Day Number One shows up. They will leave it for somebody else to do, the most important day of their life. They will make them do their homework for school. They will check their grade cards, and when they get on the honor roll, they will be the proudest parents in the world, and you will see it on the back sticker of their car: "My child is an honor roll student." But they will never take the time to disciple that child, and when it comes to the most important teaching in their life and the most important relationship in their life that will put them on their honor rolls of heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they could care nothing about it. It never ceases to amaze me.

I have seen them help plan their kids' weddings, go all out for it, and you should. I have seen it. I have been part of thousands of wedding ceremonies, wedding dinners, thousands of dollars spent on those things, and you should. Yet those parents have spent not 10 minutes preparing them for that day. They will put 100,000 times more energy into getting their wedding ready to go than they ever did preparing their child for the wedding, much less getting them ready to understand the coming Marriage of the Lamb and a great wedding supper. I have seen dads, as proud as a parent could be, walk their daughter down the aisle and give that bride away to a man that he has no clue of where he is at with the Lord, and no understanding or clue if he will carry on the heritage of our family. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. I have seen parents so happy, and all I see is an impending disaster.

I have seen moms and dads lose control of their families all the time to a son or a daughter, where the child is so undisciplined, so unstructured, so spoiled, and enabled by their parents

because of their lack of vision, that the only way they can keep peace in the family is to cave into whatever that child's demands are. Oh, that child blows a temper tantrum and throws a big fit, and everybody falls apart, and they have no clue. I have seen them warn their kids, "Don't talk to strangers. Don't play in the street. Look both ways before you cross. I am going to be going to the backyard. Don't open that door to anybody." And yet not one time have they told their kids, "You need to number your days. Kids, there are three days in your life that you have to be ready for, and I am here to help you. We will go through them together. We will prepare together. I will give you Day One. You will get to that point where you get saved, and then, you know what? We are going to go to work on building the right relationship with God because Day Two is coming, because you are such a sweetheart of a child. Somebody is going to want to marry you. Someday God is going to bring the right person into your world, and I am going to make sure that you are where you need to be, and he is where you need to be. No name, no number, no sign. Let it go." So what do they do? You tell them all the things and the dangers of life, and yet not one time have you told them to number their days. So they open up their lives and their hearts to every idiot, every person that comes down the road. They get the days out of whack. Their life becomes so complicated. Their life becomes so impacted with bad choice after bad choice, with illegitimate kids and bills and problems and this and bad relationships and two and three husbands and all of this stuff, and everybody stands there and says, "I wonder what happened?" What planet do you live on? Life is not complicated. Life is as simple as counting to one, two, and three.

I have seen them lose their child to the world. No spiritual relationship with them at all. All they get together on birthdays and anniversaries and Christmas and Easter, but nothing with God, nothing over ministry together—a complete failure of the family. I have seen those kids all my life absolutely worthless when it comes to the things of God, and the parents say, "Oh, he is okay. Oh, she is just, she is a victim. Well, they used to come to church, but so-and-so made some remark about them, and now they do not come, and so it is so-and-so's fault. Oh, he or she saw the phoniness of other Christians, and now they will not go to church." No, no, no. They saw the phoniness of your family. Let us put it right where the rubber meets the road. It had nothing to do with outside influences. I said it: you have 100% complete control of these three days in your own life and the life of your child. You let your perspective of Psalms 127:4 get away from you: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth." The bad hypocrites at church did not launch them through life. The people at church that said nasty things to them did not launch them in life. You launched them in life. You give them their value system by looking at Day One, Day Two, and Day Three. Training your child and keeping them on track is as simple as one, two, three—three days, the most important days on Earth. Having the consistency for your child when you know your child cannot keep it for himself or herself. You are the parent. It is your responsibility. You do not melt down, fold down, and melt down into a ball in a corner. You take the biblical principles. If you are not in charge, who is? You are the parent. You are supposed to be looking long-term. You are supposed to provide the vision. It will come at an appointed time. The vision is not yet. Prepare your child for these three days that will alter their life forever. If they get them messed up and out of order and out of whack, they will never see the importance from a Bible standpoint. It is over. In most cases, it is over. Just one more child that will never realize and become what God wants him or her to be.

Our camp this year is not just going to be about changing your child; it is going to be about changing you, the parent. You look at our church; you see many things. In this overall concept, I look at our church just like a giant Bledsoe's, a tool rental place. We have here every tool you need to do every job God has called you to do. It is right here hanging on a wall. I go into Bledsoe's and I buy something that I do not know how to work. I always ask the guy. They are always great people; they will show you how to make it work. You come in here and you see all these tools hanging on the wall. You do not know what to do? Just ask somebody. We are here to help. We will show you how the tools work. But I can have all the tools in the world. I can have 10,000 people standing in line to help you. But if you are not willing to change about you, what you have to change to get there, it is a waste of time. You can supply the tools if you must be willing to do the work.

Last week, I gave you three things to do with your child to help pull it all together for camp. I asked you how many of you began to do those three things? Do you remember what they were? I asked you to start praying with your child about camp. What is so hard about that? What is so hard about just pulling your child in and sitting down and saying, "Hey look, I know we have had a lot of issues and a lot of problems, but camp is going to be a real game changer for all of us." You do not have to be on the scale of Handel's Messiah. Just a simple prayer: "God, help me be better. Help Johnny be better. Help Susie to be better. Help so-and-so. Help us together as a family. Make this camp do something different."

I asked you to sit down and talk about a mission statement for your family. It does not have to be the Magna Carta. Let us be on the scale of the Declaration of Independence. Just a simple thing: "We are going to be different." I would just go over there and get that verse out of Joshua 24:15. He says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and start with that.

Then I asked you to start preparing yourself for a new child by giving them a new set of parents, because that is what it is going to take, and give to God a new family. Proverbs 29:17:

Proverbs 29:17

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

If you do not correct him, he will give you unrest. And if you do not, they will tear your heart out. Proverbs 29:18:

Proverbs 29:18

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

It is just that simple. Life is not complicated. It is not hard. Life is simply being able to count to three: one, two, three. Day One: the day they begin to build a relationship with Jesus Christ, everything changes. After they get that done, Day Two: the day they find a help meet for them to do what God has called them to do as a couple. Their life will never be the same. Day Three: the day they have a family now, and God takes it to the next level, and they are not only as husband and wife ministering for God, now they are building a ministry team because they understand Day One, Day Two, and Day Three. Every head bowed and every eye closed.