

Proverbs 22:6

Sunday 1/14/2018

SEC: Introduction and Recap of Family Training

Our time together has been spent building our families through the Word of God. We have looked at six vital areas of training and teaching up our children. We know now that it is based on Proverbs 22:6, which talks about training up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

You will remember that in week one, we basically established a context, putting your family into a biblical context, understanding what you want to accomplish, and the whole purpose and reason for having children. Week two, we talked about the importance of establishing a baseline of truth. I laid out how you, the parent, are the first line of defense for your child in all that they are going to face and deal with.

In week three and four, we dealt with the evil day that is coming in their life, and we went back to the book of Daniel and saw how Daniel is a great picture of what your child is going to face. Week five, we talked about the five stages of training as they come up through life from birth to the rest of their life: the discipleship/discipline stage, the relationship stage, the fellowship stage, the responsibility stage, and the ministry stage.

Last week, we talked about the six types of parents, based on my observation over the last 45-plus years. We looked at the different kinds of parenting that people get into. Today, as I told you last week, I want to talk about establishing and giving a vision to your child. We are coming down to the end of this study; we will probably finish up next week.

Everything that we do in life, certainly in your child's life, and not only that, but everything we do in working with our children, this will be the ultimate goal: establishing the vision in their life that you want them to be able to see and understand. Everything that you have done these last six weeks that we have talked about, it all comes down to this. Next week, we will try to just pull it all together, and I will give you seven keys on parenting and tie it all back into where we are at. But the giving, establishing, and reinforcing of a vision for them will be absolutely vital. It is paramount in what you are trying to do with your children.

Today, I want to try to accomplish just a few things as we wind down our study. Let us go to the Lord in prayer today.

Father, we do thank You and praise You for the Lord Jesus. We love You. Thank You, Father, for all You do for us. Thank You for everything that You have bestowed upon us and given us. We love You. We thank You, Father, for the Word of God that You provided for us and Your goodness to us. Bless us now as we look into Your Word today, and we will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

SEC: The Importance of Vision

The first thing I want you to see and understand here is how important a vision is in anything that we do in life. I know we are talking about kids and our families, but it is true in anything. I want

to use a couple of examples today that will help you better understand what I am trying to talk about with your kids and what I want you to see today.

I want you to realize that the concept of vision is not you getting your own vision. It is you seeing God's vision and then giving that into your own life first, and then bringing it into the lives of your children.

Let me show you an example here that I am sure you can all identify with. Most of you, I believe, really want to learn the Bible. You do not stick around here very long if you do not want to do that. Some of you may pick it up faster than others, but at the end of the day, I think the majority of you, if not all of you, really want to learn the Bible. So my job, what I have provided for you, is a couple of different areas by which you can make that happen.

Online, we have the books of the Bible where you can go through every book of the Word of God and get a breakdown of it biblically. Every book in the Bible has a natural outline that you want to follow. Years ago, when we started our church, that is one of the first things that I did so we would have it for years to come. Maybe you are new in our church, but you can start there because sooner or later, you have to get the books down in the Bible.

We put together Bible Institute. Bible Institute is for you guys and gals that want to really get a handle on the Bible. We are really working that through a three-year program. We have the People Ministry. It is designed to give you everything that you need on those levels to be able to put it all together.

Then, obviously, Thursday night, from the get-go, I have been doing Thursday night Bible studies for almost ever since I got into the ministry, over 40-some years. I think it does two wonderful things.

1. It gives you an outlet for you to really be able to ask questions about things that you are studying. So we use it as a teaching tool. You ask the question; there are probably 20 or 30 other people out there that are wondering the same question. So we cover a lot of bases that way.
2. At the same time, it is kind of like a temperature gauge for me to find out where you are at. If you come on Thursday night and you do not ask any questions and you are not in the Bible, or you come on Thursday night and you ask stupid questions, you are really stupid when it comes to the Bible. It is a gauge for me. You always ask great questions, and it shows the depth of where you are at. Most pastors cannot see that. They do not see the value in that. But to me, I want to always know where you are at and try to help you better because I believe that most of you want to learn the Bible.

Then we have the one-on-one where I spend time with you helping you put the Word of God together. Those are the things that I do to help you learn the Bible because I really believe that most of you do. I have learned in my own life that we will not grasp something completely until we see it and clearly understand it. That is key. This is why I go to the great length with the Bible that I do. We need to see the picture of what we are trying to learn or accomplish in the Word of God.

SEC: The Clarity of God's Vision

As the picture of the Bible becomes sharper through the things that we do and more clear, and as we add to what we already know and then we reinforce it, the picture of the Bible and what God is doing will become very clear in four distinct ways. This is what you want to learn about the Bible, but this is also what you want to learn about your children because they are connected.

3. When your Bible picture becomes clearer for you, you begin to understand what God is doing. That is vital. Most people do not have a clue of that. I know that sounds so basic and simple, but I am telling you, most people do not have a clue of what He is doing.
4. You find out how He is doing it. What is the mode by which He is operating today?
5. With whom is He doing it? Who is He involved with at this particular point in time?
6. Why is He doing it at all? What is the plan? What is the picture? What is God trying to lay out?

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13:12:

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

What He is saying here is right now in this life, we do not see it all. We do not understand all that God is doing. When we look at the Bible, and the Bible is that looking glass in James 1:23 that He is talking about here, right now when we look into the Bible, we do not always see everything. We look through a glass darkly. There are a lot of things that maybe we do not understand, that we do not get. The more you get into the Word of God, the more you build your relationship with Christ, the more you let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus, the clearer that picture comes.

Obviously, He is talking about right now in this mortal body, there is no way that I am going to see and ever understand everything that God is doing. But then He says, "face to face," when I get my glorified body, I will have everything to know everything that God knows. Now I know that that will never happen in this life, but it can get awful close in this life if you follow the Word of God. The closer you get to the Lord Jesus Christ and the more you get into the book, the clearer that big picture becomes.

So, in Bible Institute, I broke the Bible down into 17 parts or components. The Bible is a picture book. It is like one of those thousand-piece picture puzzles. You want the puzzle to match the picture on the box. You get an overall picture of God's Bible, then you put the pieces together, and then the picture comes into focus. Each one will be a piece of the puzzle. We break the Bible down into 17 compartments. We look at each one. We understand each one. You come away understanding and say, "Okay, I see that now. I see that now." You not only understand it, you see it, you visualize what that component of the Bible is. Then we put them all back together. These pieces will give you the vision of God and what He is doing. It will give you the ability to see it as His plan unfolding. So you can better see how and where you and I fit into that plan. This church fits into that plan. Getting the picture of God, getting the vision that God has of what He

is doing, will put everything in your life into context. That is exactly, on an overall scale, what we want.

As we go month by month through the Bible Institute, and each piece of the puzzle gets down and we understand it, then the overall plan of God, or His vision, what He sees and how He sees it, becomes more clear. As you do these things, I train you and teach you, and also in everything that we do, constantly reinforcing it. Sunday morning is nothing more than giving you the Bible where we are at, but also reinforcing what I already gave you. Thursday night, you will ask new questions, and we will get into new things. I will never miss an opportunity to reinforce what I have already given you. People Ministry is the same way. Institute the same way. One-on-one is the same way.

That is the same format that a parent uses. That is the same format a parent will do with their child. They will look at every disobedience as a teaching tool. They will look at every issue that child deals with as a reinforcement of what they are already giving them. Every issue they face, when a parent understands the overall vision of God for that child and the child understands it, now it is all different. Every issue, every problem, every challenge, everything, you can look at it one or two ways. You can look at it as a problem, or you can look at it as a teaching opportunity. Your kids are always going to have problems. The question is, do you see them as problems, or do you see them as opportunities? That depends on what you are going to do and what you understand about the vision, and it is just that simple. You want to follow it that way.

You break down your child's training as he grows through five training sessions. We talked about it a couple of weeks ago, the five different stages that he goes through. That presents the vision for that child. Then the rest of your life, you reinforce it, just like me and you.

SEC: The Vision in Proverbs 29

The verse in the Bible on a vision will be found in the book of Proverbs, chapter 29, verses 17 and 18. Let us turn there and begin to look at this verse and a few other verses.

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.

Usually, what you find here, and there is nothing wrong with doing this, I have done it many times, most pastors will, you use verse 18, and you use it in accordance with the church that you are involved in or you have as a pastor, and that is certainly okay. A church needs a vision to survive; there is no question about that. A pastor without a biblical vision is like a car without a motor. You get good gas mileage, but you never go anywhere, and that is exactly what happens in most churches. They never go anywhere because the pastor has no vision, and therefore the people get no vision.

I want to say again, this vision is not what you want to see. This vision is not your own conjured-up idea of what it should be. The vision I am talking about is you getting God's vision first. You see what God sees, and then verse 17 puts verse 18 on the vision squarely in the context of our

children. "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." And then it says, "Where there is no vision." In other words, the vision in the context of this is with your family, it is with your child. It is not you just getting a vision for your family or for your child. It is you understanding all the things we have talked about of what God wants to accomplish and then instilling those in your child.

SEC: The Need for Purpose and Roots

In your child's life, as in a church, they need to have something that is meaningful in life. I think this is probably the biggest problem that God's people have. Many of you, the reason why you love this church the way you do is because before you came here, your life was meaningless, and you were a Christian. Your life had no purpose, and you were a Christian. You found here, and I am going to show you how you found it here in a moment because it is the same concept with your family, you found here a life with a purpose. You found direction here in your life. You found understanding. You found a plan for your life.

Proverbs 22:28 and Proverbs 23:10 talk about the two landmarks in the Bible. We talked about this on Thursday night for a little bit: the landmarks. Most Christians have no purpose in their life because they have no roots. They have no understanding. We talked last week about what constitutes a New Testament local church. Most of God's people do not even know that. They go to churches. They give their money to churches. They are involved in churches. They do ministry in their churches. They sing in the choir. They do all the things that they do, and when it comes to the church in the Bible, their church is not even a New Testament local church based on the scriptures. Now we can throw the scriptures out if you want, and you can have whatever churches you want, but that is the bottom line.

If you have the landmarks, then you have something to start with. Whatever purpose you found here, and whatever purpose you got in this church, whatever purpose you did not have or direction you did not have that now you do have in your life, you did not get it because of me. You did not get it necessarily because of this church per se. You got it because of where the church goes back to, and we understand where we came from, so we have the ability to put your Christian life into a context that most Christians never get.

With your child, like with you, my people, if you do not have the vision of God and maintain it, you both get lost in the world system. The Bible says, "Remove not the old landmarks lest thou enter into the fields of the fatherless." We talked about that Thursday night, how that simply means no understanding of history, no understanding of where you came from, your roots, why we believe what we believe. Most of God's people believe something about the Bible and their church; they just do not know why they believe it. That is the way most families operate, and they do that because they have no vision of what God is doing. They do not know where they came from, and I have said many, many times, if you do not know where you come from, you certainly do not know where you are going. If you do not know where you come from and you do not know where you are going, please do not insult my intelligence by telling me you know where you are at. You cannot.

It goes without saying that the vision for your child has to start with you, the parent, and your vision, just like this church. The vision for this church has to start with my vision. Again, it is not what I want to see or what you want to see, but seeing what God sees it, the way He sees it, and the Bible and the biblical principles, as we have clearly learned, will break everything down for you.

SEC: The Television Analogy of Vision

Allow me to illustrate this in a way that I am sure we can all grasp it. In our homes, I would say that most of you have what we know and all love as a television. Your television is a breakdown of two words: "tele" and "vision." You get an audio, and you get a vision. "Tele," somebody is going to tell you something, and a "vision," you are going to see something. That is called a television. On that, you watch TV shows, and they will give you a picture of a story so you can watch it and obviously enjoy it.

You know how many times somebody has said to me, "Oh, you have got to see this movie, you have got to see this TV program." When you sit down with your television, somebody gives you an audio and then shows you a picture, the vision, television. From that, you walk away with a complete understanding of what you just saw because it was displayed in an audio fashion; you heard somebody speak, but you also saw it on your television.

But a TV without a picture, and we all hate when this happens when your cable goes out, but a TV without a picture with just the audio would be pretty worthless, no picture at all. Your TV now would not be a television; it would just be a "tele." It would be a "tele-no-vision." The picture and sound on your television give you a complete context of what you are seeing. Take away the picture, just have the sound, you do not have anything. You are listening to something exciting, but you are wondering what is going on. That is the way most of God's people are who have no vision with God. You hear me talk about things exciting, but you never see the picture of what is really going on, and that is exactly what you have.

In a family with your children, as parents, or churches without a picture, a vision of what God is doing, they will never do anything for God that really means anything. Here is the problem with churches today and pastors. I feel free to criticize pastors and churches all that I want. If you are a nurse, I would never criticize your nursing abilities. If you are a doctor, I would never criticize your doctor's ability. If you are a lawyer, I would never criticize your lawyer ability. If you are a mechanic, I would never criticize because I do not know anything about that. But I am a preacher, and I know preachers, and I have been around preachers all my life. I have seen good ones; I have seen bad ones.

I am going to tell you something: the problem with Christianity in most churches is pastors get up there, and they give an audio, but they never portray a picture. It was great in the old Philadelphia days when guys could really preach. What they did in their preaching, they not only preached, they painted a picture with their words. Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon one time, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and it still goes down as one of the greatest sermons in the history of anybody recording history being preached. It brought a whole revival,

but it was not just what he said; it was the fact that he painted the picture of what he was saying, and they not only heard what he said, they saw what he was saying.

I have known old-time preachers who could preach hell so hot you could feel the heat. You had to wear an asbestos suit when you went to church if they were going to preach on it. I have heard them preach on heaven where heaven came down and glory filled your soul. You do not get that today. They have lost the art of preaching. Pastors preaching today is like listening to a message from your dentist about your teeth being bad, and it does not do anything for it because it does not paint a picture. You hear the audio; the guy stands up there, and he will deliver his audio version of it, but there is no picture that comes through. Nothing is painted in your mind.

When you leave here, I am going to tell you something right now, when I am done this morning, I guarantee you, you will never turn your TV set on again and not think about what I just said to you. You know why? I painted a picture for you. I could have gotten up here and said, "You need to have a vision. A vision is what you see that God does. Thank you. See you tomorrow." No, I gave you a picture. I painted you. I want to leave you, when you leave every time I preach, I want you to go home and see something in your world that you see every day to remind you of what God is doing. That is reinforcement, but that is painting a picture with what you say. That is understanding that we are visual in our makeup. We love the things that we see. We love the visual things. We love the television. We love the movies. We love the internet. We love our little games we play. We love all those things that we see, we visualize. We are a visual people. The problem is, we visualize everything except what God is doing.

When you are a parent, you provide a vision for your child so they can have a context of life. You want your child to get the vision of what God is doing in your family. You want your child to understand, "This is God's family, and we are doing things for God." When you do that, when your child begins to see that, it makes life a lot easier. I told you how, in essence, the older your child gets, the easier they should be to deal with, and you should bring them right up through that responsibility stage, right up into the ministry stage. You know why? Because a vision, God's vision in your family, what you give to your child, gives them a reason for the discipline. Now you are not just disciplining because they did something wrong. Now they have a context of the discipline. They understand that the discipline that you have to discipline them with, they understand why you have to do it now, because we have the vision of God, or we cannot allow you to step out of line, just like God will not allow us to step out of line.

Now you have a reason for when you have to hold them accountable. They understand it. "Oh, Mom and Dad, why are you so sticking in the mud all the time? We cannot ever..." Now they understand because of the vision that they have of God in your family, of what God wants to do with your family. They see it. They understand it. It is being reinforced. Now they have an understanding of why I have to be accountable, why I have to be responsible for what I do. It puts it into a context.

With the vision of God in your family, your child immediately, like many of you when you started coming to church here, they get a purpose in life. They are no longer just a teenager. They are no longer just a kid struggling with issues. They are no longer up against peer pressure or this

or that. Now they have a complete purpose of what they are doing and what God wants to do with them.

Let me say this because this is very important: you do not create a vision in your child's life. You do not, listen to me carefully, you do not sit down, get a book on vision, you do not sit down and just say, "Okay, I am going to give a vision to my child." It does not work that way. You do not create a vision for your child; you pass on to them the vision you already have, whether it is good or whether it is bad. It has to come from you.

SEC: Passion and Vision

Today, there is a vision that we have to have, and I will say this, the vision has to be with a passion. I have a vision for this church. I have a vision for every one of you, and I am not ashamed to tell you, I am passionate about it. I am passionate about you. I am passionate about the truth. I am passionate about the Bible. I am passionate about the ministry. I am passionate about people.

All the time, people think that if you are in a church, you have to be like you are baptized in pickle juice. You are just... But I have seen some of you. You come to church, you just sit there, and I am not saying you have to go crazy and be charismatic. I get that. But I would like to know you are alive sometimes. I guarantee you when the Royals went to the World Series, that is what I am talking about. You never went, "Whoo!" with my preaching, but you do it when the Royals go. If the Chiefs went and went to the Super Bowl... I have been here for the Super Bowl parties. We just have and hope them staying in practice that one day we will make it there, but we will not. But I watch you guys. I watch what you get passionate about. I watch you guys go out and catch big fish. I am all for that. I never could fish. I did not have the patience. My best way of fishing would be with a hand grenade. Throw that sucker in and catch them when they blow up out of the water. You will go out and kill a 19-point buck. I am all for that. I am glad. I mean, killing Bambi's dad is a good thing, I think, for you. I get it. I love to look at the pictures. You are passionate about that.

My passion is about the Bible. It is about you. I do not mind. I get excited about when you show me those pictures. My passion is your passion, but I have seen God's people get a passion about everything out there except the things they ought to get passionate about. I like passionate people. When I look for somebody that God gives me, and we want to really get into the ministry together and work side by side, I will tell you, we have to have the same passions. If you do not, it does not mean I do not like you. It just means you are boring. I love you to death. I would do anything in the world to help you. But if we are going to work side by side, your passion, my passion, has to be God's passion. How can two walk together except they be agreed?

I think that is the number one issue today with God's people. They do not have any passion about the things of God. The reason is, they are going to go to churches where the pastor has no passion. He does not get excited about anything. He gets excited on a snow day. It is always going to be a source of frustration. It is like going hunting, and hunting is your passion, and then going hunting with somebody who wants to go, but that is not their passion. It would ruin your whole hunting experience.

Somebody says to me, "Bob, I want to go out and hunt coyotes with you." And I said, "Okay, we will go. I will meet you wherever I meet you over there. We will meet over at Gary's someplace." You are looking for me, and I am standing right there, but I look like a tree. I have got my ghillie suit on. I am all camoed up. And you have got your Chiefs sweatshirt on with your Reeboks. So we are going to go into the woods. I have got an old beat-up pair of camouflage boots on that I am putting coyote urine on one boot and raccoon urine on the other. You do not want them on your Reeboks. I do not mean to be gross this morning, but the grossest smell on the planet is raccoon urine. It is terrible. It is rank. I have got 55 gallons of it at home. It is terrible. But if you are going to get a coyote, you cannot go in smelling like you. You have got to smell like something that he is familiar with. And he does not want to see you. So you have got to get down, got a big old ghillie suit on, those big old things that the snipers wear, and you are sitting down there, and you are camoed up. And you are sitting over there next to me with your big, bright red Chiefs suit on with your big white Reeboks with your goofy-looking hat. And I am calling them in. And they hear it. They hear that wounded rabbit. And boy, they start coming in. They come around that corner, and there is Bozo the Clown sitting out there next to a tree. That would be me. You know how frustrating that is? It just never works to try to do something with people that do not have the same passion. It is just that simple.

When it comes to the things of the Word of God, and most of you, all of you probably have it, I would say 99% of you anyhow. My job as a pastor is to, through my zeal and my passion, find those who are passionate about the book, the Word of God, people, truth, and ministry, and then they do not get their own vision. They get the vision that God gave the pastor, his passion. He passes it off to them, and we all get the same vision. It is not my vision. It is the vision God has for this church. And you get the vision, the big picture of what God is going to do. More importantly, you do not just get the vision of the big picture of what God is doing; you see how you fit into it.

I will be honest with you, a pastor with no real passion or zeal for truth, not going through his ministry, like fire with his hair on fire, it is a joke to me. I have told many young men, and they were good guys, but just because you know the Bible and because you think you can preach or whatever, it does not mean that you have this desired burden to be a pastor. It does not mean that you are cut out to be a pastor. There are some things that you have got to have in place to be a pastor. It is not like you just go do that like you drive a school bus. One of the things you have got to have as a pastor is you have got to have some fire. You have got to have some passion. You have got a bunch of people that you are going to be in front of that you have got to try to enlist to serve God. If you get up there and say, "Well, this all serves the Lord today. I am glad I am saved. I am excited, brother. I really am. I just want you all to know that the most exciting thing in the world is serving the Lord." Who is going to follow that? No, no. If you want somebody to follow you, and they have got the same passion, and all Sunday morning is in any church, it is finding out who has got the passion and who does not.

I do not know about you, but I want to tell you something, I have got it. I am not going to stand up here and tell somebody, I am going to tell you that God is great. The Word of God is unbelievable. God will take your life, and He will use you. It is the greatest feeling in the world

to be used of God. Get out of what you are doing. Get away from it. Get with God and let Him set you on fire. Now, that is somebody you can listen to. It is just that simple.

A pastor with no real passion or zeal for the truth, he just stands up there in a monotone voice. He gets up there, and he never gets above three decibels. He is boring to listen to. I have heard some of the guys preach that they were so boring. When they were done, I do not know if they knew what they were saying, but I sure did not understand it. No purpose to it. No nothing. I want to tell you something. You get the idea that if you are not a good preacher, if you just preach more sermons and get more practice, that makes you a better preacher. That may be good going to the batting cages if you want to hit softballs out of the park. That may be good at going to the driving range and hit golf balls if you want to learn how to do it. That will never work with preaching. You do not preach more sermons to be a better preacher. You just wind up preaching more bad sermons. The thing that will put preaching in your heart and in your soul is the fire that you have and the passion that God gave you that you have something to say, and you want everybody to hear.

Somebody said, "Bob, can you sum up your ministry?" I can. I am a two-watt radio station. Just two watts. Most radio stations are a thousand watts. I am a two-watt radio station, but every time I get on the radio, I say, "Hello, world." And ten people around my block hear me. I am going for the world. My passion will be for the world. God will take you wherever you are at. No matter how small you think you are, no matter how small you are, it is the fire and the passion inside of you. It is not the size of the dog in the fight; it is the size of the fight in the dog. When you get that passion, nothing is going to stop you. People are going to... Somebody said one time, "If you want to build a church, if the pastor gets on fire, the whole town will come and watch him burn." A lot of truth to that.

The pastors today, they are limp noodles. They ought to get a job at a Chinese restaurant. To them, it is just a nine-to-five job. That is why I was telling Gary this morning, looking across this crowd, and I was up and watching a prayer meeting this morning. On the TV last night, they were already closing churches. I drove by 20 churches today that nobody was going to be there this morning. They closed it down. I was telling Gary this morning, I said, "You know what? There is always a method to my madness, my hardline stand, that we do not close the doors for anything."

Now, you may not be able to get here. I get that. I am not one of these kind of guys, if you do not show up on Thursday night because it is a snowstorm, or you do not show up on Sunday morning because there is a blizzard out there and you cannot see five feet in front of you, I am not going to get up and say, "We do not have very many people here today because of the snow. I wonder where we would be today if Jesus did not go to the cross because the road was icy." I am not going to do that. And do not think I just did. I am not going to do that. I get it. But I want you to know, we do not shut down for anything. If there is a nuclear disaster at 10 o'clock or 9 o'clock in the morning and a bomb goes off in Kansas City, I will be here. I might be a crispy fried critter, but I will be here. You do not shut the doors for anything.

You know what it does? It builds something in you. You know why I do not want to miss it? I gave you my verse. I gave it to you Thursday night. You were all talking about it. That is how I entered into the treasures of the snow or the hail. I told you how every time there is a deep snow and we have to fight to get to the church, God always gives us something great, the treasures in the snow. You guys were laughing about it and quoting it all across the thinkers tonight. I want you to know that in my mind, there is something going on here with God. Now maybe you do not see it that way. That is your deal. I see it that way. I look at what God has given us. I look at who you are. I look at the Word of God He has given us. I look at what He does. I look at what He does with this ministry because of you. I look at all the people here that have a passion for the things of God. I would not rather be any place else than here this morning. Amen. It did not have to be a downright nuclear waste disaster where the police surrounded my house and would not let us out because we are all glowing.

With most pastors, it is just a nine-to-five job. With me, it is my life. I do not know anything else. Now you are all hoping that you will get called off from work in the morning. I am with you on that. I hope you do. I hope it just snows tonight, and all the places in Kansas City say, "Stay home. We do not want you to be safe." I am good. But I will never say that on a Thursday night or a Sunday morning. You know what? Most of you would not miss it for the world. You know why? Because you know God is going to be here, and you want something from it. It is the same way with your kids and a family. Their passion for the things of God will be based on your passion for the things of God. It is just that simple. Whatever your passion is, whether it is the things of God or the world, whether it is going to Bible study or going out and drinking with your buddies, whether it is being here to learn the Bible or staying home and getting high, whatever your passion is, you will pass it on to them. Your passion will be their passion.

SEC: Defining and Communicating the Vision

Not only do you have to provide a vision for your kids, like I do the church, but you have to define it for them through a biblical process. For that, we want to look over at Habakkuk chapter 2, verses 1 through 3. This is the definitive passage in the Bible on a vision, giving a vision.

Let me say this before we get in here so you understand the context. Habakkuk is written to the nation of Israel. At this time, it is a pre-captivity book, right before they go into captivity. At this period of time, Israel has lost the vision of Almighty God. They are much like Christianity today, much like most of God's people. So here is what Habakkuk says to them:

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.

This book will be about our defining, passing on, and how to give a vision. Using me, the pastor, and you, the parent, the working aspects of communicating the vision of God first to your children as a family, but then me to my people as a church. Now let me basically take this verse apart for you, because there are some good things you want to see here.

> *I will stand upon my watch*

Verse 1, first of all, he says, "I will stand upon my watch." If you are a parent, you are standing a watch over your children. In this church, this church is on my watch. I will bring men and women in who are leaders, men who are deacons, women who are elders and grow up in the Word, and you will help me on my watch. As a parent, you have a mom and a dad. You have good, godly grandparents. You have them, and they help you watch. My watch. As a parent, you are a watchman for your child. You watch for their health. You watch for their safety. You watch for their physical development. You watch for the influence of their friends in their world. And you watch for their souls. If they fail, it is because you failed on your watch. It is just that simple. I do not know how easier it is to grasp. If you lose your child, you lost them on your watch. You had every opportunity. You had every responsibility. You had everything that you needed to make that child everything that God wanted them to be. You failed to give them the vision. I do not know where you were, but you got off your watch, and you did not watch for them. And they fell apart on your watch.

If this church fails, you will never see me blame any family in this church, any one person who will destroy this church. Because if any one person ever does, it is because I was not on my watch, and I let it happen. Everything rises and falls on leadership. When it comes to the church, it is on my watch. It is the pastor. In your family, it is on your watch as the mom and dad, especially the dad. It is just that simple.

He says, "I will stand upon my watch." The Bible says in Hebrews 13:17:

Hebrews 13:17

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

You do not like everything I say. I know you do not. That is okay. I do not know anybody who ever enjoyed everything a pastor said. That is just human nature and the way it is in life. But I can guarantee you this: you may not like it, but whatever I say, I guarantee you it was not meant to hurt you. It is meant to make you better. It is something that I saw, something that needs to be addressed, or something that needs to be dealt with. You may not want to deal with it. You may not like it. You may be steeped in your world system. That is okay. But I am telling you something, my job as a pastor is to watch for your souls. Your job as a parent with your kids is to watch for their souls. As they must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief. What that is unprofitable for you. You see, when you do not see that and understand it, then it is not profitable for you. As a parent, when you do not understand that you are on the watch for your child, then it is not going to be a profit for you. It is going to be some problems. When a

pastor looks at his congregation and just lets them do whatever they want to do and does not have any lines of accountability, then it is going to be a problem.

> *Set me upon the tower*

The second thing that they say there is, "my tower." There is our tower we have talked about. There is the high tower, the Tower of David. We have covered this before in the last couple of weeks or months. I have referenced it almost every week. When you stand your watch, you stand on a tower. That tower is a tower built with biblical principles. We know that by now. Built on biblical principles that allow you to see 360 degrees in every direction to see what is coming toward your family. I have to do the same thing with the church. I can see problems coming long before they manifest themselves with people. Sometimes there is nothing you can do about it. Just shore up the wall like a hurricane flood. It is coming. You cannot stop it. You just have to shore up the sandbags to keep it from doing as little damage as possible. That is the way it is sometimes in a church. It is not usually that way with a family if you do it right from the get-go. So your tower, your watch on a tower. This tower here allows you to see. It allows you to see what we have talked about before: long-term and short-term. It allows you to look behind. It allows you to look around. It allows you to look ahead. And you see what is coming on your watch. Of course, that is very important when it comes to the vision because you do not want, I do not want my church being distracted from the vision of God. You do not want your children being distracted from the things of God.

> *Watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd*

Look at the next part of verse 1. "Everyone will watch and see what He says to me and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd." See, there is your television. Not just listening to what God says, but watching what He is doing while He is saying it. Most people in most churches, they will gripe about everything in the church they do not like. But they will never see what God is doing. That is a very shallow person who all they do is they see what they, they hear what they want to hear, but they never see the big picture of what God is doing. You find me a church that does not have some issues and some problems, I am telling you, they are not out there. But there are some of God's people that all they want to do is focus on a negative, and they never see the positive.

Now they are the same parents that do the exact same thing. All they focus on is what their child did wrong. They are not watching what God is doing. They are not on their tower. I am not sure where they are at. They are not on their watch. Are you watching your watch, the tower? Are you seeing what God, hearing what God is saying and seeing what God is saying? Do you see the big picture, or is it just a sermon of words to you? Is it just disciplining your children because they did something wrong? Or do you see a whole thing in the context of life and what God is doing? And your responsibility to be on that tower on your watch for their souls.

Then he says, "and what I shall answer when I am reprov'd." That is a great question for all of us. What will we do with the message that God gives us when we see there are some things that we need to change about ourselves? I have met parents all my life that they have kids with problems, and I get it. Very few of them really get out of the problems, and there is a very simple

reason why they will not. I have never met a parent that did not have a problem with their kids that did not want their kid to change. But what they never understood was the fact that you may want your kid to change, but you will never change the kids until you change mom and dad because that is the problem. Kids do not reveal, kids do not cause problems in the home. Kids just reveal the problems that are already in the home. If you want to change your family, change yourself. Change about you.

When you hear something that God tells you and He reproves you, how are you going to respond to it? That is the question. "And what shall I answer when I am reproved?" That is a great question. What are you going to say? "I am going to keep on doing what I want to do." What do you know is wrong? "I am not going to be the husband I need to be because I like who I am. I am not going to be the father I need to be. I am not going to be the mother I need to be. I am not going to quit drinking. I am not going to quit smoking. I am not going to quit doing dope." These are all things that I know they are wrong, but I like them. Boy, I wish you had that passion about the things of God, you do your marijuana or your booze. Wouldn't that be something if all the things we have passion about that are wrong, we were focused on a passion for the book and Christ? Wow. We would win this town to Christ. Some of God's people hear the Word of God week after week after week, and it will never change a thing about them. They are spiritually blind. They cannot see anything God is doing. When it comes to their family, their family, that is the only vision their family ever gets.

The children in our families are not only hearing what you say about God's vision. A lot of parents will do that. A lot of parents will make sure they say their prayers before they go to bed. A lot of parents will make sure they read their Bible verse or their memory verse. That is commendable. A lot of parents will say, "You do not want to do that. You do not do that. You do not do that." It is not about that. The children in your family are not only hearing what you say about God's vision, but are they seeing it worked out in your life with passion? Do they hear what you say and then see what you do with the same passion about God's vision? That is the key. That is the question. It is the same with the children.

> *Write the vision, and make it plain upon the tables*

Verse two says, "And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." There are a couple of things here. First of all, he says, "Write the vision and make it plain." That is giving your child a vision of God and your family and then reinforcing it that they see how plain it really is. The vision has to be the number one goal that everything else you are doing lends itself to. They have to see where Mom and Dad are at with God's vision. Mom and Dad instill that into their hearts, and then they move out from there as a family, and that child constantly, in everything you have to do when you have to discipline them now, hold them responsible, do this. Now you do it in a context that we are God's family. You are an important part of this team. We have a vision. What happened to the vision when you did that? Did you lose sight of it?

You cannot come to this church for over a month or past a month and not feel the passion and get that we have a vision of some passion here and going in a direction. This is not the first church of

the refrigerator. Trust me. We have got it going on, and it is exciting. It is too much for some of God's people. They do not want that. They do not want to go through all they have to go through. Their passion lies elsewhere. I get that. I am not fighting that. But it is very clear what we are all about here. You either want in or you want out. That is okay. I put my sign up back there that life is tough, but it is even tougher when you are stupid. I want to get another one to put out there as you come in. It simply says, "Non-passion people need not apply." It is the same with your family. The child needs to see the passion for the things of God in Mom and Dad first. Passion is the vision. The vision will become the purpose. When they get the passion through the passion, they see the vision of God. That vision will give them the purpose of God in their life.

Then he says again in verse two, "make it plain upon the tables." Now the tables there, fundamentally first and foremost, will be the tables of your heart. 2 Corinthians 3:3:

2 Corinthians 3:3

Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

You see, "make it plain upon the tables." The thing you want to develop in your child's life is the right heart attitude about the things of God. You know how you do that? It starts with you having the right attitude about the things of God. Do not ever think that you can have the wrong attitude about the things of God and instill in your child the right things. It does not work that way. You may sell Fords at a Ford dealership and drive a Chevy. You may sell Chevys and drive a Ford. And you get away with that, but you will not, you will not, you will not under any circumstances in any way, shape, or form, not have the passion in your heart first and the things of God and purpose established in your heart. And then you will give it to your kids. It will never go that you cannot have it and they will.

As a parent, as a pastor, you make it plain by getting them their heart to see God's vision, the right heart attitude. Building in them from the time they are born, building in them everything that they need to be everything that God wants them to be. As a parent, as a pastor, you make it plain. We talked a couple of weeks ago about Daniel, how he was faced with all the things that Babylon, the world system, had. The Bible says that Daniel purposed in his heart. When I preach, I preach to your heart. I do not preach about what you wear. I do not preach about how long your hair is. I do not preach about this or that. I preach to your heart. I figure if I get your heart, everything else will be right where it needs to be. Why should I waste all this time chasing down rabbit trails? It will never lead anywhere when all I have to do in every one of your lives, if you are truly saved this morning, is go after one thing: your heart. God gets your heart, you have got the rest of you. It is just that simple. When you teach and train your child, it is to get to their heart. You get your child's heart, you have got it all. You will not have to worry about what they say, where they go, what they look at, what they do, what they listen to, because you get one thing about them. Just like if I get it with you, the rest takes care of itself. You develop the right heart attitude, and you make it plain upon the table, the tables of your heart.

Now there is a literal thing here that I love. "Make it plain upon the tables." In the tabernacle, there were seven pieces of literal furniture. Every one of those pieces of furniture is a picture of something spiritual in our lives. One of the pieces of furniture was the table of the showbread. Every morning that bread was baked fresh and put out there on a long table. The bread was put out, 12 round loaves, six in the top row, six in the bottom, 12 total because that is a picture of the Word of God. There are six at the top, six at the bottom because there are 66 books in your Bible. There are 12 because salvation is of the Jew, and the oracles of God, the Book of Romans, says it is from the Jew. So you have 12 pieces, six, six, 66 books in the Bible. And it is on a table, table of showbread, not showbread, shoebread. It is a bread that you have that is right there on that table. That table is a table of fellowship.

So when he is talking about "make it plain upon the tables," I always love this. Most of you did not learn your Bible on Sunday morning. You get a good introduction to it. There is no way we can cover it all. You know where, if you learn your Bible at all and you have a passion and you really know the Bible, love the Bible, you know where you learned it? You learned it because we set up tables. We set up on Thursday night. Some of you, when we are done here tonight, you will set up the tables. We will leave them up for Saturday morning with Institute. You leave them up for Saturday morning with People Ministry. "Make it plain upon the tables." Tables in the Bible are a picture of your study. That is when you really get down to it. I am preaching here in the morning. There is nothing really to write or take your notes. Some of you are struggling, putting your notes on your lap, and your notebooks are bending in half. I get that. But when you have a table out there, and we are going at it for two and a half hours or three hours or two hours or whatever we do on those days, you are getting into it. And you get my vision for God right here on the literal tables that we put up that get into the tables of your heart. All the things that we do, and it is a picture of those tables, are a literal picture of the study time that you put into the Word of God.

> *That he may run that readeth it*

Then he says, "that he may run that readeth it." We talked about this the other night and running the race for God. Philippians 2:16 says that we are not running in vain.

Philippians 2:16

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

We do not run in vain. We are running, holding forth the word of life. That is the race that we are in. Our race is not a race that who gets ahead of each other. Our race is a race of time. We have got things we have to get done before the Lord comes back. Philippians 2 says we do not run in vain. We are holding forth a word of life. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 talks about running with certainty.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

See, there is your purpose. There is direction. There is the vision of God running with certainty. Not one that beateth the air. Somebody that beats the air does not know what he is doing. He does not know where he is going. He is swinging at things you cannot even see. He has no purpose. He has no vision. It says in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 that we run this race to win a crown that is incorruptible, while the whole world runs races to win the corruptible crown. We run this race to win an incorruptible one.

Then Acts 8:30. Here is a good one. This is the story we talked about this the other night. This is the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, the opportunity God gives us. Philip was over there in a great revival in Samaria, and the Lord had brought that Ethiopian eunuch out there in the backside of the desert. Somebody had given him Isaiah 53, and he is reading about the death of Christ, has no idea what he is talking about. God lifts up Philip in the middle of revival where hundreds and hundreds, maybe thousands, of people are getting saved, pulls him out for one guy over here. When he comes down through there, you know what the Bible said? There is a great picture of passion. Passion is not about numbers. I know that is hard for us to get today.

I have known evangelists that would tell, they thought they were so valuable to God. There used to be one over here in Kansas. He is gone now, and I have seen it before. They get to be such legends in their own mind that this guy would say that, "I will not come to a church that cannot guarantee me a crowd of 5,000 people to preach to." In other words, in essence, "My preaching is so valuable that if you have got 200 or 300 people or a thousand, it is not worth my time." Now that is about the height of arrogance that, if I was God, I would cut somebody's tongue out like that. Of course, I am not God, but I am just saying. But that is the height of arrogance. We think that passion is about numbers. If I have 5,000 people, I can really be passionate, but if I have a crowd this size, well, I am not going to be as passionate.

I will tell you something. Here is an evangelist that was having a revival with thousands of people in Samaria, and God pulls him out and sends him to one guy. You do not hear him complain at all. You do not hear him get up and say, "Well, you know, Lord, I guess You missed a great revival we had last night. There were thousands of people that came forward. You cannot do this without me. I need to stay here. You have got to know how many people You can send over to that old guy in the desert. Me, man, I am in the middle, and I am getting on over here with these people. We are getting a revival." You see, his passion was not built on numbers. The day your passion is built on the crowd you have to have, you are in trouble. Your passion should never be built on numbers. Your passion is built on a true opportunity that God gives you, not the numbers involved. I come here on Sunday morning, and there is a bad snowstorm out there, which has happened in the past, and we have had at times that 20 or 30 of them made it here. I do not think to myself, "Well, I am going to take it easy today. It is kind of an off day. I have got

what I want to say. I think I will save it for next week. I will just put some..." You are going to get the full answer. My passion is not about how many are here. My passion is about this is an opportunity that God gave me to give you truth, and I am passionate about it. It does not matter if you are all here, half of you here, or just one of you is here. If it is just one of you, you are going to get a boatload. I guarantee you when I give the invitation, I will deal with you when you come forward. How would that be?

Philip had this great revival over here. Thousands were saved. He plopped down the desert, and the Spirit of God says to him, "Go join thyself to that man's chariot." You know what the Bible says?

Acts 8:30

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

He ran. He did not go, "Okay. I will tell you, Lord, You sure screwed this one up. I was having a great time there. I do not know what they are going to do." He ran. He was not looking at numbers for his passion. It was God gave me an opportunity, and I am passionate about it. God is giving you an opportunity with your kids. Giving you the opportunity. He has given me the opportunity with this church. He has given you the opportunity with your kids and your passion. He ran. You know why? Because he saw what God was doing. He saw the big picture. He knew that the revival in Samaria was not the total picture. He realized that the whole picture of God, and he realized what it was, and he realized that he was part of it no matter where he went. He had God's vision. He did not want to be left behind. I would hate to think when I got to the judgment seat of Christ that God had tremendous opportunities that He wanted me that were so small in numbers they looked at. But I did not go because I thought I was more important with this. Your passion is never about the numbers involved. Your passion is just about a true opportunity of God. And if it is, I am in.

> For the vision is yet for an appointed time

Look at verse three. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time." Your child's life, when they are very young, that is the time to lay it out long before it gets there. Get them ready, plow the ground. Some of you were asking me about your newborn babies. You just got newborn babies, and you cannot do these things with them. You said, "You know, we are trying to do the best we can. So we are getting ready. We are going through it. Me and my wife, we are going through it. We are getting it all down. So when they can read..." I have got one better for you now. You can do something right now. You say, "Well, it is just babies. Only been, it is a year old or less than a year old or two years old." You know what you can do for that baby? I do not care how little it is. They still have a subconscious. Read the Word of God to it. You do not think the Holy Spirit of God will take that in their little subconscious even though they cannot answer back? You think praying over them and singing songs to them that it does not do something for them? They have got a soul. They have got a soul. You think you cannot minister to them, and you have got to minister to somebody, and they have got to say, "Praise the Lord. Thank you very much. Here is a dollar." They have got a subconscious. They are there. I do not care if they are six months old

or you just brought it home from the hospital. In that little baby is a soul that can attach to God's Spirit, and you read to it. You pray over it. You sing to him. You start right away. Building the vision. Building the vision in their subconscious.

You ever notice families that have bilingual children in them, that they will grow up in a family, and they never had a class in Spanish, but Mom and Dad will be bilingual? They will speak English and Spanish, and they talk back and forth in both languages. That child will grow up by the time they are five, six years old. They can speak two languages. They speak two languages because of the two languages that are spoken at home, and they live in that home. They absorb those languages, and I am sure that for a period of time, they have got to separate it out, but they come out as they get older speaking fluent Spanish and fluent English because they come from a bilingual family. In other words, whatever language you are speaking to your child spiritually is a language they are going to adapt, and they are going to get into their subconscious, and they are going to come out speaking. It all comes down to the vision we as parents provide for them. Me as a pastor provide for you, God of the world. Simply, your child is where they are at today based on the vision that we, the parent, gave them.

> *Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry*

Then the last part of verse three. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." There is a process to giving your child the vision of God in their life. It is a process that begins with Mom and Dad and then moves into the family and then is passed on to the child as a learned training process. You go after their heart. You see what you do. You have got the vision of God in your own life, and you give that to your child. You teach them, you train them. It may take a while to manifest itself because they are little, but through the five stages of spiritual growth. And you, the parent that has the understanding, and they are on your watch, and you are on your tower, walking your child every step of the way through God's life goals for them. The ministry, understanding that the fruit is His reward and their God's heritage.

SEC: The Outcome of a Godly Vision

Remember, all training and teaching in your child's life is about getting the vision of God and your family into their life. It is just that simple. Everything you do, everything you do with your child, every aspect of discipline, all of those five things, every conversation you have, everything you invest in should be about getting and reinforcing the vision that God has for you and your wife, your family, and instilling it into your children. A vision of a life with God.

There are four things you want to remember, and then I am done. Four things you want to remember about giving your child the vision that it will do when you constantly are reinforcing that and giving it to them. When you have it in your own life first, and they see the passion and the zeal of not just listening to what you say, but watching what you do, through the concept of giving them a vision in life with God.

7. The first thing you will begin to do is shape his will. He will put his willpower aside in time, and he will follow God's will.

8. The second thing you will do through the vision is develop his mind from the mind of his own to let this mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus.
9. The third thing that you do as you build his will or shape his will and develop his mind, you will begin to mold his character through his attitude of heart, that he, like Daniel, will purpose in his heart that he will not defile himself with the king's meat.
10. The fourth thing that you will do through this process is that you will bring his human spirit in line with God's Spirit in the Word of God.

You do those four things in his life through a vision. Through everything else you do, you never lose sight of why I am doing what I am doing is to reinforce the vision. So my son, my child, my daughter has a context of everything they face in life, that they come away with a vision of a life with God is a lot better than a life without Him.

Next week, we will close out our study on Proverbs 22:6. I am going to probably talk about the seven keys of biblical parenting. We are going to pull it all together. Seven things that you want to remember going back through everything that we are doing. But the most important thing is understanding the vision. Television. It will never be the same again when you turn that thing on. It will always remind you that when a picture goes out, you are not getting anything. You have got to have the whole context of the story. In the story of life, you have to tell the vision. They have to hear it, and they have to see it.