

# Proverbs 22:6

Sunday 1/21/2018

SEC: The Foundation of Child Training

Today, we are going to close out our study on the training of our children. As you know, all of our study has been based on a key verse that we found in Proverbs 22:6 as we were just coming through the book of Proverbs. We will do that from time to time; we will hit a verse there that has so much to it and so much that has to be rolled out of it that we will just take the time to work it all out.

That verse, of course, is really the backbone of having children and family.

*Proverbs 22:6*

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

As I told you from the very beginning and all the way through, that is probably, for your family, the single greatest promise anywhere in the Word of God. It is God's guarantee to you that if you do your part, He will do His part, and you will have an absolute guarantee that your children will grow up to be everything that God wants them to be.

We have seen and talked about a lot of different aspects to teaching and training your kids. My job, as in anything I do with you in the Bible, I have tried to break it down and make it as easy for you as I could, so that you could understand it, grasp it, and then do something with it.

Now, it is your job, your time, to take the material and fit it into your own life first, and then into your family. I must say, so many of you are doing a wonderful job of that. I am getting reports every week as you are taking your little time with your families and everything. There are even some cases where the husbands do not want to do it and refuse to do it, and the mom picks it up and keeps on doing it. That is great. Thank God somebody is doing it. It is a thing where it is really going to work for you.

Now is the time to bring all the material into play with your family. I even gave you a starter plan, and of course, that plan is what you are doing now: going through every week and listening to it.

Last week, I gave you the real key to having your family be successful, and that is the vision that you will provide for them. I gave you the verse back in Proverbs 29:17-18. Verse 18 basically said:

*Proverbs 29:18*

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

We talked about how we always use that for a church, and that is true. But when you look at Proverbs 29:17, it is definitely putting it into the context of your children, providing a vision for your children.

I told you Friday night we had a preliminary meeting for camp with the key leader people that are there. I want to carry on through to camp and then out of camp. I do not want to do things with our kids anymore where we are at, just chopped up segments. Do this, and then six months later do that. I want to pull it all together. Joe is already on top of it. He has already got everything laid out. We have already got our emails. The leaders have already got their agendas and are working on them, what we are going to do. I want to work with the counselors this year to help ensure that everything just kind of moves and we stay in flow with everything that we have got to do.

Once we leave here and understand the vision and how we impact it into our family, it is the fact of getting your child to see him or herself as a vital part of your family based on the vision that God has given you, the mom and the dad, just like it is for my vision for this church. This church would go nowhere if I did not see what God wants us to do and then interact it into your lives.

We looked at every phase of their life and their training and how we need to reinforce those things, the vision of God, till we all get together. It becomes one with us that we understand it, just like we do in our church.

#### SEC: The Vital Role of Vision in Parenting

I told you last week that four of the great things that will come out of getting a vision into your family, into your child, and then implementing that and then keeping that through the vision will be the aspect of your ability to:

1. Shape their will.
2. Develop their mindset.
3. Mold their character.
4. Most importantly, bring their spirit in line with God's spirit, that everything just goes the way it is supposed to, that kindred spirit with God.

Within the vision, Proverbs 29:17-18, I remember I gave you four things about the vision, and these are absolutely vital for you to remember. I am giving you these because of where we are going here in just a few moments. I want to recap this because it is all going to kind of go together today.

- The vision is not what you want for your child, but what God wants for your child.
- The vision for your child must start with you, the parent.
- The vision has to be with passion.
- The process of defining the vision was found in Habakkuk 2:2-3.

#### SEC: Practical Tools for Parental Guidance

Today, I want to pull all of this material together and I want to leave with you a really good, solid, workable plan for you today. I want you to go out of here today with all of the tools that you need, and as I said, I will help you however I can. We have Thursday night Bible study. You

can ask whatever you want. You always have access to me. But you now have a valuable format to put into your family.

You have first of all these lessons, and many of you are actively sitting down every week and going through that, or get the reports back. That is the greatest single thing that you can begin to do in your family. We have children's discipleship lessons that are close to being finished based on ours, but for your kids. That is the next step you could do in getting those lessons and taking your kids through those. Many of you are well enough equipped with a Bible that you can just become creative with your own thing that you want to do with your kids. You can take the stories in the Bible and break them down. Get the Bible story books out of the bookstore, but once you have got it going, keep it going. Do not back off on it. Do not think now because I am done on Sunday, you are done. You are not. I am done. You are just starting.

I am going to tell you something else. If I were you, I would go through these lessons and I would make me a quick, ready reference guide to all the key things. When you buy a phone, you get this book that is thick with instructions, or you buy anything, but they always now, for me, it is always great. Now they give you a quick start-up. Just a little card, maybe two or three pages. It tells you the key features that you do not have to read that book. You just get the quick start-up and you are up in business. That is what you need to do with this.

In the back of my Bible, not this one, but the one I use for Bible study, I have a quick reference for almost every subject that you can imagine. It does not take much. I do not have to take a whole page. Sometimes I do, but I have a quick reference for almost everything that I could ever imagine that anybody would ever ask me if I cannot remember it myself. I have a quick reference on music. I have a quick reference on children. I have a quick reference on history. I have a quick reference on the nation of Israel. I have a quick reference on the wars that they fought. I have a quick reference about everything that I thought was vital that instead of me having to peel through all this material, I just go to my quick start-up. Here I am. That is what you need to do with this.

I think some of you ladies would be really good at doing this, and if we get a really good one, then we will make copies of it and we will pass it out for people. You need to have a reference of the terms, some of the key verses, some of the key concepts that we work through. You can get at a glance that will just make everything kind of, there it is, right there, a ready reference, a quick glance that you do not have to keep pouring over all this. When I always did it, I always used and I put things down that would trigger my mind to the next place I had to go that I never had to write down. Therefore, I could just do eight or nine things, but if I had to teach somebody, I could go for 10 hours and 45 minutes on just those eight or nine things because they will open up avenues to the next place I have got to go that I know that I do not have to write down. Things like that. Get a really good one, as I said. Let us see what you can do with that, and some of you ladies ought to really be good at that.

SEC: The Seven Absolutes to Effective Parenting

In closing today, I want to give you seven areas that you will build along with the vision in your life, and I call these the seven absolutes to parenting. I know I have given you a lot of seven

things, five things, and nine things, but that is what you have got to do. You have got to break things down. You will remember that your teaching and your training will be about giving your child the vision of a life with God. You want to give and instill in your child the vision of God through your teaching and your training that that child will never, never entertain the thought of what it would be like with a life without God. I will tell you something else. They will never entertain the idea and thought of what life would be without their mom and dad there. You build those things the right way, and nobody will pull them out of your family or out of the relationship with God.

Most of you young people do not know that some of you older guys will. It used to be when you bought a car, went to the dealership, now you just go and there are 500 cars on the lot, and you can find whatever you want, or if you do not find it, they will call around the world and find it and get it to you or it will bring it to you. It never used to be that way. My dad in 1960 bought a, my dad was a Pontiac man, and he always bought Pontiacs. I remember as a young kid he had a '55 Pontiac. I was only five years old at that time, but I remember that Pontiac, big old boat. He liked Bonneville's. I do not even know if they still have Pontiac Bonneville's, but he liked Bonneville's. He liked the Venturas. Me, as I got older, I was a GTO man myself. Most of you do not even know what that GTO is. That is okay.

When you went in to buy a car, you did not just buy it off the lot. What you went in and you went in there and they would sit down with the guy, and you told them what you wanted. You said, "I want white, I want this, I want that, I want," and you would give them what you wanted, and then they would send that off to Pontiac, Michigan, or wherever they built it, and they would custom build the car that you wanted. You just did not go on there and say, "Oh yeah, this is the one I want." You maybe only had when cars were in the showroom, and you got to see one, but then you had to sit down and order it, and it probably took eight weeks to get your car in some places.

I remember when we first got our new car, they told us, "You drive it for a little while, and then park it at home, and it probably will not start for a while, because the engine will swell up, but it will loosen up." Boy, you can catch up your car, now you can drive it as much as you want. Things have changed, but you used to have to go in and you used to get a custom car. You used to tell them exactly what you wanted. "I want this on it, I do not want this, I want this car, I want these kind of wheels, I want that, I want all this stuff in here," and then they would send it off to the factory, it would come down the assembly line, the guy would custom build your car.

What I am giving you is for you to be able to custom build your child. Put everything in you want to be in there as they come down the assembly line of life. Being able to add the things that you want him to have in his life, or her. Being able to put those things in their world. Ordering them up, putting them in, that when they come off the assembly line you have your dream car, or your dream child, which will fit into your dream family. You build these seven areas I am about to give you as you go through the five stages of the spiritual growth as your child develops, and you will see some difference in the thing.

Now let me talk about the first one here, and we have got some things we want to look at today, so we want to move along here.

5. Define the boundaries in your child's life. Your child has to have boundaries. They have to have parameters. They have to have limitations of what they can do and where they can go. You, the parent, have to set those boundaries. There are two things that you have got to be vital. First of all, the boundaries have to be legitimate. They have to be based on biblical principles. Because if your child down the line asks "why, why, why not," you want to be able to always fall back on the Word of God and give them the principles. You want to establish their boundaries in the Word of God. Now let me say this to you, and this is just as important, if not more important. You want to establish these boundaries, listen to me, you want to establish these boundaries before you have to deal with them and correct them on something they did wrong. They need to know what the rules are. A parent who does not ever communicate to his kids what the boundaries are, but the parent has them in his mind but never tells the kid and then the kid violates them and then you come down on him when you never gave him the wherewithal to understand what the boundaries were in the first place. It is just that simple. You have to let them know exactly what you expect from them long before you have to correct them in it. Then you always fall back on the principles. Whatever happens with your family, whatever happens when you set these boundaries down, once you establish them in their lives, before you have to hold them accountable, this will be in the discipline stage and the relationship stage very early, then you always can fall back on the principles as they get older. The number one thing is you always have to divide the boundaries and the limitations with biblical principles.
6. Hold the line of accountability and responsibility in your child's life through discipline. I cannot stress this enough. Teach them personal responsibility and personal accountability. Discipline in a family has to be a dual discipline. Mom and dad have to be on the same page. They have to work together. I know that some of you have children in your marriage, and we talked about this the other night. I forget what night it was, somebody asked about blended families where you have a spouse that is not biologically the father or the mother of the kid but yet they live in the house and you have to have some kind of form of discipline. I am telling you right now, if mom and dad do not get on the same page and understand themselves what they want to do in disciplining your child, do not think for a moment your kid will figure it out if you do not know what you are doing, and that becomes a major, major, major problem. A child needs to see strong, decisive, leaving no doubt in anybody's mind who is in charge, where accountability lies. If you do not do that together, they will play one against the other, they will play both ends against the middle. The old scenario that we always joke about, a kid will come up and say to his dad who was busy watching something on TV and he said, "Dad, can I go here?" And the dad because he does not want to do his job and he is busy with the ball game, whatever, he said, "Go ask your mother." And so the kid will go over to the mother and say, "Mom, can I go here? I asked Dad and he said it was okay if it was okay with you." That is how they play. If there is anything I have learned in over 45 years in ministry, the kids are a lot smarter than you, the parents, unless you are operating by the principles. The principles will save your hide every time. They have to know who is in charge. Teaching them a key understanding of a great principle in life that you hear

me give them all the time that comes down with accountability and responsibility. You are not responsible. You need to tell your kid that. Your kid needs to understand it. You need to understand that there will be things in your life, there will be times in your life when things come into your world that are not very good that you have to deal with or cause you great concern or cause you great problems that you had nothing to do with what happened. You did not sin and now you are in trouble for this or you did not violate the principles of God and now this is happening. In life, you are going to get the short end of the stick most of the time. These charismatic radio stations and these charismatic dial-a-prayer places where you get up in the morning and you dial a verse and a nice candy-soaked, candy-plastic voice comes on there and says, "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice," and you are supposed to get through your day on that. That is not even reality. It may be true but in reality. Now if I was doing those things and you called my number, here is what you would get: "Yeah, this is the day the Lord has made and you are going to get it in the neck so you better stay close to the book. Have a nice day in Jesus' name." Your kid needs to understand one of the greatest single principles about victory in your life as a Christian. You are not always responsible for the things in life that come your way that are the bad things. Things will happen. We live in a world filled with sin. We live in a world that hates everything about God and they are going to hate you. You are going to get up every morning and the world is going to be against you. It is going to be against your child and there will be times when you do not sin. Not too many, but there will be times. There will be times when you and I do not sin that we have absolutely no reason why this happened to me and I am not responsible for this, but you need to realize and understand and teach your children: you may not be responsible for it coming into your world, but you are responsible and accountable how you deal with it. Your kids need to understand that. They need to have an understanding of accountability and responsibility through discipline. You teach them that when the bad things in life happen that they had no part in, just like you have to teach them when the bad things happen that they are part of. You have to teach them that they have to respond to those things instead of reacting to those things. They have to use the principles to filter out what is coming their way or it will knock them down every time. Teaching them this vital concept will keep your child from playing the victim role, and boy, do we like to play the victim role today. I met people all my ministry and all my life that wanted to complain about the situations they were in. They wanted to complain about their husband. They wanted to complain about their wife. They wanted to complain about their kids. They wanted to complain about everything on this planet, but at the end of the day, they did not want to take responsibility and deal with whatever it was. It was funner to play the victim. I will tell you, you are going to find Christian people who like to play the victims. I deal with them all the time. They are in a bad, horrendous situation. They hate it. They want to complain about it, but they will never do a thing about it. I have seen, I have dealt with women who were in abusive relationships with their husband and their husband would do terrible things to them, say terrible things to them, physical abuse, and they would stay in that thing for five, ten, fifteen, twenty years. Now you try to deal with them and try to get them to try to do what they need to do to try to fix the situation. Most people do not realize, and I say this to women because women usually, I mean, I am sure that there are men out there who are in abusive

relationships with their wives. Probably true, but not like it is with reverse. Most women do not know this: if you are saved and you are a Christian, no matter what bad situation you are in, you have more control over it than he does. You may not see that. You may not understand that. You may not get that, but I am telling you right now, if you are a saved woman and you are in an abusive relationship with a guy, you have the upper hand. The problem is we get playing the victim status so much we never want to play the upper hand because the upper hand can be a hard hand to play. I tell women all the time, "Well, my husband beats me around." And I said, "How many times have you been in jail?" "Well, I have called the police several times, but then I get soft-hearted and I just cannot." You send him to jail. Send him to jail. "Well, everybody will know." Everybody needs to know. "Well, I am afraid to do." Sometimes you have to take everything away from somebody before they are willing to deal with their problem, and it is just a situation where you cannot allow your child to play the victim. You have to teach them responsibility and accountability. The bad choices we make will never be somebody else's fault, and yet I see parents all the time, "Well, my kid is this way because of this kid. My kid is this way because of something happened at church. My kid is this way because there were some mean people at church that said nasty things about him and now he never wants to go to church again." You did a terrible job of raising your kid. What is he going to do when he gets in the workforce and the supervisor does not like him or the person in the next cubicle? Are they going to quit? Are they going to not work for the rest of their life because there are people out there that may talk about them? When are we going to realize that we cannot always deal and be responsible for the bad things that happen, but we are responsible how we deal with them, and biblical principles will get you through every time. I do not know of a situation, a scenario or circumstance, no matter what you come up with, that I could not take you to the Word of God and show you how to deal with it and how to work your way through it. That is what the Bible is for. Bad choices we make will never be somebody else's fault. We own them, and teaching your child and training your child to take ownership of their bad choices. We must pay the price for our own bad choices. We can never send the bill to somebody else. If it is your bad choice and my bad choice, then it belongs to me. Life is about choices. Make as many good ones as you can. Make as few bad ones as you can, but you own the bad ones. And parents, do not pay it for them. Boy, do I see that. Your kid makes the bad choice, but you love them so much, you care for them so much. You will take from them the only thing that will ever fix them if there was any fixing at all, and that is the hard line reality. If you get it, you get it. Now you have got to pay the price for it. JFK said one time, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, I never forgot it. He said it in a speech one time over the Cuban crisis when they tried to invade Cuba back there and the CIA lied to him and he got up and he said, "Success has many fathers, but failure is always an orphan." Everybody likes to make good choices, but it is the bad choices we have to be responsible for. We love being responsible for the good choices. We also have to be responsible for bad ones. You have to teach your child the accountability and responsibility through discipline that if they make a bad choice, it is their choice. They have to lose what they have to lose. They have to pay whatever price they have to pay, and you teach them this vital concept and they will never go around playing the victim. "Woe is me. Oh, why am I in this situation?" You are in this situation because you chose to be in this situation and you are in this situation because

you choose to stay in this situation. That is why you are in this situation. Nobody shackles you down in the basement and locks you to a door someplace. Nobody makes you do this. Nobody makes you keep that relationship. Nobody makes you do that. You made a bad choice. You are in a bad situation and you choose not to do what you can do. That is the way it is.

7. Use any disobedience as a teaching tool. You want to understand this, and the great model for this is Hebrews 12:5-11. Always in any discipline and correction, the model is Christ and me and you as His son. Hebrews 12:5-11

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. That is a great principle, and that is a great model for you dealing in disobedience with your children. The model for disciplining chastisement will be our relationship with God as a father and son relationship. Verse 10 says that the chastisement in my life is for my profit. God does not do it to hurt me. You do not chastise your child to hurt them. You realize that as the parent you have the responsibility to teach them what is right. The second thing he says there in verse 10 is that we might be partakers of His holiness. You discipline your child and you chastise your child, and you do that because of the overall vision of the family. You want that child to be part of the process and the plan and the vision that God has, and we need to have correction in our family and chastisement in our family, just like we do in a family of God with He is my Heavenly Father and me as the child. The end result of any and all disobedience should be restoration and forgiveness. That is the way it is with God. Never leave a child hanging out there after you discipline them. Never leave them out there after you chastised them. They need to know that the chastisement and the discipline is part of the vision. It is part of everything that they have to go through, just like God requires it of you and your relationship with Him, you have to require it in them. Why? Chastisement for our profit. Why? That we might be partakers of His holiness. These are the things you need to instill in their hearts.

8. Knowing when to spank. We have talked about this one, I think it was New Year's Eve. Proverbs 19:18

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying. In other words, do not be deterred from when you have got to give him a whipping, when you have got to deal with him on what we call corporal punishment. Proverbs 13:24

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes. Because it is not about love. Love is about truth, and when a child disobeys and a child gets to the point where something corrective needs to happen, if you do not take that measure of

chastisement. Who of us here have not been taken to the woodshed with God? Why should you spare your child that when you know how good it works for you? Obviously, I gave you four no-brainers, everything is a little different here, but a child that lies, a child that is in rebellion, a child, the Bible says that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. You cannot support that. Willful disobedience and obviously hurting others. Those are four primary examples, and there are lots of things that you have got to be able to tell when it is these things, and we are going to talk about that here in a little bit.

9. Five steps of chastisement. I gave you five steps of chastisement that you want to follow through and when you have to go to this level with your child and you have to go through the corporal punishment stage, then there are these things that you want to be able to do, and this is a plan. Communication. They have to know what they did wrong. If you have already laid the foundation and you have already got the boundary set, you are good to go. If you do not, now you are in trouble. Let us say that you do. Let us say you have done everything right up to this point. Now you communicate to them, "What you did was wrong." Application. Now you show them the biblical principle that is involved. You not only tell them what they did wrong, now you are going to line it up against the Bible of why it is wrong. Explanation. Now you tell them, "Okay, based on what you have done and what the Bible says, now this is what I have got to do." Execution. Not literally. Then you have got to perform the corporal punishment. Restoration. You bring them back in line and now you restore the fellowship that was broken because of the act. Just like with you and God, you restore that fellowship. You love them. You put your arm around them. You pray. You laugh. You hug them. You tell them how important they are, but you also reinforce, "I am not going to allow you to do that ever again. When you do, I want you to know we will be back here again, but I love you so much because I want you to be everything God wants you to be. And just by God, how God keeps me between a white line by going to Sunday morning and Pastor Bob let me have it when he preaches the word of God, I have got to follow the same thing with you." It goes without saying, let me say this, and it just drives me nuts. When it comes to chastisement of your child and corporal punishment, you never hit your child. You never slap them. You never give them a backhand. You never hit them in the head or the face or you never kick them. That is not the way you do it. That just produces resentment and it shows how stupid you are and what a bully you are. That is never the way you deal with it. That is nothing biblical about any of that. I will tell you something else. Do not belittle them. Do not call them names. Do not say, "You are really stupid." Do not tell them how dumb they are. Do not belittle them by degrading them, by talking to them, condescending and calling them names. Do not bully your kid. I want to tell you something. Some fathers are the biggest bullies you ever saw in your life. There has to be an understanding of how you deal with them when it comes to this level, knowing when to spank and knowing how to spank and knowing what you want to accomplish with it. This caveman style, big tough guy, "I am going to just," that does not cut it. It does not cut it with anybody, least of all me.
10. You are the key. In parenting, you want to remember a couple of things. First of all, you want to remember that, as I said, you are the key. First of all, you want to remember the word consistency. These are some of the key words you could put in your ready reference. Consistency in all things. That is the key. You have to be consistent in whatever you do.

Inconsistency drives me nuts. It just drives me nuts. You have to be consistent. The second thing is you have to reinforce all of this constantly. That is part of the consistency. Then the vision for their life will start and end with you. Inconsistent parents will produce inconsistent kids. Lazy parents will produce lazy kids. Undisciplined parents will produce undisciplined kids. Parents who procrastinate in everything will produce kids that procrastinate. It is just that simple. These seven areas are the key part of everything that you do within those five stages. And it all builds toward the vision. I told you two key words and you had better put these down in your ready guide: Train and Teach. Remember those two words, to train and to teach. Here it comes. You train with the Bible and its principles, but you teach by your life examples. I am going to say it again. You train them with the biblical principles, but you teach them by your life examples as parents. Do not you ever forget that. Do not you ever forget it. Your inconsistency, your procrastination and all of the undisciplined parents in the world will produce that same mindset in their kids. They hear from you, but they always need to see it from you too. Like I said last week, television. You have got to tell it, but you have got to see the vision. You can hear it from you, but they have got to see it in you.

11. Three basic things of best parents. From what the Bible says and what I have learned through dealing with families over the years, I can tell you that the best parents are those who excel in just three basic things, and this is all incorporated in everything. Parents who are superb designers and organizers of their child's events with the Bible and the world and produce a good balance. That is the first thing. A custom building your child, as we said. The Bible, I mean, you have got to have a balance. You cannot have your kid just stay in the Bible 24/7. They have got to play ball. They want to interact. They want to do all of those things, but you as the parents have to orchestrate that. You have to be the designer of that. You cannot allow your child to design their own structure in life. The Bible has to always come out on top. They need to see no matter what they are doing in life, the key number one. And there is nothing wrong with those things, but they need to see that the number one fundamental key about everything they are doing in life is the word of God and the family and the structure and the principles that God has for them. They need to have a higher calling than just whatever they are doing in school. I think what they do in school is absolutely vital. But if it is out of balance, it will be out of balance in their life. And if you are out of balance with your kid, let me just tell you, always be out of balance on the Bible side. Always designing and organizing life through the book, through the word of God, not around the word of God. A direct interaction with the little things in their life. I will tell you the next thing that parenting. It is a thing where most parents will do the big things in life, but paying attention when they want to show you something or tell you something and you have had a hard day at work and you are sitting down and watching a television or you are reading something or even in your Bible. Let me tell you something. Let me tell you what you need to do. Turn off the television, close your Bible and listen to what they have got to say. Give them the attention that they are looking for, that you are reinforcing. Put that in your little quick guide. You are reinforcing that they are the most important thing in the world and what they have to say is important to you. Do not say, "Ah, get me later." Do not say, "Well, I am just tired." Do not get upset because it irritates you that your child wants to come and show you something, but the game is almost over and it is tied and you want to know who wins. Shut it off. Win

the game, lose the child. You figure it out. Paying attention when they want to show you something or tell you something. Never being too busy. Stop what you are doing. Put it down, turn it off and give them the attention that they need. Having them understand that they are the most important thing in your world. And you do not do that by just saying, "You are the most important thing in my world." You do that by whenever they come to you, studying it down, stopping and giving them your undivided attention. A strong show of discipline while showing and verbalizing and displaying a great love and affection for them. Telling your child a hundred times a day, "I love you so much." I have never understood this. Honestly, I grew up in a family where I, in all my life, and maybe this is why I am the way I am, that I grew up in my mom and my dad. I do not ever remember a time when my mom and dad ever told me they loved me. Now I know that they did. I know they did. They sacrificed tremendously for me. My dad worked two, three jobs. My mom worked two jobs. They provided everything for us. I am not saying anything, but it was hard. It was as sweet as my dad was. I wish you could know my dad. I am a lot like my dad. My dad was easy going. My dad, the word I say, "Hey buddy," that was my dad's word. Everybody was buddy to him. And I just picked it up, and he was the most easy going. He never met a, he never got upset. He never got angry. He got along with everybody. He was just a nice guy. Now my mom, on the other hand, was something else. They named a tank division after her. His motto was a tank and it said "hell on wheels." Not with my mom. My mom was something else. But all my life, I do not ever remember one time that they ever looked at me and said, "Bob, I love you." I think I grew up, and if that did anything for me, I saw it, the fact that that is what I really wanted. And I see that that is what most people really want. And I tell my kids a thousand times a day, I love them. They were growing up. I was not the best father in the world. I probably was not a very good father, but I always told them that I loved them. And I always tell you guys, I love you. I do not want anybody that God has put in my world to go through one day before you bump into each other that I do not tell you and let you know that I love you. And I am telling you, you have got to do it with your kids. You dads, and for some reason, it is always hard for dads, big tough dad, look at their boy and say, "I really love you." I mean, you can show them how to bat the ball. You can show them how to run the bases. You can show them how to snap the ball, throw the pass. You can play catch with him, kick the ball, shoot hoop with him, but you just cannot take them out and put your arm around them and say, "You know what? I really love you." That will be more to that child than all the training you have given him to be a soccer player, a baseball player, a basketball player, or whatever. The bottom line is you have got to be able to say to him and put your arm around him when, for no reason, and not one of these things, "I love you." No, put your arms around him and her and just simply say, "I want you to know. I want you to know how much I love you," a hundred times a day, a hundred times a day, because that is the fact. Because that is what God does for you. God tells you and shows you a thousand times a day how much He loves you. We should know that is true because we would all be dead if He did not. Amen. Always making them feel special because they are special. Their security will come from a warm, loving, kind, affectionate relationship that they see in the home. In mom and dad first, and then as you build into that, into their comfort zone, into their world, that they say, "I do not ever want to leave this home. I do not ever." My girls could have stayed in

my home if they would not have gotten, in fact, after they got married, they both stayed there for a while, and it was okay with me. I see some parents that want their kids right out there as soon as they are 18, "You are out. Get out of here." You are out of your mind, and that is your call if you want to. Maybe you are not out of your mind. You are just demanding. I cannot speak for you. You can do whatever you want to do. I would have had my kids live with me forever. I would not have had to mow the yard. We would have to do the snow. The dogs out, man, got into heaven on earth. I never wanted to leave. They did leave, and then they went to buy a house or build a house, and then they moved back in. I did not care. They could have stayed there all they wanted. That did not bother me. It was a fun time. There was never a time when I said, "I wish my kids were not here." I hope it never comes to a place where your life was apparent where you stayed out about your kids. Because I will tell you what will happen. Sometime they will get out there in the world, and the world will take them from you, and you will sit in your living room, and you will say, "I wish they were here tonight." That home needs to be their safe place. I was at QuickTrip the other day, and there was a sign on there that said, "Safe Place," that if a kid got, you could run in there. That is what your home needs to be. It needs to be a place where your kid can run to you, mom or dad, run to that home and know that they are protected there, they are safe there, that they have your undivided attention. That is the number one issue with kids today, as far as I am concerned. There is no comfort zone, no safe haven in the home. They suffer the emotional trauma of mom and dad's bad choices in most cases. Mom and dad go through divorces, multiple divorces. They go through fighting, they have to endure anger, they have to deal with an abusive relationship. Mom and dad make the bad choices, but ultimately it is the kid that paid the price for it. And mom and dad never even see it, because they are so caught up in their own drama. It is like a Saturday night motion picture, and the leading characters are mom and dad, big bold letters, starring mom and dad and all the little people that are part of the movie that make it a success, hardly read their names. Mom and dad are so caught up in their own drama, they do not see the damage it does to the kids. Now I am just going to say this, this has nothing to do with anything that is in my sermon, but I just feel I want to say this because we have got a lot of single people here. And probably people listen online. Make really good choices when you find a husband or a wife. Do not marry some deadbeat husband, do not marry some deadbeat wife. The last thing you want to do is find yourself in a marriage that a year down the line or six years in the line, what you thought was the picture on the box, somebody changed the contents. I want to tell you something, the whole realization, the whole putting together and fulfillment of God's plan in your family's life will depend on who mom and dad hook up with. It is just that simple. That Bible has all the principles, that one bad choice can end a life with God for your children for all of eternity. I am telling you, the frivolous way we pick a mate, we get everything else in front of what we should get it in front of, we listen to what they say, they tell us, but we never see the vision. Do not ever marry somebody who tells you they are going to do what is right with God after you get married. Walk them down to Best Buy, watch through, and they want to marry you, walk hand in hand down Best Buy, go to the electronic section and look at those big screen TVs that are all blaring on different stations and say, "Which one are you? I hear what you say, where is the vision? I have not seen the vision. You say, we want to find it

together." I am not looking for somebody to find it together with. I am looking for somebody who has already got it. I am not looking for somebody who is going to look to me for the vision. I am looking for somebody who has got it and I will support them. I know this, I am going to say this, as a single parent, I get it. Some of you are in situations where you have a husband or a wife who does not want to, you are by yourself in the thing, or some of you are married in a scenario where your other spouse does not care anything about God. You are in that, honestly, you are in that because of no fault of your own. You got married long before you heard anything about the Bible. No blame can be attributed to you. Please do not take anything I am saying and take it personal in anybody castigating you of the situation you are found here. There are enough people out there who knew better than made bad choices, but you are going to find people who come to this church after they are already in it. And now they find the truth. I am going to tell you something. That is what this church is here for you for. It is always something you can do. If you are a woman, we have got all kinds of women. It will be your support and help you get you through it. There will be some hard things you have to deal with, but you will not have to deal with them by yourself. If you are a husband and your wife is an abusive woman and throws you down the cellar steps and do all those things to you, let me tell you something. We have got some guys here. This church exists for one reason. One reason only. That is to give you the truth about everything in life. At different times we will give you different truth about different things, but it all comes down and boils down to the same thing. You need to have the truth about every issue in life that you have to face as a child of God. And this church exists for one reason. That is to give you the truth. I will not tell what you want to hear. I will not blow smoke up your whatever. I will give you exactly the truth exactly the way it is. You will either like it or not like it. I will love you whether you like me back or not. That is not the issue. The issue for me is not whether you like me or not. The issue for me is that I give you the truth. Oh, I care about it. And I know it is really hard and it can, but there is always something that can be done. But I am telling you young singles, we have a host of them here and you are getting to that ripe age now where you are going to be 22 and you are not married yet and you are going to worry about your oboe being an old widow someplace along the line. Just make sure, make sure, prove all things. Look for the things. Let me help you. Let me help you. I am here to help you in every aspect of your life and your, as it put together. But I am telling you that one bad choice will be the worst bad choice ever make in your life. And not only will you pay the price of it and be happy the rest of your life, but so will your kids. If it is not together on the same page, you are in trouble. You are in trouble. It does not mean you cannot make it work, but it means you are going to have to work awfully hard.

#### SEC: Restoring Lost Children: The Prodigal Son Syndrome

Now, before I close here, I would be remiss if I did not say something about this. I want to give you, say you are in a situation, if you are listening to here on YouTube or whatever, say you are in a situation where you have already lost your child. They are already gone. They are out in the world. And I want to give you some steps on getting your child back when you lose them.

I have a biblical principle or a story that sets every one of my teachings and I would call this the prodigal son syndrome based on Luke 15. I want you to know that when you reach this place in

your life, it requires extreme measures. There is no easy way here. I have told parents before that find themselves in this situation, and it is true of marriages and it is true of families with kids. Sometimes the situation is so screwed up. Sometimes the situation is so bad. You cannot do the right thing. That sounds weird, does it? You should hear me say we always do the right thing. Sometimes you put yourself in situations where the right thing is not an option anymore. So you are left with the choice of the lesser of two evils, so to speak. I will tell you right now, you never want to find yourself in that situation. But I have seen many parents that they cannot do the right thing with their kids anymore. Kids do not want to hear it.

The example of that is Lot. Lot was down in Sodom and Gomorrah. God comes down and says, "We are going to destroy this place. Get your family out of here." He goes and tells them that the Lord is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, knocks on their door. And the Bible says that they looked at him like one that mocked God. His problem was, the right thing was taken off the table. He had to load up his two daughters and his wife in the station wagon and leave the other kids there to be burned to death and burn in hell for eternity in the ashes of Gomorrah. Think about that for a while. We always tell the story. We do not think about that. He had to walk away and leave those kids in that house and not 10 hours later fire hell came down from heaven and burned them like a torch and he escaped. That is the deal. Some of you parents are going to escape and you are going to go to heaven and your kid is going to burn in hell. That is the model. That is the model. You do not like it? Then rip that part out of your Bible. I will tell you the truth. That is the Bible. That is the truth.

*1 Corinthians 5:5*

*To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

I want to say this to you and understand it. In these things here now, there is no guarantee. There is no guarantee that somebody is going to come back and damage may be too much done. But God can still get the honor and glory in any scenario. If you do not know that, then you do not know much about the Bible. But I will tell you, no matter what you can and what you cannot do, it is never too late for the parent to start doing what is right if they are saved. I am just telling you, these can be very tough and they can be very hard.

Let us look at the first one. The first thing I would tell you to do if you have lost your child, this is part of the reason why you lost them, I would tell you to:

12. Stop enabling them. Quit making excuses for them. Quit blaming others for your failure as a parent or a father or a mother. Quit bailing them out of trouble. Quit paying their bills. Quit doing their laundry. Quit giving them a place to live. Quit getting them a lawyer when this is their fifth DWI. We say we believe the Bible, but I wonder how much time we really do. Because we as parents do some of the dumbest stuff that are so out of character with the Bible. In Luke 15 with the prodigal son, you know that story, I am not going to read it to you, but you know what happens. He comes into his dad just like a lot of your kids did with you. And he will say, "I am done. I am going out. The world is calling me. Man, I am going to party, party, party, and I want my inheritance. I am going to get me a vet. I am going to get

me two hot women. I am going to party. I am going to have a great time." Dad gave him the inheritance. Here off he goes. I am sure, Bob did not tell this part of the story, but I can put into details here because I have seen it unfold many, many times. I am sure as long as his money hung out, his friends hung out. I am sure as long as he could put gas in that vet and burn rubber down the street, the women were just flocking to get in that car. I am sure that as long as his money hung out and he was the most popular guy around. But he wound up with the pigs. And he does not have any need. He is taking care of the pigs and he is eating what the pigs eat. Now let me ask you a question. What do you do with the Bible? You parents who want to fix your kid every way you can. Do you see his dad hearing that his son is down there and he is lost all of his money and he is on some farm and he is down there living in a pigsty with the mud, the pig crap and eating the food and the trough and the slop and the pigs and how dirty. Does his dad run down there and get him a room at the Holiday Inn? Did his dad come down and say, "Oh son, I cannot bear to see you like this. Let me put you up. Let me. I got a friend that will let you live with them." His dad did not do that. You know why? Because living with the pigs was part of the process to get to him. And when you shortchange that, when you step in and fix that, "Come and live with me. Let me pay your debt. Let me get you out of the pig pen." Let him stay in the pig pen because it took the pig pen for him to get to the point in Luke 15:17 where he says, "And he came to himself." If his daddy would have ran down there and did what you do and you do and bail him out, he never would have come to himself. But we just cannot let that happen. We just cannot let that happen. We have got to be the enabler. Do not shortcut God's dealing with your child by helping him out because you say, "Well, I really love him. I cannot stand to see him suffer." He made the choice. He has to own it. And if there is any way out of his suffering, it has to be God's way, not your way. Your way, put him in the pig pen to begin with.

13. Fix the core support system that is broken. The core problem will always be mom and dad. Remember, children do not cause problems in the home. They just reveal the problems that are already in the home. Proverbs 11:29

He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. That means that you trouble your own house as a mom and dad and do not do what is right. You are going to inherit a storm, the wind. And in some cases, it will turn into a whirlwind. That is why I always tell you, you want to fix your family. Start with fixing yourself. I will tell you something. You want to write this down. This is not very profound, but it is very simple, but it is very profound. Some of us need to change this morning. Some of you fathers need to change. Some of you mothers need to change. But I want to tell you something and here it comes. Write it down. You will never change until you are committed to change. You never change because you hear this sermon and you get 15 minutes of remorse. And then you walk out the door and you are still a little remorseful. And you are going to say, "Oh, I need to change. I need to change." But when you get out that door, when you have the rest of your day, the rest of your life, and you start to see all the things that you invented your life in. That is why you do not change. You want to change, but you are not committed to change. You want to be different, but you are not committed to be different. You do not like the way you are and you know your marriage is a mess. Your family is a mess. Your whole world is a mess, but it is not a mess enough yet that you are going to be

committed to do what you have got to do. You have to get committed to it. Not too many people can do that.

14. Take responsibility for the failure of your child on your watch. I have got to tell you, this is the hardest thing for a dad or a mom to do. Absolving yourself of your failed family by taking responsibility of your failed family directly to them. In 47 plus years of the ministry, I have seen a lot of water under the bridge with a lot of moms and dads and families. I must tell you, in all of the families that have lost their kids who have come in and talked to me, when I told them what they probably really needed to do, in 47 plus years of ministry, I remember four families, four dads, who had the courage to do it. And I would tell them, "Look, your failed family is on you. All right, you have got kids now they are out in the world. You want to get them back. I do not know if you can get them back, but if it is possible, here is the process to start. And even if it is not possible, you do it anyhow, because it is the right thing to do. And maybe all they will have for the rest of their life is this day, and God will use it. But you have got to give God something for Him to use with them." Now, you did not give yourself to God before when you had control of them on your watch. You kept it all to yourself. So now we have got this mess. So when in your life are you going to let God use you? You could have let Him use you when it was easy. Now you have got to let Him use you when it is really tough. Do you have the courage to do that? Four men in 47 plus years of ministry, and one of them is in this church right now as I speak. And I have more respect for him than I could ever imagine to say. He is a hero to me. So I tell them, "You call a meeting. Call a meeting with your family. Set them down in your home and begin to tell them that you were a failure, and they are where they are at, and your heart is broken. But now that you have got the Word of God in your life, and you know what is right, that you look back and you just feel absolutely terrible that you did not get it quicker to get it to them. And now they are where they are at, and this is where I am at. Tell them, tell them you are sorry. Ask for their forgiveness. Be honest. Be humble in front of them. Let them see in you the brokenness of a spirit and a contrite heart that you actually realize that they are the way that they are. And if you could go back in time, you would go back in a heartbeat, but you cannot. So all you can do is redeem the time." You sit down with them honestly and openly and say, "Hey, look, kids, I am your dad, and I love you so much, and I want you to know I failed you. I would do anything in the world to have you sit by me in church on Sunday and be involved with me in ministry. I do not like where you are at. I do not like your drinking. I do not like your, whatever you do. I do not like this. I do not like that, but I know I am responsible for it. And I am not here to beat you up over what you do. I am here to ask you to forgive me for being a failed father and not doing what I needed to do. I cannot go back. Oh, God, I wish I could. A million times I wake up in the middle of the night and I want to go back. I would do anything in the world to go back to those years knowing what I know now, but I cannot go back. So I am going to do the next best thing. I am going to start doing what is right. And I want you to forgive me. And if there is ever, ever a chance that we could ever get back with God together, I want you to know I may have failed you back then, but I will never fail you again. And I am here. I will never beat you up for the way you live. I will never beat you up for what you do because I caused that. But I will be here for you in every aspect of our life. And I ask you to forgive me. And I want you to know that I love you and

that I will be the best father to you that I could ever be." You lay your heart out before them. This one act of true biblical humility will do more than all the corrective words of the yelling or the screaming, simply because you are now as the one who caused it. You are now broken. You are now contrite. And they see it. No pride, no gall, no phoniness, no fakeness. Lay it right on the table. Now, I will tell you what will happen. Once you start to take full responsibility and ask for their forgiveness and tell them what a failure you were, believe it or not, they will come to your defense. And they will say, "Dad, that is not true. Dad, I am not going to let you talk." Once they do that. Once they do that, you now have a common ground to work on. You accomplish more in one little sentence with them in the first five minutes than you would have tried to do the rest of your life. You know why? Because you broke down the walls, you took responsibility, and now, whether they know it or not, you who caused the blame are now blameless. And they will say, "Dad, I am not going to let you say that. We made our own choices," and now you have it right where you want it. Now you have the ability to talk on a level that is biblical level, and they do not even know it. Now you have something to work with. Now you can get some things done. Now you begin the process.

15. Begin a dedicated life of consistency. You mean it. They not only hear about the vision of your life, now they see it. If we were unsaved, or we were just a bunch of nice people, we were at the Moose Lodge this morning, or the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and we were having a discussion on families, it would not work this way. But because we are a church, because you are saved, because the Holy Spirit of God is living inside you and in your children if they are saved, now God's Holy Spirit is going to take everything that you have done and everything you are going to do, and He is going to beat them senseless. And instead of you trying to do it, you are going to lay prostrate on the ground, open yourself up, ask for forgiveness, and let God just take that and work on their hearts. And maybe you will get it, maybe you will not. I have seen it where you had three or four kids, and maybe you get one or two kids, and the other two do not. But it does not matter whether you do or you do not. It is never, never too late to do the right thing. And God will get the honor of glory out of it, whatever way it goes, but He cannot get the honor of glory out of it unless you allow Him for you to be the vessel that He flows through. And that is what He wants you to do. Once you are in that position, taking responsibility for your family, now you have the basis to communicate and work toward a solution. It may be a while coming, as I said, maybe it will never come, I do not know. There are a lot of factors, a lot of different forces that come into every situation is different, but I am telling you, it is never wrong for you to do the right thing, and this is the biblical approach that you have to take. You know what Jesus said about your salvation? "Oh, I know. Turn or burn! Heaven or hell?" You know what He said? You and I were dirty, filthy rotten sinners, deserve to go to hell. And you know what He said to you and me? Isaiah 1:18

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. He wants to reason with you. You have to learn how to reason with your kids. You have to get down there on their level where you take the part of God. God did not have to say that to you. You imagine a holy God looking at a piece of crap like me who dares to scream my lungs out in the lake of fire, who does not have one inch of holiness in me, nothing that He would ever be

interested in for the holy God of the universe to come down and look at a wretch like me and say to me, "Let us reason together." That is my God, man. And then we as parents, as Christians, we have problems with each other who will become so unreasonable. Every time I have an issue with somebody, no matter what it is, and I have had some hairy issues with people over my life, I never come to the place that in that second, in that moment, that fellowship could not be restored. We could go along just fine together. You know why? He did not have to say that to me. He could have just, by all rights, reached over to the banners to heaven and snatched me out of this life, throw me in the lake of fire, buried me down to the lowest hell, and I would have deserved every inch of it. But He reasoned with me. And it was that reasoning with me that brought me to Him. And with your children, it will be that ability to reason with them that will always bring them back. But you have to let God flow through you. And all this hard-nosed, pride, big, tough guy stuff, you need to get on the ground on your face. You need to get your heart broken and your spirit contrite and God can use us.

#### SEC: The Parent's Unwavering Commitment

Now you have, over the last six or seven weeks, a really good plan laid out for you. If you have got it going, keep it going. If you do not have it going, it is never too late to start. But let me help you. We get into the summer and I am going to use camp to go right along with what we are doing. You keep your end up with the parents and doing your work. Zach and everybody will do their job. We will put the camp together for us. We will get it all up and running. We will get Barb and Zach exactly what they need to get the job done. I will get in there and going to preach to them and I will bring it all around and bring them right back just like I did last year, except we will be a couple levels up this year.

Let us together, Mom and Dad, everybody in this church, make a commitment together within this church that we not lose another child to the world. Whatever we have got to do. Change will never happen into your life until you are committed to change. That is what it is going to take. Let me help you. I am here for you. Get your quick start page ready. Show it to me next week. Mine is in the back of my Bible. I will show you mine. Get it there. We are throughout the week. We are off today. You do not have to go back to all that other stuff. You have got a ready, quick guide, start-up plan. Put one together. If it is really good, we will give it to everybody. Next week, we will be back in Proverbs 22:7.

I hope this has been a blessing to you. I hope it has been a help to you. All my years in the ministry, the most tragic, tragic, tragic, tragic thing in my life dealing with. I have seen the kids pay the price for mom and dad's mistakes because mom and dad do not give a flip. We do not have that here. Let us keep that not here. Let every one of us do whatever we have got to do to make sure our kids get the best shot they can. I will do my part. I know Zach and Jenny will do theirs, Barb and Olivia will do theirs, but we need to do yours. We cannot do it on our own. All we are are the girders that hold up the bridge that you build between your child and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us hold up there. Let us pray.