

"A Family Affair – A Word to Parents" Colossians 3:21

Tonight we would like to continue in our book of Colossians as we are going through the Bible, and we are now coming to a point where Paul is now dealing with different relationships within the family. And so we have really kind of slowed down and taken each of them. We have taken a look at the wife and her importance of submission. We have taken a look at the husband and his ability to lead and be obedient to the lord. Then last week we took a look at the kids, the teenagers and their importance of obedience to their parents, regardless if they're saved or unsaved, the parents, because this is right before God.

And tonight we'd like to take a look at parents, and so if you're married you need to tune in. If you're not married, you definitely need to tune in because you are going to be there. And if you've raised your children you can rejoice with me, and just sit back and just thank God for the grandchildren. If we could have grandchildren without children, it would be a wonderful experience in life, let me tell you. It's a wonderful thing. But my kids are 30 and 28 and so and actually 32, we have three of them, and Julie and Heather and Nathan. And just a wonderful thing that God has done. And Gail and I have been married all those years and we look back now and the thing I remember the most is just her faithfulness raising the children. I was gone, traveling, doing the church and seldom could get home in time for dinner. And God just did a wonderful work and I remember coming home many times and she was training the children. She was feeding them cookies and making them go to the bathroom, rewarding them, and I just had to leave the house. I couldn't believe my son was going through this. But God did a tremendous work in her life and I understood that God had anointed Gail to raise our children. They went through the Bible, they went through most of the books, she read to them. And so she was faithful in the raising of our children. And I was faithful in providing for them.

But tonight, as we look at parents, I want to take our time and really kind of expound on this thing because maybe there's a direction that God wants you to change. Or maybe there's something that God wants you to know. Or maybe there's a time that you feel tremendously guilty and God wants to set you free, because your children have to make a choice. Just as the teenagers have to make a choice on which way they're going to live. When all of us stand before God, He's going to very simply say, "What did you do with my son?" Not that I had these parents or that I had these things. And I read this thing the other day; oftentimes we hear the kids say, "Well, I'm just so wonderful and I had lousy parents." Well, how can you lousy parents and be so wonderful? And so you had to have wonderful parents to turn out wonderfully and God gave them to you.

I read this thing the other day and it was kind of cute. I'm really worried, said one little boy to a friend. Dad slaves away at his job so I'll never want for anything. So I'll be able to go to the university if I want to. Mom works hard every day, washing and ironing, cleaning up after me, taking care of me when I get sick. They spend every day of their life working just on my behalf. I am worried. His friend asked, "What have you got to be worried about?" He replied, "I'm afraid they might try to escape." I thought many times about Gail and I just leaving and leaving the house to the kids and going, and not telling them where we're going. Or you probably heard this before. A guy who wrote a paper titled "A Definitive Study for Successful Child Rearing." The guy was single. When the same man got married, he gave a new title to his paper - "Maximum and Principles for Family Life." When they had their first child he renamed the paper, "Some Thoughts on Bringing up Children." When his first child was five, he changed the title again; "Why Children?" And when his children were teenagers he added a new chapter to his book, "Help Me, I'm Falling Apart."

And so Paul, here in Colossians, lets pick up in Chapter 3:18 and we'll read all the way down to verse 1 of chapter 4. **"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.**

Servants, obey in all things your master according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of person.” And then in Chapter 4:1 **“Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.”** So in Verse 18, you need to underline the word wife. Then in verse 19 the word husband. Then in verse 20, you can underline the word child. Then in verse 21 the word father. And then we have, next week, the word servant and then finally the word master in Colossians Chapter 4:1.

Now your children, believe it or not, are a gift from God. It says in Psalms 127:3 **“Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of thy youth. And so he speaks of children as arrows. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemy in the gate.”**

And the word heritage there in the Hebrew is a word that means a gift. So God gave you the children that you have, the personality that they are. God knew that you needed them to help you develop in your life. The children are saying, “Well, thanks a lot, couldn’t we have somebody else?” And the answer is no. Because, God is able to do a work, sometimes teenagers look out and say, “Well my mom and dad don’t understand.” But the Bible says that we are to honor our parents and we are to trust God. Even as a wife desires to rule and a guy desires to submit, God reverses the roles. And He desires that we would come to trust Him in a brand new way. And so parents are to love their children in a very powerful way. In fact, if we would learn how to love our children, obedience would be much easier on their end.

But oftentimes because we're so busy, I think now all I have is time. You say, "Well, aren't you busy?" Well, of course I'm busy. But when you get over 50 you begin to realize that some things are just not important; that relationships are more important. When I was young, building the church, having a career, being a good pastor, that was extremely important, even more than my family sometimes. But now, at my age, I look back and I think, Oh, I want to spend the time with the children, the time with other people and so things have a way of turning. So when you are young, you are seeking to make your mark. But as you get older, you begin to realize that it's not really anything else but relationship, its not perfection. And so often parents are seeking to have perfect children when God wants you to have a relationship with them. Yes, they're going to embarrass you. Yes, you're not going to understand them. But you and I must come to try to listen to their heart and seek to understand what they are trying to do. And so our children are not ours. That's what the Bible says. They have been given to us to raise in the ways of the Lord. Not to mold in our behalf, but to unfold them for the glory of God. And so often as parents we're seeking to mold these kids into what we wish we could have been. And so we drive them into football and drive them into baseball and drive them into school because we were not successful in those areas. And all of a sudden you begin to hear stories where we see kids beginning to travel around the world, seeking to become famous, playing golf or baseball and the kids are only seven years old. And the stress upon them is unbelievable. But the crazy thing is that the parents are looking to basically prostitute their children. To begin to make money off their children and not to let their children be children until they grow up. And so the word tonight is relationship. Not perfection in a very powerful way. And children are not a thing to be molded, but to be unfolded. God needs to unfold your children. God needs to allow them to blossom inside your home. And if you're insecure or if you are doing things that are not pleasing to God, they're going to have a difficult time seeing the hypocrisy within the home, a double standard.

So the greatest thing you can do for your kids is to live your life for the glory of God. And the second thing that you can do to be a witness to your kids is to love your spouse with

all your heart. Because in the marriage we set the standard for what our kids are going to become in their lives. And so we are to train them and to teach them.

I like what Exodus says in Chapter 2:9. You don't need to turn there but you remember it's when they threw Moses into the water and the Pharaoh's wife took him out. And it says in Exodus Chapter 2:9: **"And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it."** And it's kind of like God giving you this child. I have given to you this child, take this child, nurse it for me and I will give you the wages. I will bless your life through this child and I'll bless your life through the trials and experiences you're going to grow within your life; and so the great responsibility of our life.

Now let me say something very crystal clear. When your children came into the world they were not angels. We have this idea that our kids are angels and they went astray. No, the Bible says that your kids were born in sin, shapen in iniquity. They knew how to lie, they knew how to be greedy; every sin that is possible is in them. Because of that sin of Adam, the moment that you hold that little tiny baby that baby is sin bound. And so it has a bent attitude towards evil things. And so it's not trying to keep your children from doing things, it's trying to train your children about God. They come into the world loving the things of the world. "That's my toy." "This is mine", and you have to teach them how to open their hands and be a giver. They come into the world beginning to be very selfish, and you need to teach them how to be a blessing in other people's lives. And if you're too busy to do that, you're going to have children that are going to be major problems within your life. You're going to go through your life waiting for them to kind of grow up. You're going to look at the first three years and say, "I want you to talk and I want you to walk." And you're gonna spend the next 15 years hoping they'll sit down and just be quiet. But it won't work always. And so if you just blow them off and go about your job, and do your work and never pour your life into them, you are in serious trouble.

Let me bring a reality into your life. Your children are only in Sunday school two days a year. Two days a year, maybe two and a half days. They're in Sunday school for about

an hour a Sunday morning. So you look at 54 or 48 a few, that's it, we only have your children for two days out of the year. The school only has them for about 15 hours a week. You have them for the rest of your life. And so as you are understanding that this precious little child that you hold in your hand has the capacity to walk away from God, has the ability to turn on God, for the rest of your life you will begin to prevent, begin to train, begin to discipline that as he grows up he will begin to grow up loving the Lord, fearing the Lord, understanding the Lord so when he gets blasted by the enemy, when his life falls apart, when his world caves in, he is able to look to God. He won't be looking to drugs. He'll be able to worship God. He won't be chasing women around the world. He won't be selling himself or herself because God has given him an image that he was made in the likeness of man. And so children, you need to understand, that though they're beautiful, they're born in sin, shapen in iniquity. And it's your job, by God, to raise them in the ways of the Lord.

And I think the philosophy of our minds are not that set on what I am saying. I think we believe that we can raise them up, they're great kids and someone has deceived them and pulled them away. And that is true, but that's not the whole truth. Outwardly, the world is falling apart. The culture is falling apart. They are being tempted farther than anything else. Your children are exposed to more things than you were ever exposed to in your life. The media has exposed your children far beyond what they should be exposed to. By the time they are 18 years old, they're going to see 90,000 violent acts on television. It's too much. They can't handle it. The violence of the games and all the things taking place, these kids were not made to handle that type of emotional experience. And so kids are beginning to kill at 6 and 7 years old. They don't understand. But it's your responsibility to say no, you can't do that. And it's your responsibility to understand that God has entrusted you to raise these children and to present them to the Lord and then to be able to walk away and let God work in their life.

And so when my kids hit 18, they walked out and I had total peace that we raised them in the ways of the Lord. And now, God has his hands upon their life. And God is going to lead them and God is going to unfold them in His plan and in His way. Yes, I would love

my son to be in the ministry by my side, but he has chosen to be a vice president of a bank, and that might be nice for me down the road. I don't know. "Son, I need a beach house to write my book, you know." "No problem dad, here." But no I would really rather have him here. But I want God in his life; I want to see him in heaven. I want to enjoy his life and so I need to continue to pour in his life, even as his father. And so we get together. We talk about the things of the Lord. I ask him how he's doing. Because for the rest of my life I'm going to to be training my son.

And one of the things that we don't understand in the days of the Roman times, a father could kill his child. A father could do anything he wanted to to his son. He could sell his son to slavery. He could get rid of his son and so what Paul was talking about is real liberation right here. And so once again, they're not able to handle it.

And so, tonight, I want to look four simple things. I want you to write these four things down. And they're going to to be kind of a little awkward but I've really thought about this and I wanted it to really mean something.

Number one: They need to see the grace. In other words, grace them. I know it doesn't make sense, but grace them. Not erase them, grace them. And I thought about love them, that would be a little bit easier but I need to have grace with my children. God's unmerited favor: When you want to kill them you need to love them. You need to remember that God has grace in our life when you are out of control; God has grace upon your life. You like that. Well, they need that. So number one, grace them. Number two: Disciple them. Number two, disciple them. Then, number three, very simply: Nourish them, nourish them. And number four, we'll end up here, teach them.

Now let me establish what I believe that God is saying through the Bible in a very simple way. In Colossians Chapter 3:21, a word for parents. It says here,

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged with you." Now in the book of Hebrews, in Chapter 11:23, it says, **"By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months by his parents."** Now the word parent, there in

the Hebrew, is the very same word in the Greek. So many believe that this father is not speaking about fathers, it's really speaking about parents.

So there are times that mother does provoke her children. And there are times that fathers do provoke their children. It means to make them upset. It means to nag them. It means to constantly hassle them. It means to question them constantly, to irritate them. In other words, this is very dangerous. And so, as a husband as a wife, I need to learn to trust God with my children. You're never going to know what they are doing. But God does. And if you would pray, God would begin to show you what they are doing. You have the edge because you are in authority. Now, of course, the father is on top. And so he is the one that God is going to look forward to. So, as a father, I am not to provoke my child. As a mother, I am not to provoke my child. To arouse them and it means, in a sense, to discourage them. And here's the reason why. When children become discouraged, they become an open prey to Satan. When your children become so devastated, they begin to walk away from the light and they become an easy target for Satan. And so, as parents, we need to have grace in our life. I know you want to walk away sometimes. I know you want them to just get out of your life and get away so you can have a breathing room. And so the kid comes under your feet, wants to help you to cook and you're busy and you're tired and you want to get the food done. So you say to the little girl, "no, no, no, some other time, get out of here." Well, what have you told that child? That that child's not important. You could have at least let the child put a spoon of salt inside of the soup. Or sometimes dads, when they're working on their car the son comes and says, "Dad, can I help you" and, of course, we don't want the kid's help because he's kind of going to stall us down and we don't have the patience to put up with him. But if you take a wrench and let him hold it for a few moments, that's all he wants to do. But when you come to a child and tell the child that you don't have time, you have sent a message forever. You see, their perspective and your perspective are totally different.

My grace needs to be far beyond what I have ever experienced. Let me tell you how I believe you can provoke your children. Number one, I think you can over protect them. I

think you can put a band around them so tight that they feel like they are in a prison camp. And you do that because you're afraid to let them go with God. And so you put boundaries around their life. You force them to be able to lie. You cause them to get out underneath of your authority, rather than coming together, setting the rules, setting the boundaries, setting the times. You won't let them do a thing. And so you can provoke your children by not trusting them.

I think another way is by favoritism. Oh, your brother always gets A's, and you're just an idiot. Or, you know, this happened or that happened and so sometimes there's that favoritism. I think, in a horrible way, Jacob really, in some ways, did some major damage because he showed so much favoritism towards Joseph. And so his eleven brothers were just envious of him. And so the envy caused them to cause major damage in his life because father favored the other. Isaac favored Esau because Isaac loved meat and Esau could fix it.

And so Jacob new that he wasn't favored and so he became a mama's boy. And so when I favor children, now there's going to be personalities you get along with. But the personality you don't like, that's you. And they're pushing your buttons, and when you see them you're seeing yourself, and that's what we see. So if you would change and they would change, we'd be happy. And we see it in the Sunday school ministry. And then we see it in the sanctuary. And you would say, "why, I just can't believe it, my children." Well they are a reflection of who you are.

And then I think another way is by unrealistic goals. Listen, you need to get A's. Well, maybe they can't. Maybe a C is the best they can get. And so, I need to find exactly where my children fit. Learning to understand and sometimes we place unrealistic goals upon our spouses. You need to do this or you need to be like Pastor Steve, or you need to do this. You don't want to be like me. You're going to go bald, be fat and won't be able to see. You don't want to be like me. You want to be the man, the woman that God has made you to be. But sometimes we put unrealistic goals upon our kids. "Why aren't

you playing football?" Why don't you get involved, and all of a sudden they begin to feel that you are molding them instead of unfolding them.

And then I think, also, in a very interesting way, by over-indulgence. Buying them things and spoiling them and giving them what they want all the time. You begin to indulge them and all of a sudden you pick up after them and you clean up after them. I remember Gail used to make the children dump the trash when they were young. And the kids had to do the dishes. And so at an early age they had to learn to take the trash out and to dump it and if they made a mistake it wasn't a problem. And then the kids had to dishes ever other night and she taught them how to be faithful, and I taught them how to work with their hands and how to be disciplined. And I remember one time my son threw a rock through a sign. A neon sign over at the other church. Big old hole in this neon sign. A \$25,000 sign. And I wanted to have grace on him. And so I grabbed him. I said, "You're gonna go talk to this guy named Steve." And he goes, "What for?" I said, you're going to tell him you threw a rock through this sign. He goes, "Dad, can you just pay for it?" I said "NO", I said, "you threw it, you have to take the responsibility." So I took him over and I said, "Steve, my son wants to tell you something." And Steve goes, "What's that Nathan?" And Nathan says, "See that hole up there, I threw a rock threw it." And my son was trembling. My son was frightened. And Steve just said, "Did you learn your lesson?" And he says, "Yes sir." He said, "Don't do it again." And my son never forgot that lesson. It would have been easy for me to laugh it off. But he needs to understand consequences. You need to understand that if you live in sin, God's going to deal in your life. Cause and effect. I think another way is lacking patience. We won't sit down and listen to them because their earrings are driving us crazy or their hairdo is driving us crazy. We're talking about the hairdo. Gosh, I can't believe their hair. Well, wait a second, what did you do? You know? I ran around with feathers and flowers in my hair and half undressed and stoned all the time, and listening to Led Zeppelin, and Canned Heat, and going to rock concerts and painting my mom's house black. And you know but she listened to me. And sometimes we can't get beyond how they look and they're trying to tell us and we need to learn to listen and we need to learn to love but we don't have the patience to put up with them. And sometimes we just write them off.

And I think sometimes we neglect them. And they want to do something or go somewhere and we don't have the time. And I think the greatest is that we provoke them when we promise them and we're so inconsistent. Oh son, I'll take you to the game and we never take him. Oh son, I'm going to do this with you today, and we don't do it. And sometimes we provoke our children to understand that we're too busy and so they're going to go get a life. They're going to have friends. They're going to get out of this house because it's a prison. And we have failed as parents to give them a palace and a fortress. Not a battlefield where we are constantly fighting.

And so I see, number one, that I am go grace my children. I am to be the father. And sometimes we say, "Well, you know, I can't believe you're doing that." Time out, you're the parent. You are letting them do it. No, no, you are the parent, you set the rules, you set the standard. "I told you don't do it. I told you don't do it. That's once, that's twice, that's three times." Gail used to walk around with a paddle in her purse. And they didn't get two, they didn't get one. When they disobeyed, bam! And the reason why we used the paddle is because it would break. We never hit our children with our hands; never hit our children with the back of our hands. Never touch your children with your hands. If you need to discipline them then get a small wooden spoon. I'll probably go to jail for this but get a small wooden spoon and discipline them. And so if you're angry you're going to break the spoon before you hurt the kid but I'll tell you, when she would pull out that spoon, bam! They would be quiet. We'd go out and have dinner and they'd begin to act up and she'd pull it out and put it on the table. Bam! We had a wonderful dinner. Some of you I would never want to go out with. Your kids are climbing over the table and grabbing my food and driving me crazy. Kids are whining, they're controlling you. You're the adult. I don't want to be the dad. Now, hey, you did it, these are yours. You do it, you know? For the rest of your life they're going to be yours.

And so what are you going to do? Get a paddle. Discipline them. "Fathers, provoke not your children but bring them up." And the word bring them up is a word that means to discipline. It means to discipline. It means that through your discipline, you're going to:

A) Remove foolishness out of that child. That wooden paddle is going to remove foolishness. You're going to say, "What about my 18 year old?" Well, it's too late. I'm not going to say baseball bat, but it's just too late. You have to start early. You have to then reason with them or tell them there's the front door. I said it. You live under my house, you live under my rules, this is how it is. I'm the father. I'm the pastor. I have to answer to God. I'm paying your bills. You can live here, and it can be a palace or it can be a prison, your choice. You say, "Gosh, that's terrible." Well, both my kids are working; both my kids are doing great. Both my kids are not asking me for money. That's a wonderful thing. I did something right, and then I got a Father's Day card. And it was a wonderful card. Dad, everything I have, everything I own, everything I am, is because of you. But I made him work on Saturdays, made him work on Labor Day, I worked him to death. But you know something, when he got out of high school at 18, he graduated after five years at Irvine and he went right into business and guess what? He's a senior vice president of a bank at 30 years old, and all his other friends are waiting on cars and busing tables.

You see, unless you pour your life into your children, set the standard, have grace upon them, work with them. Jesus said, "Let's come and reason together sayeth the Lord." God's willing to reason with you. You need to learn to reason with your children, sit down and so...number one, grace them. Number two - Disciple them. So remove the foolishness. I think secondly it relieves the anxiety. Sometimes the kids are looking to get blasted. And when you don't discipline them they don't understand. They cross the line and you didn't fulfill your promise. If you cross that line I'm going to spank you. And so they cross it, you don't spank them. What are you telling them? That they can dictate in your life. If they're going to hit you and match you, you need to match them and you need to win. You are the parent, you are the dad, you are the mother, you set the standards. This is your home and you answer to God for these children. It's important that you understand this. You're going to say, Oh I, man that's kind of strong. Yes, it's very strong. Very, very strong. But if you don't do it, we're going to lose the impact we have in this world. And you can change, and your children can see you change in a wonderful way and then it reflects the character of God.

But you know, when I was thinking about this, it says in Proverbs (and don't turn, just write these down) in 13:24: **"He that spares his rod hates his son."** You spare that rod, you say "Well, I'm not going to discipline my son" then you hate him because he's going to grow up out of control and he will not listen to authority nor will he submit to the responsibility he has as a young man or a young girl within his life. But he that loveth him chastens him. In Proverbs 19:18: **"Chasten thy son while there is hope."** In other words, he's still young; you can still get to him. Chasten him. Not let the soul spare for his crying. "Dad, you're going to hurt me." Hey, blast through that crying. Don't let those tears fake you out. Sin is in those tears. Satan knows it; Satan doesn't want him to be disciplined. Satan wants this kid out of control. God wants this kid under control. Now you've got to make a choice. I want my kid to serve God. I want my kid to do something in this society. Then you need to go through the tears, through the emotions and be obedient to the word of God. Yes they're going to cry. And you're going to say something dumb to your children, "This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you." But no it doesn't. But then the tragic thing is after Gail would spank them or I would spank them, then we would stop and we would get on our hands and knees and we would pray and they would have to pray and ask God's forgiveness for their rebellion.

You see, the Bible says rebellion is as a sin of witchcraft. The most cursive thing in the world is rebellion. It's as a sin of witchcraft. It's demonic. It's the heart of Lucifer. And they were born in sin, shaped in iniquity and that sweet little thing is a monster inside unless she's under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God has changed your life because he has taught you. Who's teaching your children? I'll tell you who's teaching your children: the society, their friends, because you're too busy. You need to teach the children. You need to be in the Sunday school, you need to be taking these children under your wings because these are the ones who are going to pay social security for you. Think about it. They're going to be pushing you around in a wheelchair, or pushing you over the hill in a wheelchair, I don't know. You know?

And then in Proverbs 22:15: **“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child but the rod of correction will drive it far.”** They’re foolish; they don’t know what they’re doing. But this rod will teach them what’s right and what’s wrong. And Proverbs 23:13: **“Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beat him with a rod; he’s not going to die.”** He’s not going to die. “You’re killing me.” The tragic thing today is that now the kids are calling up and reporting the parents. Don’t let them do it. Take the phone out of the house and figure out a way to discipline this kid because you’re going to win. And that’s the heart. I’m the parent, I might be stubborn, might be stupid, but I love you more than you ever can believe. And my best interest is for you. Well dad, you’re making me push the lawnmower. Yes, because I’m lazy and fat, but you need to learn discipline and responsibility because one day you’re going to have to have this. And I walked through the snow for 12 miles to get to school. Then I found out my dad lived in San Pedro. I couldn’t believe it. He lied to me. He lied to me. The whole time I thought, I could see my dad just trudging through the snow, gotta get to school with one of those belts on his back and you know, and playing football. And then I found out he went to San Pedro. I want to raise him from the dead and just beat him, but I can’t. And then in Proverbs 29:15: **“The rod of reproof giveth wisdom, but a child left to himself brings his mother great shame.”**

And so, I need to discipline. I need to do it God’s way, in a gentle way. I need to grace them, I need to discipline them. Let’s move on. Number three, I need to nourish them. I like this. It says, admonish them or adoration. It means to instruct. Here check this out, I Samuel 3:11: **“And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold I will do a thing in Israel at which both ears and everyone that hearth shall tingle. In the day I will perform against Eli, (now Eli was the high priest) all things of which I have spoken concerning his house.”** So God is going to judge Eli. And the reason why is because I spoke to him concerning his house. When I begin I will also make an end. **“For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he Kneweth; because his sons made themselves vial and he restrained them not.”**

Now the word restrain in Hebrew is the very same word as instructing. Because Eli would not instruct his children, God dealt with the family. So the importance of understanding. I read this thing the other day warning the Sheriff's office in Texas City, how to raise juvenile delinquents. So if you want to know how to do this, this how they say. Begin with infancy to give the child everything he wants. This will insure his behavior and the world that the world owes him a living. Pick up everything he leaves lying around. This will teach him that he can always throw off responsibility on others. Take his part against neighbors, teachers. They are all prejudiced against your precious little child. He will be a free spirit and never wrong. And finally, prepare yourself for a life of grief; you're going to have it. Make your kids pick up the socks. Make your kids pick up the toys. Make your children go to bed at a certain time. Well I don't have time for devotions. Our kids were in bed at 9:00 and they stayed in bed until 7 – 8 o'clock until my wife had her devotions. She trained them so that she did not have to give up her devotions. She was the mom, they were the children. And what I hear today so often is, I can't get a hold of my children. I have no time for devotions. You have no time for devotions because you will not discipline your children. Now I love you. But I'm telling you the truth. God gave you these children to drive out this incredible wickedness, to bring them to Jesus Christ and that brings me to my last point. Teach them.

And I want you all to turn with me to Deuteronomy Chapter 6. And I'll give you something to take home right now, if that wasn't so much to take home. In Deuteronomy Chapter 6:4-10, I think this is going to be great, this is great encouragement. Great lessons, teach them. And this is what I want you to do with your children. Expositionally looking at verses 4-10 in just a few moments, five things he mentions. Number one – teach them about God.

Notice in verse 4: **"Here oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord."** God wants you to teach your children about God. Not about HBO, not about movies or, I mean, your kids know more about witches than God. And you let more Satanic influence in your home than the Lord Jesus Christ. And then you wonder why they are out of control. You have fed them the enemy. You have opened your home to an evil spirit and Satan wants to destroy your home. Joshua said, **"As for me and my house, we will what? Serve the**

Lord.” You’ve got to make a stand. And when you bring in a double standard and you sit there and watch that movie and then you come to church and worship the Lord, your kids don’t understand and so, why can’t they do that? And so they walk out and they put the earrings in that you don’t know they have. They put the tattoos that you haven’t seen. Today, if I were raising kids, I’d make him strip. I want to see what you got. I mean, I don’t know anymore. I mean it gets tough being a parent at this time. And so number one – teach them about God. Well Steve, I don’t know God. Oh, you see unless you know God, unless you love God with all your heart, then God won’t become the most important thing. And you’re going to teach them about manna and teach them about material things. You’re going to teach them about things and Solomon said, “All these things are vanity, its emptiness. But the thing that’s going to save your life, and son I want you to go to heaven, is God.” And so you’re going to introduce, now check this out, you’re going to introduce God to your children. Oh, they know God. They were born in sin, shaped in iniquity. You’re responsibility is to teach them the greatness of your God. Oh, is that why I’m supposed to have devotions? Ah, Yes. Well, if we don’t have devotions, your children are not learning about God.

Number two – Teach them to love God. Notice verse 5: **“And thou shall love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might.”** I remember when Heather’s husband was murdered. And she was crying and it was five years ago, six years ago and she called up and I had no words, and I still don’t have many words about it. But I remember that I just held her and told her that God understood. She looked at me and said, “How can God understand?” And I simply said to her, “Because they murdered his son.” You see, you’ve got to teach them how to love God when they don’t understand. When your whole world falls apart, you can fall back on that which you do understand, that God loves you. When your wife wants to walk away from you, when your kids want to walk away from you, everybody wants to walk away from you, one will never walk away from you but he will stick closer than a friend and a brother. He will never leave you nor forsake you, and you need to teach your children. I remember when a bike was stolen from Nathan. I told him and he was broken. He couldn’t believe it. And so I sat there and we prayed and I said this is how God feels

sometimes when we walk away from him. That emptiness, someone violated you. I remember the time he called me in the mountains and broke up with his girlfriend. We sat out in the car for three hours. He was at a retreat but I wanted to be there because I wanted to comfort his heart. That his heart is going to be broken, there's going to be difficult times, there's going to be death, there's going to be difficult moments in his life, but God will always be there son. HBO won't be there. God will be there.

Number three – Teach them to obey God. In verse 6: **“And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart.”** It's not enough. They need to be obedient to the word. And so when they are unfaithful, we need to teach them to be faithful. When they make the mistake, we need to teach them how to be successful. Teach them how to be obedient. Teach them the fruit of being obedient. If you are disobedient in my home, then there's no way I can bless you. But if you are obedient with me, I'll put you all the way through college. And so they begin to realize that it's kind of a game. I need to do what's good here and behave myself and God's going to bless me and he's going to use my dad to do it and that's true. But he's also going to use my dad to make my life miserable. Well kids, you've got a choice to make. If you're really, really smart, you're going to realize that you're going to go someplace in your life. You've got to get through this parent thing. And going out and being crazy, you're going to get killed. I was shocked. I was hurt because I didn't honor my mom and dad. So the scars and the pain in my life, all the things that happened is because of the foolishness of my life. Some people say well, what a great testimony you have, but so what. The greatest testimony is if I would have served God with all my heart for the rest of my life, that is the greatest testimony. I look at a Jon Courson, I look at a Skip Isaac, those guys are so solid because they have a family they can fall back on. Gail and I don't. And so all we have is Jesus Christ, which is a wonderful thing. But then I realize that – teach them to obey.

And then in Number 4 – teach them the way. Notice verse 7: **“And thou shall teach them diligently unto thy children and shall talk of them.”** Talk about the Lord. Oh did you hear so and so at church, look how fat that person is, look how ugly that person is, man we are so bad. We have nothing good to say about people. And so when your

kids grow up, guess what, they're going to be critical just like you. My mom used to say, "If you can't say something nice, don't say it." You don't have a right to point your fingers and say look at that person, look how ugly that person is. Because when you do that those kids remember and they'll do that same thing to you. Don't do that. Teach them how to be obedient. Teach them how to walk in the way. "Thou shall talk of them, thou shall sit in thy house and thou shall walk by the way of the cross and thy will lie down and thou will rise up." In other words, Nathan, Heather, God will always be with you.

And then teach them to remember God in verses 8 and 9. Teach them to remember God. There's going to be a time they're going to walk away. There's going to be a time they're going to forget God. You forget God. And then God reminds you. And then you say, Oh, man, this trial's pretty tough. You cry out to God and what does God say? "Where you been? Where you been?" "Well, been here, there, all over the world." "Great, how you doing?" "Terrible. I can't believe you won't help me." "Well, you won't ask. You want to do it, go for it." You're all bloody, beat up and think this is not the way to do it. God says, "I agree. He that has an ear let him hear. You want to be stubborn, I'm God. Bam, Jacob, I'll ring the bell. I'll wrestle with you all night. I'll wrestle with you for 30 years. I'm not going to lose any strength whatsoever. And I'll pin you every single day. And if you beat me, you've really lost." So think about that. You're going to burn all the energy up trying to fight God when you should be loving God and fighting Satan. And Satan is going to use you and he's going to twist your mind. And he says here **"Teach them to remember God and thou shall bind them as a sign upon their head, hand, and they shall be as a frontlets between their eyes and thou shall write them upon the post of they house and on thy gates."** In other words, hey kids, grab your Bible. Hey, Nathan, read "Left Behind." Keep doing. Put God before you all the time.

And lastly, and we'll end up here he says, **"Teach them to beware"** and this is so important. The rapture's coming. We've got to teach our children that God is going to come with them or without them. And it says here in verse 10: **"It shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore and to thy Father to Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, to give the great and the goodly cities**

which thou built not, and the houses full of all the good things which thou fended not, and the wells dig which thou dig not, the vineyards and the olive trees which thou has not planted, when thou shall have eaten and be full.” And then Verse 12: **“Beware lest thou forget the Lord which brought thee forth out of the land from the bondage.”**

And so I would say that if I had to do it all over again, I would do this. I think I'd love my wife more. I think I would want my children to see me loving my wife more. Because homosexuality and lesbianism comes right out of our homes. A domineering woman, no gal and a domineering guy can do major damage. You have a domineering woman with a son; he'll never marry a woman. He'll hang out with a guy. I would think that I would want to love my wife more. Kiss her more, hug her more. I want my kids to see that I am romantically in love with one woman. I think that she would agree with that, that's what's sad.

I think, second, I would laugh more. I think I was too serious. Everything was about me and the ministry and the kids and holding things together, I, I would laugh more. I'd laugh at myself, I'd laugh with them and I just would laugh, and I was very dumb. Wrapping that car around that pole. Nathan told me one time. Dad, the hubcaps just came off. I said will how high did they go? They went about 40 feet up in the air. Did you hit anything? No dad, they just came off. Well he held that for 10 years. We were out to dinner the other night, Laker's game, he said, "Remember when I told you that?" He said, "I fell asleep at the wheel and ran into a curb." And I said, "I knew." And we started laughing. I would laugh more. I would let my kids know that they could get around me and not going to be burned up. My kids, principle.

I think, thirdly, I would definitely listen more. I don't have time to listen. I would listen more. I would take them. I took Nathan on retreats and took Nathan much more than I took Heather, and I wish I would have taken Heather more to the mission field, because it gives me time to listen to the children. Oh they're mad, and so now I need to listen to them.

And then, lastly, I think I would really lead them much more to Christ. That's what I would do. I think, simply I would love my wife more, I would laugh more, I would listen more and I would lead them to Christ more. They are sinners given to you by God, to win to Christ. And so a parent is an evangelist for Jesus Christ. God has entrusted these kids for you to get them to heaven.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we thank You and we praise You. For Lord, the great patience and kindness You have upon our life that Lord in our insecurities and in our difficult times that we have we see that we have dropped the ball. But Lord, our eyes have been opened tonight. Lord we need to fight for these children. Lord we need to put a net around their lives. We need to embrace the teenagers. We need to try to get into their work. But God You have given to us the authority that we need to be fair and balanced. Lord we need to set rules that are right before You, boundaries that are gracious and give them the freedom to trust You or not trust You. And God, we pray that You would make us stronger. God I pray for every parent that You would anoint their life with a new vision. That God that they would stand before their children, understanding the importance the life of Christ, that You would give them ways to share with their grandchildren about Jesus Christ. God You have given to us a second chance. I pray that Lord that You would show the parents in this room that all the things they're striving for. Lord You will give to them if they're faithful with their family. Lord, You honor obedience. And so Lord, we lift our kids before You. We lift our grandkids before You. We pray that we would be gracious, that we would learn to discipline with tremendous love, that we would nourish them and that we would teach them the greatness of our God. And we will thank You, and we will praise you in Jesus' name. Amen.

