

Attitudes on Parenting

by Jim Logan

A clear conscience is essential for love to flow from our lives and for us to be victorious in our spiritual warfare.

Duration: 1:25:21

Scripture: Romans 2:1

Topics: "Parenting"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares two stories about individuals who believe they are being followed or monitored. The first story involves a man who believes that rays from the television and phone are being used to track him. The second story is about a highly educated professional who is convinced that he is being followed by a black car. The speaker uses these stories to illustrate how guilt and unforgiveness can affect our perception and lead to paranoia. The sermon emphasizes the importance of asking for forgiveness and instilling character qualities in children to help them stand firm in their faith.

Transcript

It's been a good week. I've just about had it. Two weeks of this.

I swore I was going to work with these kids. Oh, man. But it has been good.

It's been a real encouraging week for me. And, you know, being in exhorter to go. And every time I go, I really pray that it would be worthwhile, because this is kind of a new thing for my church, to have a pastor that goes a lot.

And the pastor they had before was a tremendous fellow and stayed there 18 years. And then they were without a pastor for two years, and I came along, and I've been gone almost as much as I've been there, but I told them that. I said, if you want me as your pastor, I really, I can't tell you how fulfilled I get by going out from the church.

And I said, I just feel it's extending the ministry of the church in different places, and then going back there, and then going out again and going back. So, sometimes I don't tell them I'm going if I'm not gone long. You know, they never, they don't miss me.

It's only a couple of days. It's not an overnight thing. I don't say much.

I try not to be gone on the weekends. You know, a lot of people, they don't think the pastor is anything anyway, so they might as well be gone between Monday and Sunday. But, oh, I didn't want to show you this one.

I wanted to put this on again, that we might look at a few insights on the thing we looked at last night. We looked at lust last night, and we said that it was appeal to physical senses for personal gratification, but I like sensuality better than lust. Because a lot of people think that they're okay because they don't have lust, but they're struggling with sensuality.

And sensuality is just giving in to your senses. And so we have sensual reading material I should discontinue. I had an interesting experience.

I got a telephone call from a pastor in Philadelphia, and one of his young men was flying jet airplanes out of McCurt Air Force Base, and he asked me, because he saw my name in the IFCA directory, if I would go and call on this young man from his church, because he wanted him to go to church. He says, you know, when the young men go into service and they get away, sometimes they get away from the Lord. Well, I said, well, I can tell you he hasn't visited our church, and I'd be glad to go visit this guy.

So I went to visit him, and he lived in a motel-type thing a lot of these flyers lived in, and he was never home. So I just always made a point when I drove that way that if I ever saw a car there, I would just drive up and visit him. So I came and knocked on the door when I saw this car.

You know how you can park in front of... It was a motel, but they were just renting it out to the servicemen. And the car was angled in front, and I went and knocked on the door, and he answered the door. And he obviously wasn't expecting a man of the cross.

And I told him this pastor had called me and that I would like to come in and just tell him a little about the church and, you know, share with him and so on. Well, he was a little bit embarrassed, you know, and kind of struggling, I could sense. And, like, should I invite him in or should I not? And so he invited me in, and I walked in.

And there's different places I could sit in the living room, but his coffee table was spread with his current reading literature. And I think he forgot it was out. And so I thought, I'm going to get this kid.

I'm going to sit where he's going to have... I'll sit on one side of it, and he'll sit on the other side of it. And I could just see him, you know, doing this. Well, come on in.

Because it wasn't the child today, or whatever you call your magazine, where it's the one spread out on his coffee table. And it was really bothering him. And so I think it's important that as we, you know, realize that there's things that maybe we ought not read.

And how do we determine? How do you determine what you ought read or ought not read? And I think this way. Not is this evil material or not evil material, but how will this be a benefit to my life? And if it isn't a benefit to your life, you know, it's possible it'll be a hindrance. And there may be nothing wrong with it, but that is not the issue.

It's what's right with it. And we need to have that. What's right with this? Not what's wrong with it.

There may not be anything wrong with it. There may not be anything good with it either. And then word phrases I shouldn't use.

I remember one time my son came home from church. He said, Dad, he had a little kid. Dad, it's awful.

I said, what's awful? He said, deacon so-and-so swears. I said, what? I thought, you know, if he swears, he wouldn't do it at church. How would Richard swear? He said, no.

Daddy swore. I said, are you sure, Richard? Daddy, I know swearing when I hear it. And what this fellow had used was replaced slang.

And we had told the kids that garsh and gee and golly is the same as you might say the real thing. Let's say that. And this fellow had used one of those words.

And in his mind, it was swearing. I remember the first time I ever saw a policeman smoking. He just died.

That policeman went down 40 points. He just couldn't believe it. He said, Dad, he's smoking.

I said, yeah, I know. Isn't that awful to him? And he just felt so... The policeman doesn't know how much he dropped down in the eyes of my son because he expected more of a policeman. But, you know, are you using terminology that maybe isn't the best for a Christian? You know, as you grow as a Christian, there's things you ought to be throwing out of your life that just isn't the best.

And so if there's anything like that. Habits I should break. Expressions of flirting I should stop.

And that can be really bad. You know, there's the thing of being friendly, and then there's that over-friendliness. And this is really bad in a Christian school.

And today we have a whole new struggle. And it's hard for me to comprehend, but I think it's a whole switch on TV that's caused a whole switch in the school. But as I get around to the Christian schools, I've had different parents come up and say, what should I do? My fifth-grade son is being propositioned by the sixth-grade girls.

And the girls are making the moves today towards the fellows. And, you know, the girls are calling, asking for dates. The girls are calling and giving the fellows all kinds... The fellows are playing hard to get, and the girls are trying to catch them.

And this is a whole new... Now I don't say this in the colleges, or at least the college I was with, the Christian college, but I know that it's in the Christian high schools, and I know it's very much in the public schools, even down in the lower classes. And so you have these girls that are becoming tremendously flirtatious. And that is bad.

That is bad. And some of these girls are flirtatious, and they're really innocent. They don't know what they're doing.

And they don't know where it's going to lead them as parents. You better tell them. Or if you see it in your club, somehow you better talk to these kids about this.

And it's amazing how young it can go down, with these kids doing this type of thing. And then we looked over here at this thing of purity. Now tonight, we want to take up a very... Not that they're not important, but

this one is one of them.

A major attitude. I guess you're going to say, well, they're all major, as we've been looking at these attitudes and the difficulties. Tonight we want to look at the condemning spirit.

We'll look at a critical spirit. A critical spirit is bad enough. But a condemning spirit is a lot worse.

And what lies at the root of a condemning spirit? What? When someone is very condemning. Now what's the difference between a judgmental spirit and a critical spirit? A judgmental spirit is one that passes sentence. That's it.

They're judge, jury, and verdict. Boom. What does the Word of God say is at the heart of a condemning person? I could tell you.

Turn to Romans chapter 2, and let's see if we can figure it out here. When people open their mouth... You know, a lot of people, I think, after this will go to church and not say anything. Because people have no idea what they're saying when they open their mouth.

Besides they need to brush their teeth. You know, a lot of other things. They reveal a lot of their heart.

More than what they know. And they're revealing more of their heart than what they know. In Romans 2 it says, Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man.

That's starting out pretty heavy. You're inexcusable. Whosoever thou art that judges.

For wherein thou judges another, thou condemnest thyself. Now why am I condemning myself when I judge someone else? For thou that judges, what? Doeth the same thing. You better believe that.

The people that run around this organization with their long old fingers out pointing at others, there's a real key there that they're struggling and failing in the very same areas in their own life. Why is it other people's failures in my area are so glaring? You know, and mine aren't so bad. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to the truth against them which commit such things.

Do you want to see a beautiful illustration in the Old Testament of this? Turn to Genesis 38. There's always beautiful illustrations in the Old Testament. I don't think there's a New Testament truth that you cannot find in a living setting in the Old Testament demonstrated.

Genesis 38. This is a particular portion of Scripture that Dr. McGee does not even like to cover in the read-through of the Bible. There's two passages in Scripture he doesn't want everyone to read or preach.

This happens to be the story of Tamar which is a tragic story. And you remember the story. She was married to the son of Judah and he died.

And then he had another daughter and another son and he died. And so he told her, you just go away because you were supposed to marry. I mean, this was a practice.

It wasn't something strange that the widow of your brother became your wife. And it's excellent because it meant when her brother got married the whole family was in on it. And a guy said, you're not going to marry her because if you die I don't want her for my wife.

You better pick somebody of more quality than her. I mean, the whole family got in on this thing because you figured a third down you still might end up with her. It was something that in the rest of the family.

But two brothers died and the other brother he was only seven a little too early for marriage so they told the girl that when he was old enough to get married that they would send for her. Well, he didn't send for her. And if you read the story she realized that her father-in-law was going up for the shearing of the sheep and so on.

She put on the robes of a harlot and she was immoral with her own father-in-law. And he left his signet, his staff, and I forget, you know, his calling card and a few other things with her. And when they came back to get his things she was gone.

And they said, where's the harlot in this place? And they said, there's no harlot in this place. Now, this is a small town and we know if there's a harlot in town we don't have one. They said, oh well, never mind.

Well, then later on in verse 24, and it came to pass about three months that it was told Judah saying, Tamar, thy daughter-in-law hath played the harlot. And also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And what did her father-in-law say? Let's pray for her and restore her to fellowship.

Judah said, bring her forth and let's burn her. Didn't like that daughter-in-law anyway too much so let's get rid of her. Now, what was he doing? He was doing Romans 2-1 and she was brought forth.

For what purpose? They're going to burn her. And she said, before you light the fire, she sent her father-in-law saying, the man whose these are I am with child. She said, discern, I pray thee, whose are these? The signet, the bracelet, and the staff.

And Judah acknowledged them and said, bring me with her. Now, all of a sudden, he got very forgiving. What did he say? She said, she hath been more righteous than I. But what was his attitude before? A terrible daughter-in-law.

You can go through scriptures and find this kind of a thing. That just proves Romans 2. He thought she was horrible and he changed his mind when he got cornered. Look at verse 3 of Romans 2. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judges them that do such things, and you do the same, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Do you think you can judge others, do the same things, and get away with it? Are we supposed to answer it? No.

Alright. I just wanted that. What was his problem? What is the problem of a condemner? Guilt.

Guilt. Guilt and bitterness are two poisons God never intended to remain in the body of a Christian. The two major reasons of mental breakdowns and especially what they call nervous breakdown.

There's no such thing as a nervous breakdown because nerves don't break down. It's like Christian science. It's neither Christian nor scientific.

And when you have what doctors would call a nervous breakdown, about 97% of nervous breakdown is unhandled guilt. Guilt that has not been dealt with. What is the way that they're doing, again, it was very popular at one time, it faded away, and they're doing it again.

How are they handling guilt today? If you are having a tremendous amount of guilt, so that it's causing you not to function normally, and you are going to be committed to hospital treatment, what is the treatment for

guilt? Shock treatments. Shock treatments will not work ever. Because guilt is not registered in the mind.

It's registered in the spirit. And you cannot touch the spirit with shock treatments. A lady after 22 shock treatments was asked by a counselor friend of mine, what did you forget? You know, it just scrambles up your head.

She said, I forgot everything. He said, everything? She said, everything but the two things that were bothering me. And this is a sad thing.

We had a fellow that came to Calvary on a commuting basis type thing. He came in to see me and he said, Mr. Logan, I'm having a terrible time with my thought life. And he began to share and he was having a terrible time with his thought life.

But he didn't get as serious about it as he should have been. And I didn't see him for quite a long time because he was kind of like one of these outside students that takes a class or two, you know, that kind of person. I saw him again and when he came in and had an appointment, he was in bad shape.

I mean, really bad shape. He said, Mr. Logan, I think I'm going to kill myself. And I was really concerned for him.

And he was one of the most severe cases of disturbed people I've seen in a long time. And that was just in a period of about four months. And his thoughts had gone from bad to worse.

Finally, his parents were so afraid that he would just destroy himself, they committed him to a mental hospital. He had ten shock treatments in one week. He got out a week later and came to see me.

I asked him, I said, he said, oh, Mr. Logan, the thoughts I have, they're so vile. I have the most vile thoughts. You can't believe.

I can't believe that I'm saved and have these kind of thoughts. But I know I'm saved. And he said, you know, I have ten shock treatments.

They had me so doped up. That's the other thing I do. Dope, you know, dope therapy.

You dope them up so they don't know where they are and then shock them, you know, and then they turn them loose. And I said, when you were having these shock treatments, what did it do? He said it did everything but touch my vile thoughts. And the guilt that I felt just wouldn't touch it.

Because it's a spiritual problem, not a mental problem. And guilt in the conscience is a tremendous thing. It's like when we touch a hot stove and you know to take your hand off.

You know, that was the trouble with lepers if you read Ten Fingers for God. Lepers, their fingers weren't being eaten up with leprosy. They had no feeling.

And they would find the rats were gnawing them off and they didn't know it. And they would, you know, just wear their feet off because they couldn't feel anything. And so, you know, and you go to a psychiatrist and what does he tell you with guilt? He says you're too sensitive.

You do more sin and you won't feel so bad. And that's true. The more you sin, the harder your conscience gets.

But eventually, it'll get to you. And guilt is a very terrible, terrible thing. And we want to see in Scripture some things about guilt.

Turn to Timothy. The Apostle Paul, 1 Timothy is a tremendous book. The Apostle Paul is going, I mean, pardon me, Timothy is going to pastor his first church.

He's never pastored before. Timothy was going to pastor in the most difficult town of all the New Testament. He was going to pastor at Ephesus.

If you know anything about Ephesus, what was at Ephesus? The temple of Diana, which is one of the ten wonders of the world. I mean, you talk about a fabulous church. There was one there.

The staircase was made out of one vine over a thousand of the most beautiful women served as prostitutes in the worship of Diana in this temple. It was renowned all over the world. Timothy was going to have a storefront Baptist church down the street.

You know, that's hard. It's just like, you know, renting something by the Mormon tabernacle. I mean, if you could get the idea there, it would be a terribly struggling place to start a church.

It would be hard. Very wicked, evil, immoral place to go and preach righteousness and godliness and holiness. And Paul says, Timothy, I know that you are probably going to the hardest field we have, Las Vegas.

Reno, Nevada, because I'm here from Reno. And he said, I'm going to give you some advice. He said, if you follow this advice, Timothy, you'll be successful.

If you don't follow this advice, Timothy, you will fail. And he told Timothy the two things he would need to be successful as a servant of the Lord. And without these things, he said, Timothy, you will never make it.

And that's why this passage of Scripture is so very important, just as a background of how important it is we're going to hear. Look at verse 18. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them might war us a good warfare.

He says, Timothy, my burden is that you will be victorious in your warfare, your spiritual warfare, as you go to serve the Lord. And he says, Timothy, there's two things that you must have. The first is what? Faith.

And then you add to your faith what? A clear conscience. What is the opposite of a clear conscience? Guilt. And he says, Timothy, I want you to know that there are some who do not think a clear conscience is all that essential for their Christian life.

And what happened to them? They ran their life of faith, what? On the rocks. They're shipwrecked. And he says, Timothy, I want you to know who they are, and he tells them who they are by name.

He says, you probably wondered why those fellows are shipwrecked. I'll tell you why. Because they didn't have a clear conscience or genuine faith.

Look at chapter 1, verse 5. Now the end of the commandment or the purpose of preaching is what? Love. Now how can we have love? We talk a lot about love today. But what are the prerequisites for love? You and I are what? We talked about how we could show to a lost world Christ's love through our spiritual gifts.

But he says that there's some things that's important for love to come out from our lives. Real, genuine love to flow out from our lives. Out of what? What's the first requirement for love to flow from your life? A pure heart.

We talked about that last night. You'll never love right if you're struggling with sensuality or immorality or any degree of that in your life. You cannot love properly.

The second is what? A good conscience. Because you cannot properly love if you're filled with guilt. And the third is what? Faith unsinged.

And unsinged, I don't know, I get a picture of a guy with that and all those things. And what it really is is genuine faith. Real faith.

So I need to have a pure heart. I need to have a clear conscience. And I need to have real faith.

And that's the whole purpose of teaching. What do you suppose I'm trying to do in my church my first year? To have these three things. If that church I'm pastoring is going to be a place where people sense the genuine love of God, the congregation has to have what? Purity and a clear conscience and really trust God.

Or it won't be there or they won't sense it. The church won't be able to love as God would have them to love. Turn to the book of Acts somewhere.

24. I'm glad I looked and had it written down. It would take a long time from chapter 1 to find it.

But I know it's at the bottom of one page and the top of the next one you turn it over. The Apostle Paul says something that is so tremendous. He said, and herein in verse 16 do I exercise myself always to have a conscience void of offense.

Or Paul says, I exercise myself to always have a clear conscience towards who? God. Most people put a period there. I confess my sin to God.

But what else does he say? And toward man. So a clear conscience has with it that I have a clear conscience towards God and what? Towards people. And in my ministry I realized about ten years as a pastor that pretty much I had a clear conscience towards God but not towards and I wondered why I was not as effective as I wanted to be.

The Apostle Paul says, I mean, the Lord Jesus said, if you have offended your brother and you want to give a gift to the Lord's Word God says, I don't want your gift. Until what? You get right with your brother then you come offer your gift. And I we're trying in our church to move towards stop taking offerings.

I mentioned that and I thought everybody would just blow away in that church and they didn't. They got really excited about the idea of stopping the offerings. And I got worried.

Who will pay me? But in the second church the last church I pastored we just felt that offerings destroyed the spirit of giving. Why? There's two reasons not to give. What are the two reasons not to give? Of necessity or grudgingly? Why do most people give? Because the point's coming by.

You know, you turn off the light, we'll go off the air, you know, we'll lose, they'll pull up the rugs and all this other stuff if you don't give. And so we stopped offerings in the church. And it was so interesting, people

visit the church and they'd say, how do you give to this thing anyway? You know, did he forget to do something today? He said, forget what? Well, they never took any money in this church.

You know what my dad said when I took him to church and he was unsaved and he came to church and he sat right in the front row in a super church, the guy gave an altar call and my dad could move three inches and get saved. You know, I thought, I'm right down something, I don't have to go far. And my dad, my mom turned to my dad and said, do you want to go forward? And I'm going.

My dad said, no, they just only want your money anyway. And I was a brand new Christian, two weeks old, and the Lord, 19 years of age. And I thought, that's terrible.

But, you know, the older I got, I thought, you know, I know why my dad had that idea. And you know where he got it from? Christians. And a lot of pastors and a lot of radio broadcasts.

Because where do they put the emphasis? You know, and that's where he got the idea. And do you know the most amazing thing? That when we stopped taking offerings in this little dinky church up there at the base of the mountain, guess what we had a problem with? Surpluses of money. We didn't have to deal with it.

And we had to pay to find ways of giving it away. Because I didn't believe in bank accounts. And we tried to figure out what did we spend, \$500 this month for this missionary.

And we had a dinky little church. You know, and it's just amazing. We didn't have signs, you know, offering box this way, you know, big arrow right here, don't forget.

No, we just put it in inconspicuous places. If people want to give, they'll find it. If they want it, if they have the heart to give, they'll find it.

If they don't want to give, fine. And when God touches them, they'll want to give. But you know, as I was thinking of this, I went back in my mind, and I had some difficulties in my life.

And my real problem was here. Bitterness. I was really bitter.

And I tried to forgive, but I couldn't. I couldn't forgive. And the person I had bitterness towards was my father.

And in fact, it would go from bitterness to hatred, and back to bitterness again. When I was unsaved, I hated it. My dad became an alcoholic when I was in junior high school.

And people have got offended when I say this, but we did live in hell. People say, y'all, you don't know what hell is. I say, if you ever lived in an alcoholic, that describes it pretty good.

It was awful. It was just awful. We'd come home every day wondering how drunk he'd be.

It was just a horrible thing. I just can't tell you how my heart goes out to kids whose folks are alcoholics. They live in a horrid, horrible, emotional thing.

It's terrible. And I was saved at 19, and I didn't have the love from my dad after I was saved. I should have had.

We just had a film last Sunday night in church. It's that new film, that western one, you know, the shootout on the bridge. Mark IV.

It's on a forgiveness film. You've probably seen it, haven't you? You know what I'm talking about? And the film, I hadn't seen it before, but it really bothered me because this guy hates this guy because he... Well, I can't tell you the whole thing, but anyway, the whole thing is about these guys that hate each other. And he gets saved, and they ride off in the sunset, and they love everybody, you know, ever after.

And that's wonderful. I got up right afterwards and had a church full of people that came from all over town. I said, listen, I got saved, and I still hated my dad.

Come out next Sunday night and I'll tell you what I did. I was running forgiveness. I rode off in the sunset, and I still hated him.

And I was still saved. But I knew it was wrong, but I didn't know what to do about it. And I felt guilty.

Why should I, as a Christian, feel this way? And I'd say, God, I don't want to feel this way. And then I'd see my dad again, and I'd feel worse. And I'd go down to his house, and for ten years, after I was pastoring, I had horrible feelings in my heart towards my father.

We'd go on vacation. We'd go in the house. My dad was a strong Democrat, and I would become a Democrat.

And as soon as I became a Democrat, he'd become a Republican. You know, if he said it was raining, I'd say, I'll get the umbrella. You know, I mean, I would try everything in my power, and we would argue.

And we would fight, and I'd say, I'm a Christian. How can I fight and argue with him? And he'd sit there with his drinking, and my stomach would turn over, and I just, it was horrible. And finally, I realized that, that I had hurt him too.

And it took the Holy Spirit a long time to convince me of that. And one day I got along, and the Spirit of God did a really work on my life, and I looked back on my attitudes towards my father. I always looked at what he did to me, not what I had done to him.

And so I began to examine my heart. Where was I wrong? What had I done wrong? And I thought, would I want my son to respond to my authority the way I responded to my dad's authority? No way. Would I want my son to talk to me the way I talked to my father? I would not.

And God broke my heart. As I looked at my responsibility in that whole relationship, I was wrong. And so, I wanted to tell my father, in person, how much I had hurt him, and how much I realized I had hurt him, and how wrong I had been.

And I had... We were pastoring in Tacoma, Washington, and I brought a message on forgiveness in the church, what it's all about, and shared the bitterness that I had and the guilt that I had in my heart. But I would balance that guilt, because, see, when I feel... When you feel guilty, you can't handle guilt. And so when you feel guilty, what do you do on the other side of the scale? You put the blame.

And see, that helps you to balance out and keep yourself halfway, you know, from going nuts inside. And so whenever I think about the things I said, the things I did, I would think, well, look what he did to me. You know, and I would be just kind of doing this.

For years, I did this kind of thing inside. And everybody... We struggle with guilt. If people have abortions, you have all the reasons over here why they killed that baby.

You know, if they did this, this is why, over here. You know, their grandmother didn't look at them when they were little or something, or they got a spanking once, or, you know, something. There's all these reasons why I did what I did wrong.

So, as I allowed God to break my heart and really show me my attitudes and how wrong they were, my wife said, Jim, and we were driving home from the church, she said, Jim, why don't you call your dad and tell him? I said, honey, I want my dad to see it in my face. It's easy over the phone. I want him to see how bad I feel for the way I have treated him for all of these years.

And we got home, we sat down at the table and the phone rang. And it was my father. It was the first time my father had ever called our home.

Period. Well, I knew that it was divine. You know, I just, I got all sweaty and shook up.

I thought, oh God, why are you doing this for me? You know, I knew what I was going to say. My wife says, why don't you talk to your dad? And he calls me. And so, I knew, I knew God wanted me to do it.

And so, I told my father, I said, Dad, I've recently been looking back over my childhood. And as I look over my childhood, Dad, I am grieved at the heartache I've caused you. And Dad, I just, I just realized how wrongly and what a disappointment I must have been as a son.

Could you forgive me? And my dad said, you know, kids are kids. And when he said that, I knew something. I knew I had hurt him more deeply than what I even thought.

And I said, Dad, I can't tell you how wrong I was. Could you and would you forgive me? And he said, Son, I forgive you. The one thing I always wanted from my father was approval.

I never got it. I thought when I got married, he would show up. Well, the only thing he really did like was my wife.

You know, the one thing you ever did to a good kid was getting her. And I thought, you know, I went to Bible school, he'd say something. He'd say anything.

When I graduated from Bible school, I thought he'd say something. He didn't say anything. He came.

He was half drunk, but he came. When I passed through the church, I thought he'd say something. I'd say, Mom, does Dad care about me? He said, he bragged about you all the time.

I said, why doesn't he say one thing to me? He said, I don't know. But he tells everybody how proud he is of you. I said, Mom, if he'd only tell me.

After that telephone call, I got a letter from my dad. I said, Dear son, I want to tell you how proud I am of you and that you're a minister. I waited 10 years for a letter like that.

I mean, that was after I was out of college. When that summer came, my dad called on the phone and said, Can I come and visit you? Which was, I mean, we just couldn't talk. I mean, you don't know how bad it was.

My wife would say, it's worse than Jim can tell you. And we just did not, there was no communication. We'd watch TV.

Thank God for television. You know, you could sit there and not do anything, just watch a program and just kind of smile during the commercials. I mean, it just saved a whole lot of things for us.

And he said, Can I come up and see you? And he was coming up without my mother, which was unbelievable because my dad never went anywhere without my mother, especially on a trip. He just wasn't, you just have to see this. And I saw my dad, I realized he was short and he felt inferior and he had a lot of struggles that I could finally see when I got rid of the bitterness in my heart.

But he said, Can I come up? I'm going to fly up and spend a week up there. And I thought, Oh, super, come on up. And so he flew up and we went to the Sea-Tac Airport to meet him.

And I'll never forget this. We were standing there, you know how they come in those deals and then come out, you know, they walk up those little runway deals and then they come out. And my dad came out and I saw him.

And all of a sudden something happened that I could never remember ever happening. You know what happened? I loved him. It was the first time I saw him after I asked him to forgive me.

And in my heart, love flowed out to him. And he said, I couldn't believe it. You know, I thought I'd be nice to him but I never thought I would love him.

It just flowed out. And my dad came with my nephew who was 14. The second night in our home, my nephew accepted Christ with my dad sitting in.

My nephew went back home and led over a hundred of his high school friends to Christ and started a Bible club. He didn't know anything about it. And he's now a police man in Los Angeles and he's been still strong for Christ.

That Christmas time, that was in August, that Christmas time, Christmas was Sunday and it was Saturday. I was at the church and my wife called and said, Jim, sit down. And I said, why? She said, sit down.

Your mom called and found your dad dead on the floor. So I had the service Sunday and then flew to Los Angeles Monday. And I had six aunts, my dad's sisters that were at the funeral.

And I said, and we went up to the coffin and they were staying there and I went to each one of my aunts and I said, there's something I need to tell each one of them. I said, I want you to know that before my dad died I asked his forgiveness because they knew for the way I had treated him. And each one of my aunts said this to me.

They said, did you know this? That when your dad came home from visiting you last summer, he told me it was the most wonderful week of his life. And I don't know if my dad's saved or not. He sat there and we found a new testament in the coffin when they were going through his things.

When my son accepted Christ, when my nephew accepted Christ. But you know what's tragedy? I was a Christian for all those years and I never cleared my conscience of my father. And all he had was one week with his Christian son that was good.

Isn't that tragic? When I, when I was I didn't know. No one had ever showed me. Now I know this ignorance that I didn't know.

But now you know. And you dare not put off making right with people because you and I do not know how long we have to do it. And pride will do what? Cause you to put it off.

It's one of the most difficult things to say. I was wrong. When our children were teenagers I realized that I was not building into their spirit.

And God when our two oldest girls were teenagers. Cheryl was was going in high school. A girl in high school, a girl in high school, a girl in grammar school and a preschool little boy.

And I said God I am not building into the spirit of my kids. I am not being a leader to my children. Help me to lead my children and to build into their life eternal values and all of this.

And I made appointments with my kids individually. And I met with them individually. They had one hour a week.

And I would spend one hour and they had notebooks. And I would begin to build biblical truths into their lives. One of my daughters was not open to me.

And I could sense it. She never said anything but I could sense there was something between me and her. And so you know can't you sense that when there is an openness and not an openness and there wasn't an openness.

And so I went along with the Lord and I said Lord there is some reason there is not an openness between my spirit and her spirit. I am spirit with one daughter. I am spirit with another daughter.

I am spirit with my son. But this girl there is a closing of her spirit to me. I don't understand.

And I said Lord show me. And I began to look at scriptures. And guess what scriptures God brought to me.

A wounded spirit. Who can bear it? A heart knows its own bitterness. A brother offended.

It is harder to be one than a walled city. And then I asked God to show me how I had hurt my daughter. And when he began to show me I wondered why the rest of the kids had an open spirit.

I looked at times that I had slapped her face when I was angry. There were times I attacked her character instead of her behavior. There were times I had let her down.

Times I had promised her things and didn't give it away. And I thought God I have failed her so bad. And so I had the Lord just show me.

And the guilt just really began to show her how I had just failed, failed, failed. And this happened to be a very sensitive daughter and it hurt her deeper than the others. And so as I made appointments with the kids this time, they didn't know.

I gave them homework to do. They always have homework in the scriptures. And this time she didn't realize she came in.

I sat down and I said, you know honey, as you look back over your childhood, are you happy or sad? And she said, neither, Dad. I said, you know, as I look back over your childhood, it grieves my heart. You know, what have I done? That's what she said.

You know, what have I done? And I said, because I failed you as a father, as being a Christian example of what a father ought to be, and deeply hurting you and letting you down, would you forgive me? And the tears just flowed down her cheeks. And she said, oh, Dad, I forgive you. And she kissed me and I kissed her and I followed up with this and I said, honey, would you do me a favor? I know I failed you and your sisters terribly.

Would you point out next time we meet five areas in my life where I could be a better father? And she looked at me and she said this in her eyes. If I do, you'll get mad. And I said, honey, no I won't.

I really want to be a better father. And you're older now than the other kids. Can you help me to be a better father to the ones that are coming along? And you know, it's important if you've wounded the spirit of the children, I don't care how old you needs.

But one day, don't you hope that your kids will meet their own physical needs? And I'm not planning on supporting sons-in-laws and grandkids and all this stuff. No, I want my kids to be able to do this. We communicate to them on an emotional level.

But one day, our kids are going to form what? New emotional attachments. And if that's all that we've ministered to, then when we get older, we're going to be like so many older Christians. It's lonely.

The kids just don't come around. The kids just send a Mother's Day card. The kids just now and then again.

But there's one other level that God wants us to minister to our kids. Now, what level is that? To their spirit. And that's the cord that's to bind us with our children for the rest of our lives.

It's at the spiritual level. And the scripture says what? A three-fold cord is what? Hard to break. And so we wanted to begin to develop the spiritual cord with the children.

And you know, I found that first of all, I needed to have a blanket forgiveness. You know, asking forgiveness that would be blanket, that would cover all my failures. If I said to this one daughter, do you remember the time that I slapped you? Would you forgive me? She'd say, yes, but what about the time I promised to take you to the zoo and didn't? You know, there's all kinds of things that they remember that I have forgotten.

You know, when I have been offended, I remember. The one who offends me forgets. So I know when I offend someone, it's easy for me to forget what I did was.

But if you've been hurt, you don't forget. And so, if you've never asked forgiveness, you need to ask, especially someone you lived with for years, you need to make what? A statement that would cover all of the failures. Then after that point, you need to develop an inner sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, and when you fail, then you ask forgiveness for the individual failures from that point on.

And guess what? We will fail. Don't plan to fail, you just will. I know you want to be good parents.

I want to be good parents, but I failed my son. And dealing with a little child, let me give you an illustration because some parents blow it with a little child because they don't know how to ask forgiveness. I was in our home and we had taught our children certain character qualities, and they knew how they functioned.

And one was attentiveness. And the kids were not to interrupt when we were doing something special, but we would give them our full attention at certain times. And one of the times we were not to interrupt was when we were having devotions, unless it was life and death.

When you try to have devotions, the dog barks. The fish gloop, gloop, gloop, gloop. You know, all this kind of stuff.

There's all kinds of distractions. Your mind is always going everywhere but off the word. And we just said we had to guard that time.

So I was sitting there and I was reading the Bible in the living room. My son was maybe two and a half, three years old. Just a little kid.

And I was reading the the word and he was bugging me. Now, he knew he was not to do it. But, you know, I was trying to be spiritual and not dealing with it but just doing the slow burn.

Just sitting there getting hotter and hotter on the inside as I'm reading the word. Finally, he just broke the camel's back. And I know you're supposed to look at a kid at eye level, so I picked him up at eye level and I shook him.

And I said, Richard, I'm reading the Bible and you're not supposed to interrupt me. And I sat him down. And I picked up the Bible and I'm rocking and the Holy Spirit says, you dummy.

Leave me alone. I'm reading the Bible. And I knew I wounded his spirit.

I wounded his spirit in the way I handled the matter. I handled it wrong. I got mad.

And so do you suppose he focused on what he did wrong or did he focus on my attitude? It was my attitude. And so many kids never focus on what they did wrong. They focus on how their folks handled it.

So the Spirit of God really got off me and I just knew that I needed to deal with it. So I said, Richard, come here. Well, he didn't want to come.

But he was obedient. He came. But you know how hesitant looking down.

And he walked over because his heart was hurt. And I grabbed him and I put him in my lap. And I started rocking.

And I did something that I think is very important. I mean, God taught me a lot of things that I did right. And when I looked back on it, I realized it was more right because I was sensitive to what God told me to do and I was doing right, even though I hadn't read a book on it.

And so I'm rocking and I said, Richard, what you did was wrong, wasn't it? And he said, yes. See, as a little child, you must establish what they did wrong. And then I said, Richard, what Daddy did was wrong, too.

He said, yes. He said, And I said, honey, would you forgive me? And he just cried because you know why? He didn't like having those feelings in his heart towards his dad. And that's how he got rid of them.

And I kissed them and we rocked for a while. You know, and you say, parents don't stand a chance. No, you don't if you don't ask forgiveness.

Because when you ruin the spirit of the child, you will never minister to them spiritually because they cut you off and they're not open. Their spirit is closed. And so we have to be so sensitive to our kids to keep their spirits open to truths that we want to pour in to their lives and to their hearts.

Same way at a club. If you ruin the spirit of a child and you have a club, and if you do it publicly, you better ask that child's forgiveness publicly before all the kids in that club. Very, very important.

And you look back on your family and you may see it's very important. You may have hurt some of your family deeply and you've never made it right. And you need to go back and make it right.

I just can't tell you all the tremendous things that have happened to students, people in our churches, people that have come for help, that admitted their wrongs and went back and started clearing up their offenses and how God began to do things in their lives tremendously. And you know you'll visualize the worst? We had a man in our church that owned drug stores, lots of drug stores. And years ago he installed a second phone in his house and didn't tell a telephone company.

And so we were talking about having a clear conscience. Paul says the most important thing you can have outside of your faith is if you want to be victorious. He didn't have a clear conscience.

He said, Oh, Pastor, what am I going to do? I've had that phone for 10 years. What am I going to do? And I said, Well, you've got to call the phone company and tell them. And he visualized, you know, this man's face in the newspaper.

Embezzled phone company, 10 years of, you know, this lying. And he saw himself in jail. And I'll tell you, he was sick.

Just sick. And I said, You know, I could go to jail for this. I said, You know, it would be better to be locked up and be free on the inside than to walk the streets and be locked up on the inside.

And so he called the telephone company and he said, You I'm so-and-so. My telephone number is such-and-such. And I live at such-and-such a place.

And he said, 10 years ago, I put a phone in. I've done some investigation and I found out the phone bill for that long should be this amount of money. I have figured out the interest that I owe you on that money at the highest rate that they were paying was so much that he added to the bill and I will send your check for X amount of money.

And the girl said, Just a minute, I'll give you the supervisor. So he's going to supervisors and bookkeepers and all of this stuff and it's getting worse and worse and finally the bookkeeper said, We can't handle this. If you send us this money, it will blow our bookkeeping system.

Just take the phone out and have us put another phone in to start paying from now. But you know, Satan had this guy all grown up. We know another man, a very top man, very excellent man, had 12 years of education apart from high school.

His twin brother came to us and said, There's something wrong with my brother. He was a professional. I said, What's wrong? He says, Well, if I tell you, you will hardly believe it, but my brother is thoroughly convinced that he's being followed.

I said, What would happen? He would drive home from his work with his wife and he'd say, See that black car behind us? And they'd look and it'd be a black car. He'd been following us for three blocks. He'd turn the corner, the black car turned the corner.

They'd go in the house, you know, they'd pull the shade, and they'd say, See that car out there with the people sitting in it? They're taking notes. Maybe someone's sitting in the car out front taking notes. And he'd say, Look at the can guys.

See that can that's stented? They put stuff in it. I'm talking about a man that's a very, very top man in his field. He smelled gummy.

And then he said, Look at the television. You know that they're putting rays through the television into this home? While his poor wife was studying. I mean, she was about climbing the wall.

He had her so convinced. I mean, in everything that he said there was something. He says, What's wrong with my brother? I said, It's simple.

He's full of guilt. My brother can't be full of guilt. He's a big man in the church.

He's leading souls to Christ. He's an outstanding man in the community. And the community is in.

If you say, Who's a Christian man in this community? They'd say, That's That guy. Outstanding. In all kinds of activities, clubs, heads of this, heads of that, and all this stuff.

I said, That man has got guilt that he's not dealing with. And it's going to cause him to have a total breakdown if he doesn't deal with it. He said, Are you sure? You know, I'm in partnership with my brother.

I work with him every day. There's nothing. I said, There is something, and it's bad.

There was just two things wrong. He was having an affair with a woman, and had over \$100,000 in a Swiss bank that the United States government knew nothing about. When he declared to the income tax his \$100,000 money, confessed to his wife, this woman, the voices, the people, and everything, when he cleared his conscience.

And I can tell you story after story of people on strange things. And they go to psychiatrists, they take pills, they go to the they get everything else, but what? Deal with a spiritual problem in their life. And when they deal with it, God heals them.

Secret. And so what is the positive quality? It's a peacemaker. It's one who makes things right with God and with others.

And there's so many scriptures on a peacemaker. Then we have the apathetic and indifferent spirit, which flows out of one who has a disinterest and irregularity and devotion. And I want to show you a little later on that these top five seem to affect the bottom three.

And these next three seem to flow out of a deficiency in the top five. The solution is to have a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Who in scripture would you picture having a hunger and thirst for righteousness? David.

David said in the Psalms, As the heart panteth after the water brooks, my soul panteth after God. You know what a heart is? It's a little deer. And we went to Israel.

The one thing I wanted to see, guess what it was? A heart. I wanted to see a little heart. And we were driving up the Jericho road and our guide said, Look! And we looked and she said, I can't believe this.

They're not here because that's the Judean wilderness right there. And there was two hearts leaping and running up the hill. And I just thought of that.

And also the hearts had been called what? Hines. Hines feet in high places. I can't tell you the thrill of it.

And does your heart, do you pant after God? Are you really hungering for the things of the Lord? And we have the insensitivity and the bored spirit that comes from a lack of prayer and a lack of purpose. There's so many believers that have no purpose. And the solution is to mourn.

To allow God to break your heart with the things that break his heart. You know what most Christians do? They laugh at what God is grieved over. And they're grieved over what God laughs at.

And we need to get turned around. Fearful, compromising, and persecuted for righteousness sake. And God wants us to be willing to be persecuted for righteousness sake.

That we would be willing to identify with him and his way of life at any cost. It's something that is so important. You've got to teach your children how to stand alone.

If they don't stand alone, they'll fall for anything. And kids will have to stand alone in junior high and high school if they go to a public school. But what is more tragic is if they go to the Christian school and you're not sure and they may not stand alone there.

And kids have had to take strong stands in many of the Christian schools because a lot of Christian schools stand for nothing. There's a Christian school in Kansas City whose bathrooms have more filth written on them than you'll find in the stores that are written on by the students. I asked them, why don't you paint them? I said, those walls are filthy in here.

I mean all over, just filthy, filthy writings in this Christian high school. They said, well, if we painted the kids, we'll just write on it again. I said, doesn't that tell you something about the school? There's something wrong in this school.

I mean really wrong in this school. And there really is something wrong in that school. I would rather my kids go to a public school than that one.

You know, people say, how do you pick a public You go to the school and you look around and you find out who are the heroes. If the heroes in that school are the godly kids, put your kids in it. If the heroes in that school are the rebels, put your kids in public schools.

Because you will regret ever putting them in a Christian school where they are, pressure is put against them because they want to be godly. But don't put them in it. It's not worth it.

And there's a lot of parents that are terribly discouraged and disappointed of what happened in the Christian school when the kids went there and they thought they were sending them to a super place and it wasn't a super place at all. You've got to check the school out. Walk and look at the kids.

Just take a good look at the product of that school. You want to send your kids to a Christian college? Visit the college and look at the product. Walk up and down the halls.

Look at the countenances of the girls and the fellows. And if you don't like what you see, then don't put your kid in that Christian college. And I invite you to walk up and down and look at the halls of Calvary.

Anytime. I invite you to look at the kids in any of the classrooms. I invite you to visit the dorms and I invite you I invite you to visit the dorms and colleges.

They had an alcoholic problem. They in favor alcoholism. They celebrated Do you know how many kids got on drugs in our college this year? Do you know how many girls, did I put that kind of statistic, how many girls were pregnant? You know, and all this kind of stuff.

Do they have that in the Christian college thing? Uh-uh. They don't. You go check it out.

If you love your kids, check it out. It's important. I'm not going to tell you that there's only one school.

No, there's lots of good schools. Be sure your kids are going to one of them. You know that to be persecuted for righteousness sake is to have a conviction that you're worth dying for.

You know, are your kids worth, are they willing to die for what they believe? Are they willing to stand all alone for what they believe? And do you know that if they are, you don't stand alone, and I don't even like that word standing alone. I use it because everybody, it means something. You know what you need to do? You don't stand alone.

You stand with the Lord. We want kids to stand with the Lord today on these issues. I remember our oldest girl was in the high school choir in a secular school.

She brought home a piece of music and she was playing it on the piano with Cheryl. Some of you know Cheryl. And she said, Dad, I can't sing this song.

And this choir was their, you know, the state, all state choir and all this kind of stuff, and they were coming just for their competitions and all this kind of thing that they do. And the guy that led the choir had been with Norman Luboff or one of these other things. You know, just a fantastic, and he's a Christian in this public school.

Cheryl said, I can't sing this song. I said, what is it? She said, it's Aquarius. She said, Dad, look at the words.

She said, I never paid attention, but look at these words. It says, let Aquarius guide your life. She says, Christians can't be guided by Aquarius.

Besides, I can't sing it. What am I going to do? And if you know my daughter Cheryl, she's so shy. You know, for her to stand alone would kill her.

I don't think it was going to kill her if she didn't. She said, what am I going to do? I said, Cheryl, let's work out your wording. And so we worked out her wording.

And the wording was something like, she went to the teacher and she was going to tell him how much she appreciated the class, how much she appreciated all that he knew about music, but she just had one problem. And that was, there was this song that he had picked for them to sing. And she couldn't sing it because it violated her personal moral convictions.

So she said, I've got to do it. And I said, what are you going to do? She said, I'm going to do it at 9 o'clock tomorrow, if there's no one there in his room with him. I said, okay.

So my wife and I are praying like crazy and she went at 9 o'clock and praise the Lord, somebody was there. Later on, she stumbled in and nobody was there. And she was so nervous.

And she went through the whole thing. She had rehearsed it so many times so the wording would be just right so she wouldn't forget. And she thanked him for the class.

And she said, I don't really want to give you any problems. And he said, what's the problem? She said, it was the song. He said, what do you want me to do? He said, Cheryl, what do you want me to do? Do you want me to let you walk off the platform? They had about 150 kids in that choir.

You're going to just make your way through and walk off? What do you expect me to do? And he got so mad and Cheryl was so scared she didn't know what to say. But the Bible said, answer not an angry man. And so she didn't answer him because every time she thought to think of what to say, he'd go into something else.

He was trading. So she just stood there smiling. She didn't know what else to do.

She was so scared. Finally he said, leave. And so she walked out and she came home and she felt super and terrible at the same time.

She felt like a martyr for Jesus and she felt awful because he was mad at her. So the next time choir met, all the kids were in there and it was just, I think, two weeks before they were to sing for all the points and all this kind of thing, which is every choir director's whatever. He said this, there's been some comments about One Little Song.

How many of you kids would rather not sing Aquarius? It was the only popular song in the whole thing. They were singing all this heavy stuff. Every hand went up.

And so did Cheryl, about 17. She came home. She said, you won't believe it.

And every one of our kids has had to stand alone, a book assignment, a film they wanted the kids to see, or something. They had to stand alone because it would violate the convictions of our family and violate their personal moral convictions. But if your kids don't have any convictions, nothing is going to violate it.

You've got to work with your kids and put those convictions in their heart so they'd be willing to stand alone. Now, a high school kid saw this chart and made this chart. And this kid happened to be one that's into machinery and stuff and I thought he did a super job.

If you see this chart. He saw those five qualities, those attitudes, as five gears that mesh perfectly. And as those gears mesh, they turn the driveshaft here of spiritual hunger, a Godly concern, and a willingness to endure and prospering.

And he saw that if someone had a problem in the area of a forgiving spirit, that when the gears don't mesh, what happens? The whole thing breaks down. And if you think you can have resentment in your heart and have a very meaningful, you won't. It just won't work.

And then he put down a forgiving spirit towards your brother, your sister, your husband, your wife, and so on. A clear conscience towards government, friends, children, mates, employees, relations, enemies. Who are enemies? They're usually former friends.

It's someone that you let down. They expect it more from you. The only enemies you and I can have are who? God's enemies.

Jesus Christ said, when you identify with me and my superior way of life, those who reject me will what? Reject you also. And that's the only enemies we can have. And if you and I have personal enemies, we need to go and get right with them.

And you know that God is more concerned about you and I having a clear conscience than we are. We had a girl that sat in our class when I was sharing about my dad that cried. The mascara was running down her cheeks and zipping off.

And this girl became unglued. I said, why are you crying? She said, the last time I saw my dad, I was 12. I said, I hope you die.

I hope I never see you again. And she said, I've never seen him again, and she was 26. And she asked God to take that bitterness out of her heart.

And she asked God, she said, God, I would so long. She said, God, if you will bring my father back into my life, please, so that I can tell how long I was, and ask his forgiveness. And he called the college that week.

She hadn't seen them since she was twelve, but she was twenty-six. There was a minister that I got mad at over child evangelism. It was in our first church.

One of the first missionaries for child evangelism came and went to our church, Florence Stone. I don't know if you know Florence Stone, a godly woman. She's led more children to Christ, she's never been married, and when she gets to heaven she's going to have more spiritual children than you can shake a stick at.

And this gal had a good news club in our church. We called the other pastor. We had his wife help out in the club.

Some of the ladies in the other church did not like the idea of the club being in our church. It should be in their church, and not our church. So I went up to the pastor to tell him I didn't care where the church was, as long as children are getting saved, you can have it in a neutral place.

It's just that we had so many children coming out, our church was bigger. And I went up there to straighten it out, and he said, I am really not interested in the salvation of children anyway. And I got mad.

And I called him up. I mean I really did. I just called him up, and you guys were all with me, and you're wrong, because I was wrong.

It was wrong. That and that was like 12 years before I really, the Spirit of God, and when my dad was such a big thing, I thought when I cleared things up with my dad that I was clean. But after I cleared things up with my dad, then there was a lot of others that God began to bring to my mind that weren't as important, but became important as the list began to come up.

And this guy was on the list. And I said, God, you don't want me to ask forgiveness of this pastor? I don't even know where he is. I have no idea where he is.

I haven't seen this guy for seven, eight, nine years. I don't know where he moved away, he's passing church, I don't know where he is. God spoke to my heart that week.

The next week I went to the FIRS, Bible Conference. The first day I'm walking out of the coffee shop with a cup of coffee and a donut. And there is a guy that I went to college with, and we stopped and he talked.

And he said, by the way, do you know Reverend Solenthal? You know who it was, don't you? I said, God, I can't believe it. I mean, it was just last week, and I haven't seen this guy for seven years. I didn't know what to say.

I stood there and I shook. I said, this is divine. And I didn't say anything.

I went back into the coffee shop. And I said, God, I'm not ready. I didn't know, you know, I got the wording down.

I didn't expect to see him. And you know, that guy was calm out of there, and I've never seen him since. I wasn't ready.

You know, when God lays someone on your heart, you better get ready. And I don't care how long it's been. You have no idea where they are.

I'll tell you, we can have the kids from the college tell you unbelievable stories, except I know they're true. Because story after story after story, how God brought these people back into life, they didn't know where they were. Old boyfriends.

Old girlfriends. You know, I like this, the one that Bill Godfrey tells, because it's so important, of the youth director, that dated all these girls in Bible school. In fact, he dated them all in high school.

And he was not the type of a fellow he should have been with these girls. And this fellow had a terrible fear of ever going anywhere speaking. For fear, one of these old girlfriends would be in the audience.

And when he was preaching, you know, sin, judgment, righteousness, and holiness, this girl would take out her handkerchief and wave and say, preach it brother, remember me? And the guy just couldn't visualize this. He just was fearful. And God spoke to him and said, God, if it's important for me to clear up my dating past with these girls, even before I was a Christian, because it was still wrong, then you bring those girls in my life.

The following week, he went to have a week of meetings in the church, and he organized and he asked for forgiveness. Now, in asking someone's forgiveness, do not make it worse. What do you do when she's

married? Can I talk to your wife? Who is that? You know, you've got to be very careful and discerning when you do this.

Or, you're a lady, can I talk to your husband? Who is that woman? Oh, it's one of my old girlfriends. You never told me about Louise before. You know what I mean? You've just got to be careful.

I'll tell you, God, if you're wise and sensitive to the Spirit of God, God won't make it so it's right. One of the worst things you can do is to write a letter. Because you can put things in that letter that maybe should not be put down in writing, and you never know what's going to happen to that letter, and you don't know if they forgive you or not, because you don't get any verbal back.

You should always do it with writing. But if you look at these things, these are tremendous things that God wants to work in our lives. Now, I know that you guys have probably figured out by now the attitudes we've been looking at.

Where do we find those attitudes? Those are the B attitudes. And it's so important that we be those attitudes. They're attitudes that are to be a very important part of our lives.

And you see, they're just not words, they're what? They're actions. And we need to go over that and deal with it. And if you want to have a vital, meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, you've got to deal with those first five.

You cannot have bitterness in your life and be an effective minister. I can tell you that because I minister with bitterness. I have bitterness towards God, because I knew that God put me in that family.

And I was rejecting my father. I looked in the mirror. I said, God, I don't know why you messed me up, but I sure don't like what I see.

And I was bitter towards God for the way he made me. I mean, God hardly stood a chance. Here, I'm serving God.

Do you know that you have a poor self-image? You know what goes along with that when you're trying to serve God? A lack of faith. Because if you can't trust God for the family he put you in, and you can't thank God for the way he made you, you're not going to trust God for other things either. It's just amazing how my faith increased and I was able to trust God more when I could see why God gave me the parents he gave me.

Do your children know that they're in the right family? I can't tell you the number of times that I wished I would find a paper saying I was adopted. I was so unhappy. I was sure I couldn't be a natural-born child in their family.

And I remember one time in Tacoma, Washington, when Richard was about two and a half. I mean, he was just a teen. And I was laying on the floor studying out of my Bible.

And I always liked to study laying down. Then, I don't anymore. It gets me in the back.

I'd lay down and study and do my messages on the floor. You could lay a lot of books out. My wife was at a woman's meeting and he was laying by me and he was studying with his coloring book.

It was real quiet. He was coloring. I remember it was raining and we were in front of the fireplace.

It was just one of those real neat, quiet times. And Richard was coloring and looked at me and said, Dad, you love me, don't you? I said, yes, Richard, I love you. And he kept coloring.

And then he said a horrible thing. He said, Dad, why do you love me? And my first thought was, because you're a good boy. And the Holy Spirit touched me.

I couldn't say that. I didn't know what to say. And so I saw him and I said, do you know why I love you? And he said, no.

And then it just flashed. And I'll tell you how the preparation of man is in his heart. But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.

And I know the Lord gave me this answer. And I looked at Richard and I said, because God gave you to me. And I thought he was going to say, that's profound, Dad.

He didn't say anything. He just colored. But you know, you'd be amazed what kids think while they're coloring.

My wife came home. She came in the front door. Richard ran up to her and he said, Mom, do you know why you love me? She said, no, why, Richard? He said, because God gave me to you.

You know, every child needs to know that God put them in that family. Isn't that right? Let's bow in prayer. Father, we just thank you for tonight.

And Lord, may we realize that these attitudes are so essential. If we want to be effective communicators of your word and of your love. That, Father, we've got to deal with pride.

And, Father, we've got to deal with anger and worry. And then, Father, we need to deal with bitterness. And we need to deal with impurity and guilt.

And that these are areas that will just diminish our effectiveness. If they're not dealt with. And, Father, we know that one of the hardest ones to deal with is guilt and bitterness.

And I just pray that the Spirit of God would just speak to us. And that there would not be anyone that we would be unwilling to forgive for what they did to us. And then, Father, that we would look to see what have we done to them.

Who are the ones we have hurt? Who are the ones that we have failed? And then, Father, as your Spirit reveals these individuals to us. That we would be willing to go when you bring them into our lives. Or if we know where we can get a hold of them.

And acknowledge our failures. And ask them to forgive us. And then, Father, that we might be able to say as the Apostle Paul.

That we exercise ourselves always to have a clear conscience towards God. Amen. Amen.

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