

(Biblical Manhood) -Morning Brunch

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer emphasizes the importance of biblical courtship and the role of parents in guiding their children according to Scripture amidst a culture of complacency and confusion.

Duration: 1:18:16

Scripture: Judges 17:6, Isaiah 1:4-6, Hosea 4:6, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 2 Corinthians 10:5, 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Manhood"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a godly example to our children. He shares his desire for his son to see him on his knees, weeping with joy about Jesus Christ. The speaker highlights the responsibility parents have for their children's spiritual well-being, referencing 1 Corinthians 4:15-17 and Hosea 4-6. He urges parents to strive to know and live by the Scriptures, as every word they speak will be judged on the day of judgment. The speaker also addresses the reality of conflict and sin in families and emphasizes the need to submit our lives to God's revealed will.

Transcript

It is a great privilege for me to be here with you, a tremendous privilege, tremendous privilege. Before we get started, let me say this, some background. We have gone through several decades, maybe a century in the evangelical church in America of being buffeted by liberalism.

What I mean by that is a form of Christianity that may accept some of the truths of Scripture, but for the most part denies the greater part of Scripture and puts in its place an ungodly pagan culture. I would consider myself a person who is still coming out of paganism, of ungodliness, not a person who has arrived, but a person who is learning. Many of the truths that I am going to teach today have not been taught for over a hundred years.

But just recently, in the last decade, there has been a reformation, and it is God's doing. It is a reformation of returning to Scripture. And although many people in the United States consider themselves evangelical, consider themselves Christian, consider themselves born again, this reformation that is going on in our country is going to be the very thing that defines who really is a disciple of Jesus Christ and who is just playing with a watered down cultural Christianity that holds the form of godliness, but denies the power thereof.

Now, I am going to say something, and I want you to understand that I am saying it because it is true. Many of the things I am going to teach today I did not practice in my own relationship with my wife before we were married, even though by God's grace we remain pure. Because even 15 years ago, these things were unknown to the greater part of the Christian community in America.

And it is not because we have discovered something brand new now that no one has ever taught before. No, it is because the old ways have been lost, and put in their place has been our culture, and that is the reason for all the malady, all the pain, all the suffering, and all the sin, even in the community of genuine believers. I beg you to listen to me as though you were my children.

And I beg you to not walk down the same path that I myself have walked down. If you knew the scars, you would run from the way that most are on as though some fierce beast were after you. Now let me say this before we even start.

And I am saying it out of a heart of love. There is a real sense that you are a fool. Let's just get it out in the open.

I have to say the same thing about myself. No, this is not a get together where we are going to talk about how okay I am and how okay you are. There is a real sense in that for the major part, we are biblical fools.

In that there is so much that the Scripture teaches about every aspect of our daily life that we are not only ignorant of, but walking in complete contradiction to it. Do you see that? Now that is not something to be sad about. You can rebel against it in pride.

But the fact of the matter is, we are a people that has lived for years and years and years doing things that seem right in our own eyes. And not following the precedent of Scripture. We have adopted so many things that are from our godless culture that we no longer see the dividing line between where the Bible starts and culture ends.

There is a passage in the Bible and it says this in Proverbs 12, 15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes. He who listens to counsel. Will you be a wise man? Will you be a wise woman? A wise young person today? Will you acknowledge that if I put a list of things in the daily life of most individuals would you acknowledge that you would not be able to go to Scripture and define how those daily activities should be carried out? Will you acknowledge that there is so much we do and we don't even know if there is a biblical precedent for it or not? If you are willing to acknowledge that, you are in a safe place.

God can really work with you. But if you just set yourself against it, there is no hope. The way of a fool always leads to destruction.

Now, we are talking about biblical courtship. What is that? Courtship is simply the biblical alternative to one of the most destructive practices in western culture. Recreational dating.

Recreational dating. Where two people, usually quite young, decide to date for no purpose, no divine or eternal purpose whatsoever. And it has brought about more destruction in our culture, in our society because society, for the most part, is based upon sound marriages and sound families.

And because we begin totally wrong, we usually end up wrong. The amazing thing here is that if someone would choose to disagree with what I've said, you have nothing as proof. Because the culture that dating has produced, we all recognize, is miserable and destructive and painful.

And so we are going to look at biblical courtship. Now, before we do that, we have to realize something. There has to be the plowing of fertile ground in order to receive this teaching.

And what do I mean? Parents, it all begins with you. It all begins with you. And not with just tweaking a few things, and not with some program or process or working through a workbook dealing with courtship.

No, it all begins with being willing to radically change your lifestyle everywhere your lifestyle contradicts Scripture. Now, you would think among a community of believers that would not be a big issue, but you would be amazed. I hear people, because I've lived so many years in third world countries, they'll say, Boy, you know, we don't even know what it's like.

It's so easy to live as a Christian in the United States of America. That is one of the largest lies that exists. It is so much easier to live for Jesus Christ in the jungles of Peru than it is in Muscle Shoals that you can't even compare the two things.

I knew two Russians who, when they were young men in church, saw the KGB come in, slam their pastor against a wall, pull out his tongue and cut it off. And yet those two young Russians told me it's much more difficult to live for Jesus Christ in America than in Russia. It's easy to live as a unconverted church member.

It's easy to live like most people who call themselves Christians, but to be a biblical disciple of Jesus Christ, this place, the Bible Belt, is the most difficult place to do it on the face of the earth. The question is, are you going to follow Jesus? Or are you going to have a form of godliness that denies the power thereof? I mean, after all, you would think that God dying on a tree and rising again from the dead would be something that would radically transform every aspect of your life, and not just Sunday morning. And so it begins, not with the children, it begins with the parents.

First of all, we must be aware of our present reality as a people. That's where we must start. And I want to read something.

It says in Judges, and I have all these verses laid out for you, so don't worry about writing all this down. In Judges 17.6 it says, In those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

The issue here is not that there wasn't a king. The issue is that there was no authority. There was no biblical authority, and therefore everyone did what was simply right in their own eyes.

And you have got to be convinced that your eyes, your heart, your mind, without the saturation of Scripture, is a danger. You've got to believe that. You've got to realize you can trust in nothing but God's Word.

It also says in Hosea 4.6, My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. You can not divorce the mind from the Christian life. You can not do it.

But that mind must be a mind renewed in the Word of God, submitted to the Word of God. Everything, the question is in every aspect of our life, what has God said? That's the only question. That's it.

What has God said? It also says, My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priests. Since you have forgotten the law of your

God, I also will forget your children.

Parents, do you understand what this is saying? If you do, then know the fear of the Lord. Because you have rejected My law, I will reject your children. And for the most part, a parent who has rejected God's law, can only produce lawless children.

You see, it is the Bible. It is the Word of God. It's so simple, but it always comes down to this same thing.

What has God really said? Now, you must be convinced of this. I want to read out one other passage, Isaiah 1, 4-6. A last sinful nation.

People weighed down with iniquity. Sin is very, very heavy. Offspring of evildoers.

Sons who act corruptly. They have abandoned the Lord. They have despised the Holy One of Israel.

They have turned away from Him. Now, what does this mean? To turn away from Him? There is no debate about Jesus as Savior, Jesus as Lord in the Bible. Jesus is Savior and Lord.

To take Him as Savior and not Lord is to not take Him at all, but it is to despise Him. The Greek actually calls Him a tyrant. Did you know that? He is called a tyrant in the New Testament.

The absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. But here's the thing, that absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ to a true Christian is not heavy, it's not burdensome, it is like your feet on air. It is a wonder and a power, like being carried on eagles' wings.

But it is sin that is heavy and sin that destroys. Now, look at what this says. And if this does not describe the typical family in America, nothing does.

Where will you be stricken again as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint from the sole of the foot even to the head. There is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds. Not pressed out or bandaged nor softened with oil.

I look at so many families and this is just the case. Conflict and fighting and turmoil and sin upon sin upon sin. These are things that we have to recognize.

Now, we must be aware of our present reality. Another thing, we must be convinced. We must be convinced that the entirety of our lives must abound to the glory of God and be submitted to God's revealed will.

Now, I say the word revealed will because there are so many people submitting to things today supposedly in the name of God, but it has nothing to do with a correct interpretation of Scripture. You must become convinced. And I hope that the bruises on your body, the sores in your family, the things that will not heal will be used of God to convince you that there is only one way out and that is to entirely submit yourself to Scripture.

The worst thing you can do is go halfway. God will not bless halfway obedience any more than no obedience whatsoever. Now, 1 Corinthians 10.31, whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.

If the most menial task of eating and drinking are supposed to abound to the glory of God, how much marriage and family? It is not that men arrive or they reach a plateau and they've arrived at these things. The struggle of the true man, the struggle of the real man, is constantly striving to bring everything in subjection to the glory of God. That is the true man.

That's his constant battle. He's not constantly battling to give his children things he never had because God never commanded him to give his children things he never had. As a matter of fact, it's the things a man never has that builds the character in him in the first place.

The godly man is constantly striving in his own life to submit himself to the glory of God, to bring his wife into that, not by coercion, legalism, or manipulation, but by example and power, and to bring his children into that. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. But unless you define biblically what it means to serve the Lord, you're no better than the pagan.

Now, Psalms 29.9. This is a verse that's a favorite of mine. It says this, The voice of the Lord makes the deer to calve and strips the forest bare, and in His temple, everything says glory. I am the temple.

Collectively, the church here at Muscle Shoals, whatever church you're a part, collectively, we are the temple. Absolutely everything in our individual lives and everything in our local body ought to scream out glory to God! Especially your relationships. Because if you read the Sermon on the Mount correctly, you find out in the Christian life everything is relational.

To the glory of God. Now, 2 Corinthians 10.5. He says, We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. This is the man's battle.

This is the woman of God's battle. So many people, complacency will kill you, thinking you've arrived. And you can only think you have arrived in the Christian life.

Because if you are in Scripture every day, the one thing you will realize is I have fallen so short. And you will constantly, it will motivate you to strive, to strive to bring every thought captive. To make it obedient to the law, the will of Jesus Christ.

Now, and of course, 2 Timothy 3.16-17. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. Folks, I have got so sick of hearing people talk about how inerrant and infallible this thing is. That has never been the question.

The question is, those of us who believe it to be inerrant and infallible, are we going to take the next step, which is the step that will vindicate us and prove that our belief in this thing is true? Are we going to obey it? Are we going to obey it? And I don't want to pretend that all this is in my heart and in my head and in my life. It's not what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about perfection.

I'm talking about striving for everything here to be in here and for everything here to be submitted to this. It's our only hope. It is our only hope.

We do not live in a culture anymore that's friendly to Christianity. We do not live in a culture that is basically going to respect anything that we are. We live in a culture that is demonic, earthly, sensual, and wants to rip to shreds everything that has to do with the bride of Jesus Christ.

And if we do not cling to this Bible, we're gone. We're gone. Now, the context for teaching on courtship is very important.

You know, people who almost never read the Bible, but they come to a crisis in their life where they need to discern the will of God. And so they go to the Bible and they try to find it. And they almost never do.

I mean, they end up throwing the Bible in the air and hoping it will open to a certain passage. Because the Bible is not a magical book. It doesn't work that way.

The Bible teaches us in Romans 12, 2, we renew our mind in the Word of God. And then God begins to reveal His will to us almost not even knowing it, we're walking in His will and we're thinking His thoughts, you see. Alright, it's the same way with courtship.

You can't just say, okay, I need to fix this one aspect of my life or one aspect of my children's life, so we're going to practice courtship. Knowing the will of God springs forth from a lifestyle of renewing your mind in the will of God. Courtship springs forth from a lifestyle of seeking to submit your marriage and your family to God's Word.

Gentlemen, the worst thing you could do today, men, is to go home, call your family to the table and slam your fists down and say, I'm going to make sure we start doing things right around here. Because you're just not going to be able to turn over a leaf that quick. And what you're going to do is you're going to be like a Pharisee pressing things upon your own family that you yourself cannot lift.

It should be an attitude of not, I'm going to fix this family. I'm going to fix me. I need help.

Well, I want to tell you something. If you need help, then come join my club. I need help.

We all need help. Some of these truths are new to me. The question is not, can you make it on your own? The question is, are you broken before God and His Word? Are you trembling? Do you have a contrite heart? Do you fear the Lord? Do you fear what will happen to your children? Are you willing to even make a covenant with other men? To join or find a church where they're serious.

Not that they've arrived, but they don't really know exactly what's right, but they sure know what's wrong and they don't want to be a part of it anymore. And so the context is, first of all, parents must strive to know the Scriptures. I'm sorry, there's no way around this.

You can't keep doing everything as you see fit in your own eyes. Proverbs 29.18 says, where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained, but happy is he who keeps the law. I hear so many men use this, you know, where there is no vision, the people perish.

We need a vision. We need to have a building program. We need to do all this stuff.

That's not what this teaches. Where there is no revelation or teaching of God's law, the people run unrestrained. That's what it means.

The Word of God is essential. The Word of God as you study it yourself. The Word of God in small groups and interacting with other Christians.

And the Word of God from the pulpit. Exposition of the Word of God from the pulpit. All these things come together.

And this is what is necessary, parent. You must strive to know God's Word. You know, there were times when I would go down the Amazon or the Marañon, and without a map, blind at night, wild, no spotlights, nothing, just racing wild down through there.

I didn't care much. You're young, you're free. You put my wife and my two boys in the back of that boat.

And watch how careful I'm going to make my way down that river. If you're married, sir, this is not about just saving you. This is about saving your wife.

This is about saving your children. And this is about assuming the responsibility for their possible destruction. That's frightening.

That's frightening. Hosea 4.6, my people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge. I mean, I think I could spend my entire life preaching that passage.

I know that passage has spent a great deal of time preaching to me. My people are destroyed. You know, every aspect of our life, the Word of God speaks.

And if it's not specific and direct, there are enough governing principles surrounding that to let us know what God's will is. And yet, we do so much stuff not being guided by the Word of God. Now, parents must strive to know the Scriptures.

Parents must strive to live as biblical examples. You see, this is very, very important. I want my boy to wake up at 2 in the morning sometime wanting a glass of water and walk by my study and see a dim light on and see his dad down on his knees weeping with joy about Jesus Christ.

That will do more than a thousand sermons. Daddy, why are you crying? Daddy, why are you so happy? Why are you singing, Daddy? I sing because I'm happy, son. I sing because I'm free.

Example. 1 Corinthians 4.15-17. Listen to this. For if you have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers... Let me put that in modern day vernacular for church life.

Though you have many Sunday school teachers, you've only got one dad. Though you have many youth directors, you only have one dad. It is not the responsibility of the Sunday school teacher or the youth director to teach your child.

For in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the Gospel. Listen to me. Sir, it is true that your son and your daughter could be under a man more biblical than you and more godly than you.

That's true. I can say the same thing about myself. My two boys could be under... a man in this world more godly than I am, more knowledgeable of Scripture than I am, but the fact of the matter is in God's providence, those boys are mine.

And I'm the one called up in spite of all my problems, in spite of all my failures, all my weaknesses. They are mine. They are my responsibility.

And I need to arise to the occasion. And although I am not competent in myself, God is competent and has promised His Spirit, has promised His help. Therefore, I exhort you, be imitators of me.

We ought to be able, we should say to our children, imitate me. And I've got news for you, they're going to. When was the last time you looked at your child and said, imitate me in these things concerning God, concerning virtue.

Imitate me. Don't think that Paul had the right to do this just because he was an apostle. He had the right to do this because he was a Christian elder statesman.

He was a man. He was a man who had grown in the Lord. When I walk through these hallways, I've got to realize something.

There are young men looking at me. No matter where I go, they're looking at me. They'll be influenced because I remember looking at men when I was their age and being influenced by them.

So we ought to live circumspectly knowing that people are imitating us and some of the most important people in our lives are imitating us. And whether we want to be followed or not, we will be. He goes on and he says, speaking to Timothy, he says, for this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.

Timothy had become an extension of Paul. Paul had poured his life into Timothy. Paul didn't have to go there.

He had Tim, his precious Tim. And Tim was imitating Paul. Paul was pouring his life into Tim.

And he says, look, this is the amazing statement. Can you imagine a pastor writing another church and saying to them, listen, I'm sending one of my disciples to you and he will remind you of my ways. You know that church would write back and say, well, what about the way of Christ, hotshot? What do you mean remind us of your way? Paul's way was so identified with the way of Christ, he could honestly say that.

We would call that proud today. But it's not. Look what he says.

He will remind you of my ways which are in Christ. Gentlemen, we have this idea of it's okay to be an absolute failure. It's actually something humble about it.

But we're not supposed to be failures. We are supposed to be... You know, I hear people say, well, you know, I'm just... Don't follow me. I mean, I'm just... And I just want to look at them and say, well, then what's your problem? Yes, we all have our weaknesses.

Yes, we all have our flaws and the holes in our armor. But there ought to be some victory in the Christian life. This is a supernatural thing that's happened to us.

We do have a new heart. We have been recreated. There ought to be a real sense in which we can say, follow me in this.

And especially to our children. And he says, he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ Jesus just as I teach everywhere in every church. Now look at this.

His teaching and his way, they were the same thing. He didn't say one thing and do another. They were the same thing.

Now, I want us to go, he says, in 1 Corinthians 11, 1, be imitators of me just as I also am of Christ. Here he's acknowledging something, that he isn't the source of his own character or his own godliness, but that he was seeking, following, and drawing from Christ. The task, sir, that you have been given is so immense that you cannot do it in your own power.

You must constantly be following Jesus Christ, your eyes upon Him, and drawing from His strength. He is the vine. You are the branch.

Without Him, you can do nothing. 1 Thessalonians 2.14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God and Christ Jesus that are in Judea. Now, I want to say this for a very, very important reason.

I want you to look at this. He's not only telling people to imitate Paul or to imitate Christ, imitate the churches. As a church, we're made up of individuals.

Other Christians outside of our local body ought to look at us and imitate us. We ought to be aware of that. You ought to be aware of its goals to grow in Christ and His will so that other churches can look at you and imitate you, and there's nothing proud about that.

We should be worthy of imitation. But a church is only worthy of imitation as each of its members are seeking to imitate Christ. And if you are not seeking to imitate Christ, I can assure you that the enemy out there is going to point out the one sheep astray and ignore the 99 that are walking with Christ.

We've got to take seriously this idea of being as individuals people who ought to be imitated, and as a body, a group of people who ought to be imitated. We ought to take that ministry very seriously. Now, I want to give a negative example.

The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves, Jesus said, in the chair of Moses. Therefore, all that they tell you, do and observe. But do not according to their deeds, for they say things and do not do them.

And parents, that's one of the deadliest things that can happen to you in your relationship with your child, is to tell them to do things you yourself do not do. But now I want to say something to the children. Now listen to this.

This is a warning. First of all, to the parent. This is a warning to parents to practice what they preach.

But it's a warning to children not to use their parents' disobedience as an excuse for their own. Jesus won't allow it. He said, look, those Pharisees, they're telling you to do stuff they're not doing.

But you better do it anyways, whether they do it or not. You see, children, you cannot use your parents' flaws and your parents' disobedience or even your parents' out-and-out rebellion as an excuse for you rebelling the same way. It will not wash on the day of judgment.

You see, the question is always the same. What has God commanded? It doesn't matter if the one preaching it to me is a demon out of the pit of hell. If God has commanded it, I need to do it.

Now, parents must strive to love, teach, and govern biblically. Genesis 18-19, He says this, For I have chosen Him, God is speaking, that He may command His children. Now, the word there in Hebrew is command.

If it had been something else, they'd have translated something else. Command. That is so foreign to American culture that it almost makes bristles stand up on the back of people.

Command His children. Not suggest, not plead. Command.

Command. When parents are seeing their children in disobedience, and then just hope that somehow God's going to work it out without the parent making a stand, that's very dangerous. You are dropping your responsibility.

God has ordained many things, but He's also ordained the means through which those many things are to be done. Maybe God plans on stopping your children from destroying their lives by commanding you to command them. But again, you just can't walk into a child's life that you've really had no part in, except that you provide for them things that you never had, and you've never taught them, you've never disciplined them, you've never prayed over them, you've never blessed them, you've never been their friend, you've never done anything.

And then walk in and start commanding them, it doesn't work that way. This is a lifestyle. Everything has to go together.

Everything has to go together. But make no mistake, you are called, gentlemen, to govern your families. You are God's authority in your family, and you must assume that role.

Not delegate it to your wife. Genesis 18-19, I've chosen Him that He may command His children and His household after Him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice. Do you realize that most moral training in most homes never occur, and the only time morality or anything is talked about is after the child has already done something horrendous? But the Bible says that my responsibility as a man is to literally give my life to my children, to pour myself into them, to teach them.

Deuteronomy 6, 5-9, You shall love the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently.

Look at that. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. Do you see what's going on here? Every aspect of that household is to be about communicating the Word of God to children.

That's what the whole household... You know, so many people are worried about how they're going to decorate their home. What kind of carpet? What kind of this? What kind of that? You should be worried about where you're going to put Scripture. The entire household is to be built around communicating Scripture, communicating Scripture.

The lifestyle of the father going in and out, communicating Scripture. And here's something you need to understand. I know a lot of men who have raised some very, very godly children and yet almost never had a quiet time with their children.

And the reason why is because their entire life was Scripture. I mean, every time they did something with their child, everything, whether it was the sun coming up or shooting a turkey, they somehow used it to communicate Scripture. Everything.

It was just constantly talking. You see, one of the things that we do in America that is so bad is we departmentalize everything. You know, here's your quiet time.

Okay, we got that over. Now let's live. When the thing about it is is sometimes my son and I will go out walking in the woods and there'll be snow on the ground.

I say, who made the snow? God made the snow. And why did He make it? Well, I don't know. He made it for His glory.

And He made it so you could slide on it because He loves you. Everything. It is a lifestyle.

It is a lifestyle. One of the things I appreciate about Brother Knoblet that I've heard since I've been here this week is constantly, look, you can't put this in a program and make it happen. It's a work of the Holy Spirit.

It's a life. It's a life. And that's hard.

You can become a Pharisee in about five minutes. Just get the right books and fill them all out. But the life.

In that church, I want to tell you something. You're not going to make it on your own. You're only going to make it to the degree that you come be a part of a church anywhere.

I don't care where it is. Not the church of your choice, but a church that is serious about walking this path because you're not going to make it on your own. I'm not going to make it on my own.

Every time I turn a corner, a brother's got to be sharing this stuff with me. Every time I walk in the house of God, I need to be nailed with expository preaching. That's the way you make it.

Now, he says, Joshua 4, 5, and 7. I love this passage. And Joshua said to them, Cross again to the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you take up a stone on his shoulder according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel.

Let this be a sign among you so that when your children ask later, saying, What do these stones mean? No, it's not what he says. He says this, What do these stones mean to you? There's a big difference. Then you shall say to them, Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it crossed the Jordan.

Now look, here's the thing, Father. You're saying, Hold on, I thought this was about courtship. It has to be about you, Dad, before it can do anything else.

We're talking about lifestyle. What do these stones mean to you, Dad? Dad, what does that cross mean? The devil could answer your child better than you could. He knows exactly what that cross means.

He knows about everything that you could know about what that cross means. But that's not the question. That's not the question here in Joshua.

What does that cross mean to you, Dad? Dad, what does it mean to you? Because see, the reason we're here, folks, is not to be more moral than everybody else. It's not just because we want to clean up our lives and avoid problems. Because I can assure you, you're going to have just as many problems following the godly way as any other way.

It's what does that cross mean to us? What does it mean to us? Son, the greatest joy in my life that will ever happen to me is to know that your heart is totally devoted to the One who shed His blood on that tree. That's what it means to me. And he goes on in Ephesians 6, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

You know, I want you to look at something. Just as Southern Baptists... Now some of you who aren't Southern Baptists can gloat, but you're probably not any better off than we are. Just listen to this.

If I were to take how much money the Southern Baptists spend on Sunday school material, and how much the Southern Baptists spend on promoting Sunday school, and how much the Southern Baptists spend on teaching people to be Sunday school teachers, and then I put on the other side how much money the Southern Baptists spend teaching fathers to obey this command, I would like to see the difference. And yet the Bible, even though you can have a Sunday school of sorts, it'd have to be very different from what most churches have, but what you've got to understand is the Bible never commands you to turn your child over to someone else so that they might learn about God. Never once.

But all over, I mean almost every chapter in the book of Proverbs, what is it about? Teach your children. Teach your children. Sons, listen to me.

Sons, listen to me. I hear so many people say, you know, I'm just not in church because I feel like God's failed me. Well, how has God failed you? Well, it says train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he's old, he'll not depart from it.

Well, I took my child to Sunday school, and I took my child to youth group, and he's just a hellion. And I said, do you honestly think you fulfilled that passage by dropping your child off on a curb? Is that really what you think it means? It means you pour your life... You know, I'm just going to say it. I'm a hillbilly.

A lot of people just ought to be neutered. I honestly don't know why they have children. I honestly don't know why some people have children, because they don't do anything with them.

I mean, what? They're just an inconvenience. I mean, what on earth's going on here? What is the purpose? You have children to the glory of God, and you pour your life into them. And I want to tell you something.

Be very, very careful about this. John MacArthur's very good on this. I really appreciate what he says.

There are parents today that have children serving as missionaries in Indonesia, and they think they were successful Christian parents when in fact they were failures. But by the grace of God, He saved their children. And there are other parents who've poured their lives into being biblical parents, and their children have turned out to be hellions, and people judge them, and yet they were in fact the ones who were biblical parents.

Because I want you to know, biblical parenting comes down to obeying God's commands with your children. It does not come down to results. If you look in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, some of the men who exercised the most faith died because of it.

And we're not saved on this earth anyways. And so what we're talking about here is seriously taking the Scriptures and saying, okay, the Bible tells the dad. It doesn't say parents, even though mothers have a very important role.

It says dads. Dads. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

And of course, yes, there will be times of discipline. There will be times of specific instruction, maybe sitting down at a table and things like that. But that's just a tiny part of this.

This is talking about the lifestyle of the father, the attitude of the father, the things that come out of the father's mouth almost constantly. And when that child is looking at dad on the telephone and looking at dad in a conversation and everywhere else, and dad is just all about God and His will. Now, I want to take a deeper look for a moment, a deeper look at Ephesians, just for a moment, the passage in chapter 6. And I want us to listen to this.

Well, before I do that, let me go a little bit further. I'm going to go ahead. I'm kind of worried about time, but I'm going to keep going.

In 1 Timothy 3-4, now listen to this, Father. Speaking about an elder, okay? But don't think that... They apply to every godly man. The only thing it's saying is an elder ought to be a godly man.

It's not saying that an elder ought to have qualifications no one else has. It says he must be one who manages his own household well. Now, the word manage here means to superintend, preside over, be the protector and guardian.

Spiritual watchdog. Physical watchdog. Guardian, protector, governor, superintendent.

I mean, there's a real, real declaration of authority here. You know, many times you have to deal with women who refuse to show any respect or submission, biblical submission, to their husbands. And I so often hear people say, you know, they've stepped outside of God's authority.

They've moved into another realm. They haven't kept their domain, even as the angels in Jude did not keep their domain. And they'll be under the judgment of God.

God gave them a specific place of authority. They stepped out of it. And this woman, she doesn't want to submit to her husband.

She doesn't want to practice biblical submission. She's done the same thing. She's in danger of judgment.

But how many fathers and husbands have done the same thing merely by dropping the ball? By not exercising their authority. By not assuming the responsibility as protector, guardian, superintendent, governor. It is a God-ordained responsibility.

You can't say, I don't want the job. If you don't want the job, don't get married. Don't have children.

But if you get married, God has ordained this responsibility for you and you will be held accountable on the day of judgment for this very thing. Possibly above everything else in your life, including ministry. Now, I want to talk for a moment about how parents must be convinced.

Children must be convinced. Young people, you must be convinced. And for the most part, you're probably not.

If you're young, I mean, we can relate. I'm young too. If you're young, there is without a doubt foolishness bound up in your heart.

There is. There's foolishness bound up in your heart. You're not as wise as you think you are.

I used to have a principal in high school that used to say, when you think you know all the answers, don't be surprised if someone changes all the questions. Not only do you not know all the answers, you don't even know what the questions are yet. And I'm not saying that to be smart-alecky, and I'm not saying that because I did not pass through the same step.

The thing is, that's what Scripture teaches. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. And the way you are saved from foolishness, because foolishness in the Bible is not just acting silly, a harmless, comical thing.

Foolishness brings death. As much as immorality or anything else, foolishness results in destruction. There is foolishness in your heart.

You ought to be afraid of it. And the only thing God has ordained basically to save you from that foolishness is the authority of your parents and the authority of the elders and godly men and women. You cannot save yourself from foolishness any more than a man can pull himself up by his bootstraps.

Someone has to save you from the foolishness that's in your heart, and that's why God has created the family. Fathers and mothers. Because God realizes something that people just don't seem to realize anymore.

This whole system of authority and everything that's in this world, it's the result of the fall. It's necessary. It is a work of God's common grace to restrain the foolishness or the evil that's in the heart of men.

In the same way that a child... Listen to me. No one ever had to teach you to lie. They have to teach you to tell the truth.

No one ever had to teach you to make a fool out of yourself. You just do that naturally. They have to show you, no, you don't act this way in public.

You see, you need supervision. And the sooner you recognize that, the better it will be for you. The marvelous thing is that you have supervision of people who love you.

All things being normal. Now, listen to me young person. The parent's role in your life, your parent's role in your life is ordained by God.

Okay? This is God's doing. And it is the first law governing man's relationship to Him. Do you realize that? You come to the Ten Commandments.

Those first several commands are all about God. When He starts dealing with men to men, the first thing there is family. Parents.

Honor your father and your mother. Honor them. And what I want you to see is this.

Since God has ordained it, your rebellion against your mother, your rebellion against your father is a direct rebellion against God. Now, young people always ask me, well, what if my dad asked me to build a nuclear bomb or something? And I always ask him, well, when was the last time he did that? Because that's not really the problem, is it? It's about whether or not you should wear that certain type of clothing or whether or not you're going to take the trash out before you go to school. But realize this.

Mark it down. If you don't learn any other thing, it is this. Realize this.

To disobey, to disobey a clear and common and biblical command of a parent is to rebel against the very throne of God. As though you were to crash in to the throne room of God to seek to knock Him from the throne and slaughter Him. It is a vile thing to step outside of authority.

Now, some of you automatically are thinking, well, what about when that authority isn't right? What about when that authority... Isn't it amazing your mind always works that way? Now, there are senses in which authority goes bad and that's God's built-in other safeguards if you're in a biblical church where they shepherd you and they get involved in the lives of their people. But isn't it amazing that whenever you're told to submit to authority, the first thing that pops up in your mind, well, what if they tell me to do something that's not right? Look how your mind's working. Always to get out.

Always to get away. Now, children, in Ephesians 6, 1-3, children, obey your parents. Now, I want you to listen to this, children.

The word obey means to listen to. Okay? To hearken to. And there's a wonderful way in which this word is used sometimes.

It speaks of one who, on hearing a knock at the door, comes to listen very quickly to discover who it is. It's also a word used to describe the work of a door porter, a doorman, who the moment he hears someone knock at the door, he jumps out of his seat, he runs to the door, opens it up and says, yes, how may I help you? That's the idea there. It's not just the idea of obedience, but of a quick response.

A quick response of hearing, of listening. Now, parents, this is an important thing because they are commanded to listen. And parent, whatever comes out of your mouth, you will be judged for on the day of judgment.

It better be biblical. Folks, do you not realize that there is coming a day when each of us will stand before the judgment throne of Jesus Christ? Does that do anything to you? And that He said for every idle word that comes out of our mouth, every word that in some way deviates from the pure, unadulterated, revealed will of God, every word will be held accountable for. They are written in His book.

And if you expect that child to listen... You know, parent, one of the judgments of God, disciplines of God against you that your child doesn't listen to you may be because when you speak, Scripture never comes out. This is serious. You see, I could just keep going and going and have us all on the floor, and that's maybe where we belong.

You know, one of the hardest things to convince a people, and we need the Spirit of God to do this, is that this is not a baby's game. This is not just some little religious add-on thing. Moses said, these are not vain words.

It ought to be frightening. The most frightening thing you could ever do is sit under a biblical preacher. That's terrifying.

I always tell people before I preach, here's the way it is. This is dangerous for both of us. If I preach to you something that is not according to God's Word, I will undergo greater condemnation as a teacher.

But be happy, if I am a false prophet, you have nothing to worry about on the day of judgment. But if I stand before you and teach the will of God to you as it's revealed in Scripture, then the danger is yours. You see.

Now, he says, so obey your parents, which means to listen, to hearken to, in the Lord. Obey them in the Lord. I want you to know something.

There should be a real sense in which you love, revere, and honor your parents. But what you've got to see is the bigger picture. This is not about your relationship with your parents as much as it is your relationship with God.

It's to obey your parents in the Lord, because He has established them as your authority. Again, so many people ask me, well, what happens when my parents are not doing right? Well, let me tell you something. That is where you still honor them and you give place to the vengeance of God.

I want to tell you something, young person. If you get serious about submitting to and honoring your parents, God will deal with them. I always tell people this illustration.

You go to Europe and the castles are beautiful. I just love castles. Any time I get a chance to see a castle, I go see a castle.

And the first floor, the door on the first floor of the castle is absolutely huge. But you go to the second floor to get up to the second floor, often times the stairwell is about this wide. And at the top, there's only a door about this big.

And I asked somebody one time, I said, you know, here you've got this beautiful castle, huge door on the first floor. The second floor, to get up to it, you've just got to walk single file and you go through a little cubby hole. And the man said, well, there's a reason for it.

When the castle is stormed and all the people run to the second floor, one man with a long lance could hold off an entire army because those soldiers are only going to get up single file. And it's like, young person, let's say that your parent is disobedient, your parent is not giving wise counsel, but you honor God by honoring your parent, then what's going to happen? Well, let's look at what's not going to happen if you don't do that. If you fight against your parent, and then as a Christian youth, you're going, God, why don't you help me? Why don't you help me? And God's going, get out of the way.

Give place to the vengeance of God. Give place to my working. Give place to my wrath.

Give place to my discipline. But as long as you're standing there fighting when I told you not to, I am not going to jump over you and fight. You stand back and give place to me and I'll deal with the authority that's over you because they happen to be under me.

Now, he goes on, children, in the Lord, for this is right. Literally, this is righteous. And what is righteousness? It is conformity to God's law.

Again, obeying parents is not necessarily or finally or ultimately something between you and your parent, but something between you and God. You do it because it's righteous. It is conformed to divine law.

And then it says, honor your father and mother. That means to esteem them as valuable. Do your parents, do they look in your eyes and see that you esteem them as valuable? Young people, I'm talking to you

now.

Would your parents say that my child esteems me as valuable? Now, let's just play the devil's advocate on that for a moment. And you say, well, my parents don't act very valuable. You know, I'm commanded to love my enemies.

We would suppose that if I'm commanded to love the very person who is burning me at the stake and to bless those who curse me and pray for those who persecute me, that it would not be unreasonable in light of all those other commands to think that I ought to honor my father and mother even if they don't act honorable. Regardless of what... I saw this the other day and it was a total disgrace. Disgrace for a Democrat or whatever, but it was a total disgrace the way I saw some people on a platform treat the President while he was on the same platform.

And it has little to do with George Bush. It has little to do with his politics. They did not honor his place.

He is President. And I can say the same thing about conservatives on Bill Clinton. There is a real sense that regardless of the man, God has established authority just like King David, before he was king, honored Saul.

We know nothing about authority today. Why? Because in the 60's, everybody wore t-shirts that said what? Question authority. If it's authority, it's wrong.

The Bible says, honor authority and God will deal with the authority. Now, honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. This is a reference to a blessed life without fear of divine judgment.

You want to know what that means? Very simply, it's just referring to a life lived out in God's favor without the fear of divine judgment. I used to work with street people years ago, lived with street people for a while, and one time we just got thinking, how did all these street people become street people? I mean, they didn't start off that way. You know, we did kind of an unofficial kind of questionnaire and we really put some time in thinking, but you know what we discovered? Every one of them, their life turned for the worst as they began to disrespect and dishonor their parents.

It all began with rebellion in the home. Young person, let me ask you something. I mean, do you really believe in the God of the Bible? I know that sounds like a strange question, but everyone believes in God, but He looks more like kind of Santa Claus or an old grandfather that's kind of not too up on things that you can so easily deceive.

Do you actually believe in the God of the Bible who actually tells you that if you honor the authority He's placed over you, He will grant you a life without divine fear, without having to fear judgment? And that if you live a life of rebellion against your parents, at this moment, in this young age of yours, these few years that you're with your parents and you rebel against them, that that right there could bring about the certainty of divine judgment for the rest of your entire life and on into eternity? Do you think that things in this world just happen? I think one day, God is going to pull back the veil on history. And it is going to be amazing how much of everything is based on just one concept of sowing and reaping. You will reap what you sow.

Your sin will find you out. There is a payday someday. I believe that because it's what the Bible teaches.

God hates rebellion because all rebellion is ultimately rebellion against His throne. I want to, just for a second, tonight, we're going to move into courtship. And I want to finish this part before we do.

I have to lay a foundation before we can get into courtship. But I want us to look at something. First of all, young person, listen to me.

It is moving beyond obedience also. Moving beyond obedience to honor. In 1 Timothy 3-4, there's a command to the elders, or requirement of being an elder.

And it says, He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control. Well, you know, I don't control my children. Well, you're supposed to.

Not manipulating, not using worldly, fleshly means, but sir, you're to govern your home. Keep your children under control with all dignity. The child demonstrates reverence, honor, and respect, or treats the father with dignity.

You see, we talk. Young people, do not come up and call me Paul, because I love you too much to let you get away with it. I am your elder.

Not only am I an elder, but I am a man given to preaching. You don't call me Paul. Don't walk up to Pastor Noblitt and go, Jeff.

But at the same time, don't walk up to your mom and dad and just go, Mom! Dad! You see, we do these things all the time without any awareness of what's really going on. To treat the authority that God has established in a lackadaisical way is to treat God's authority in a lackadaisical way. There should be a sense.

Of course, with our children, we ought to have a wonderful time of play and everything, but there ought to be in the back of that a sense of respect. This is my dad. This is my mother.

This is the pastor. These are the elders. These are the deacons.

And you say, well, what if they don't? I don't care if they don't. God has established it. Honor God by honoring what He has ordained.

Now, it says that the child is to demonstrate reverence. A child is to demonstrate honor and respect. And listen, fathers, when you listen to this, you shouldn't be sitting there going, that's right, but you should be sitting there saying, You see, you will invest your life learning every sort of thing, trying to master every sort of hobby, trying to catch fish, kill deer, do absolutely everything, make money, build houses, get new cars, when you should be seeking only one thing, to be a worthy and honorable servant of the Most High God.

And that your sons and your daughters might be able to look at you without remorse and honor you. Now, it says this. I love this.

Leviticus 19:32 You shall rise up before the gray-headed and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God. I believe it was Susanna Wesley who, in order to train her two boys, she put them in a room and gave them some things to play with. And then during the course of the day, she walked in and out of that room 150 times to teach them that every time an adult walks in that room, they stop talking to one another, stand up, and turn towards that adult and wait to be spoken to.

You know, when I was a little boy, like about 150 years ago, I can remember my dad, who was an unbeliever, teaching me that. None of those things exist anymore. You say, well, you can carry that too far.

There you go again, trying to find a way out of things. Yes, you can carry things too far, and you can carry them to the absurd, and you can carry them to the dangerous, and you can make things horrid. I'm not talking about stealing joy from the face of the earth.

I'm talking about simply, have we lost all sense of honor? It's my father. It's my mother. You see.

And you shall rise up before the gray-headed. Honor. I'll never forget this young man.

I was sitting in a pew. And he walked by. He was like a college student.

He walked by and grabbed me by the earlobe. And I couldn't believe it. I was sitting there in church getting ready.

And I just prayed. I said, Lord... And a friend of mine, Darren Rotman, saw him. It's the closest I've ever seen Darren to literally taking someone out and whipping them out in the church parking lot.

And I'm glad because it protected me from having to do it. But Darren... And this kid, he loved the Lord. It's just no sense anymore.

There's no sense of respect. There's no sense of dignity. There's no sense of honor.

And it's such a beautiful thing to have. Like I said, and like Scripture says, it's not a burdensome thing. It's not a heavy thing.

It's the iniquity that's heavy. We are to be... We are not to be an extravagant people. But we are to be an elegant people.

We're to be a beautiful people. We're to be a noble people. We're to be like Christ.

You see, one of your great problems is that most of your views about Jesus Christ is based upon 15th century Catholic art that was painted by homosexuals. Jesus was something. And there's a real sense in which we, even though we recognize our brokenness and our fallenness, we're to strive, to seek to be.

All that we can be for His glory. Now I just want to end by looking at a few divine penalties. In Jude 1.6 it says, the angels who did not keep their own domain, and some translate this to mean keep or stay within their own position of authority, but abandoned their proper abode, He is kept in eternal bonds until darkness for the judgment of the great day.

They were designated. Whatever this passage says, one thing it does say is they had a God-ordained designation, a place of authority in creation. They had a place.

God ordained it. They had a domain, an authority. God ordained it.

They violated that, and until this day they have been kept in bonds, waiting the day of judgment. Now, young person, you have been given a place. One day you will assume a place of authority when you leave your father and your mother and go out and join yourself as a young man to a young woman, then you will have a place of authority.

Right now you don't have a place of authority. Do you understand that? You have no authority. No authority has been given unto you.

Do you understand that? And the reason why no authority has been given unto you is because God is protecting you. You can't do man things until you're a man. We're going to talk about that today, a lot tonight, a lot.

You have not been given authority. It is given unto you to learn. It is given unto you to follow.

It is given unto you to grow. It is not given unto you to lead. It is not even given unto you to decide for yourself.

Now, take it. There are parents who can take that and twist it into something just perverted, that the child has no will anymore, the child has no desires it can express and things like that. That's not what the Bible is teaching about.

But what the Bible is teaching is that there is a reason why authority has been placed over you and you have been given none. Because there is still foolishness bound up in your heart and there is much to learn. And if authority were given to you, it would be like placing a loaded pistol in the hands of my four-year-old.

And that is why young people are destroying themselves today. Because they are being given authority by their parents that they have not grown to be able to use. You see, God does have a way.

And it totally contradicts our culture. And it totally contradicts most church life. Now, you want to talk about real discipleship? Because young person, radically following Jesus Christ means more than a cross around your neck and a Christian t-shirt on and contemporary Christian music in your iPod.

True Christianity is submission to God's Word. It's submission to God's Word. Now, I know we haven't hardly got in on courtship, but here's the thing.

How can we unless these things are laid down? Are laid down. And then today we'll talk about courtship, or this evening, and what we're going to talk about is we're going to talk about what it is. We're going to talk about the time when it can begin.

And if you will grasp what I'm going to teach you tonight about when courtship can begin, it will change your life. I promise you that. Please come back.

And yes, I have hit you hard, and I intended to. In the same way a doctor who loves his patient doesn't fool around with cancer that kills. Hits it with everything he's got in his hand.

This is the Word. And I would recommend that you would get the things that Pastor Noblitt has taught. You would get all the outlines you can.

And just because of the Scriptures I've given you today, if you will just go over them and over them and over them, and allow God to begin forming these things in your life. Let's pray.

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