

Family Series Part 3 (Responsibility, the Duty of Fathers)

by Paul Washer

Fathers have a primary responsibility to teach, train, and invest in their children, and neglecting this can lead to bitterness and anger in children.

Duration: 49:29

Scripture: Proverbs 4:1-4, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 6:1-4

Topics: "Family"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of character and example in parenting. He highlights the significance of teaching children God's commandments and living them out as a parent. The speaker urges fathers to take on their biblical responsibility and not to prioritize worldly pursuits over their families. He also emphasizes the need for fathers to invest in their children by teaching, training, and illustrating biblical principles. The sermon references Proverbs 4:1-4 and warns against the consequences of failing to fulfill these responsibilities.

Transcript

Let's go to Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 6. Let's stand for the reading of God's Word. Verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment, with a promise, so that it may be well with you, that you may live long on the earth.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Let's pray. Father, I do pray that you would help us.

It has been a long day. Lord, give us wisdom. Take your truth, that it would be proclaimed clearly tonight, thoughtfully.

That by the power of the Holy Spirit it would be applied to the heart and mind of every believer. Lord, that we would move one step closer to what is the very center of your will in our families, in our lives. Thank you for the privilege that is mine to speak to a group of people such as this.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

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. The last two Sundays we have been dealing with those verses. So very, very, very important, because as we have already understood, that the family is the very foundation of society in God's plan.

That as the family erodes, so does society. But not only that, we have nothing but a cosmetic church, cosmetic church service, until we have families that are walking and living biblically in the truth. That is our goal.

Sunday morning with the large crowd we had and all sorts of things, that is not the litmus test of a biblical church. The litmus test will be found in our own homes. And so we have these commands directed towards children, and now we are going to move on to verse 4, where we have commands directed to the fathers.

Father, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Now, the first thing that I want us to see is that Paul directs this text now to the person who is primarily responsible for the instruction and training of children in the home. Now notice, he says fathers.

He does not say children church workers. He does not say Awana leaders. He does not even say mothers.

He does not say youth directors or vacation Bible school workers. He says one thing. He says here to us, fathers.

Father, to be biblical, you must assume the responsibility, the biblical responsibility of a father. It does not matter how much activity you do in the church. It does not matter how much activity you do in worldwide missions.

For what does it matter if a man gains the whole world and loses his family? And how can a man be obedient outside of his house if he is not obedient to the Lord's will inside of his house? Now, I want to read from Proverbs chapter 4, verses 1 through 4. Hear, O son, the instruction of a father. You see, in the nation of Israel, that was the primary duty of the father, to give instruction to the sons and give attention that you may understand. Children are not born understanding.

They are taught understanding. And they will never be taught understanding in a secular world that knows not God. Because the beginning of all wisdom and understanding is the fear of the Lord.

It goes on, he says, I give you sound teaching. Do not abandon my instruction. Here he uses a possessive pronoun, my instruction.

You know, a father who really wanted to teach biblical things to his child, but did not live those biblical things, would probably hear on saying this, you know, do not abandon my instruction. The child would probably answer back, oh, I did not know it was yours, dad. Oh, if you would have told me it is God's instruction, I could understand.

But yours? When did that happen? You see, in order to teach instruction, it must be our instruction. And it is our instruction because it comes from our God. Our God, whom we obey.

It is instruction that we have incorporated into our own life, that we have digested, that has become a ruling principle in our own life. He says, when I was a son to my father, tender and the only son inside of my mother, then he taught me and said to me, let your heart hold fast my words, keep my commandments and live. Look at this father.

He had a father who was an example. Look at the heritage that is being passed down here. I did not have that heritage.

But before God, and by His grace, it is my desire that my sons have this heritage. I cannot say, and you say also, you cannot say, that you are able to go to your children and say, I am going to teach you what my father taught me in the Scriptures, because most of us never learned anything from our fathers in the Scripture. People come to me and they say, well, Brother Paul, you just do not understand.

I am from a dysfunctional family. We are all from dysfunctional families. Get over it.

Been a dysfunctional family ever since Adam and Eve. The time is, is now, we come under a new father. A new headship.

A new lordship. No more excuses. I have a father who teaches me well now.

A heavenly father. And I have no excuse not to teach my children. It says, when I was a son to my father, tender, and the only son in the sight of my mother.

Tender. There is, even though all children are born, as Scripture says, radically depraved, there is something, and it would be impossible to deny it, but there is something of a tender age. There is a time when the hearts and minds and wills of children can be molded, and there comes a time when no more molding will be done.

And it is an early age. We begin at the beginning. Some psychologists, who I usually do not find myself quoting many of them in the pulpit, but I would agree with them on this, would say, just about six or seven years old, the child's character has been formed.

I can see that through my own observation. You say, well, when he is older, I will teach him. Too late.

You do it when they are tender. When they are tender. And then someone comes to me and says, well, Brother Paul, I just do not have the time.

Well, let me say both a positive and a negative. First the negative. Brother, if it is your son, you have the time.

But another thing I want to say to you, that some of you have been listening to this and say, honestly, I want to be a godly father, but where do I get the time? Let me tell you this. Character and example will make up for a lot of time you do not have. But if you sit there and teach your child four hours a day, but you do not have the character and example before them, all your teaching will rot.

Now, there is a time when they are tender. And he says, tender and the only son in the side of my mother. Then he taught me and said to me, let your heart hold fast my words.

Again, they were God's words, but they had become the father's own. Because he himself was a follower of the righteous path of Yahweh. As we see in the Old Testament.

Keep my commandments and live. Well, dad, you know, that is just your opinion. No, son, they are my commandments, but foremost they are God's commandments.

They originated with him. I made them mine. But they have his authority, his seal, his mark upon them.

Now, although when it says fathers, mothers can be included in this and should be involved in the teaching, it does say fathers. It is masculine. It is dealing with fathers.

And there is a question of why would that happen? I mean, why would Paul just particularly point out fathers? Here is the first reason. Because fathers really are supposed to be the head of their household. And the chief responsibility of all the household does rest upon the father.

And one of the greatest gifts that God has given us is our children. And God does not want you to delegate that responsibility of teaching them to anyone else. The father should be the primary instructor and molder of the children.

Now, I want you to know something. That does not mean just the boys. It means the boys and the girls.

Fathers, I hope that you will come to grasp how much, you will come to understand how much your sons need you. But then I hope you come to understand something else. Your daughters need you just as much.

Because your daughter's husband, her standard by which she measures a man, will be largely based, sir, upon you. She probably won't shoot for anything much higher than you. That is why it is so important to hold that standard very, very high.

Another reason why I think Paul addresses fathers is because fathers, by and large, are the ones that are out there in the jungle fighting the world and bringing home the bacon. And when they hit the door, they're tired, they're wore out, and basically they think, I've finally reached my castle, crown me the king, I'm resting the rest of the night. I'm sorry, brother, let me share a scripture with you.

There's no rest for the wicked. This is part of what it means to be a man. Yeah, I know you've been battling dragons.

Well, now you've got to come home and fight little monsters. Now you've got to come home and give yourself to them. I told someone the other day, there have been times when literally I've just stood over in a corner and literally from exhaustion just almost broke down and wept while my two boys are pulling on my pants and one of them is saying, let's wrestle.

You know what you've got to do? Suck it up and wrestle. That's exactly what you've got to do. Another thing, a question that I have for you.

Now, this is a tender question, but I just want you to think about it. Some of you men have to put in hours and hours and hours a day to make a living, support your family. I understand that.

I don't take anything away from it. But how much less would you have to work if you didn't need so many things? Let me share with you. But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

For we have brought nothing into this world so that we can take nothing out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. Paul's standard, what was required for contentment, was a lot lower than ours.

He says, you know, I didn't bring anything here. I'm not taking anything with me. He says, but I'll be content with this.

I have food, shelter, clothing, content. Maybe if we were content with a lot less things, we would have a lot more time to be involved in those things which are truly eternal. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

It's like doing a headfirst dive into a sewer. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

What should you be pursuing above all other things? Not the American dream, the heavenly vision. The heavenly vision is this, righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, gentleness. A hundred years from now, no one will even think about how much money you had in your checkbook.

No one will even be thinking about what kind of car you drove or the house you lived in. But there may still be a godly heritage on the earth that you have left here. It's like the man who died.

All his life, he knew he was going to die, and so he took everything he had, he sold it and he purchased gold, and he filled this box up with a huge thing of gold, and he wrapped his body around it, and he said, I'm taking it with me. So he dies. And bless the Lord, I don't know how he did it, but he took it with him.

He got all the way to the gate there, and the angel goes, What's this? He goes, Look, this is not just anything. This is everything. And the angel goes, Wow, okay.

Well, what do you want? I want to bring it in. The angel goes, What? He goes, I want to bring it in. I have worked all my life for this.

I have slaved for this 24 hours a day. I've done everything in my passion and power to have this. I need to bring it in.

And the angel, so impressed, he goes, Man, okay. But, I mean, before you bring it in, can I look into it? I mean, I'd like to see this thing that you have given your life for, every breath. I mean, I would love to look into these things.

And the angel lifted up the lid and looked, had the most bewildered look on his face. He said, Gold? You gave your life for gold? We use this stuff to pave our streets. You gave your life for asphalt? Think about it.

What is eternal? God is eternal. The word of God is eternal. The soul of our children is eternal.

Now, he says now here, he says in verse 4, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. I want to read some things from John MacArthur, John Gill and Albert Barnes. John MacArthur said, In the pagan world of Paul's day, and even in many Jewish households, most fathers ruled their families with rigid and domineering authority.

The desires and welfare of wives and children were seldom considered. The apostle makes clear that a Christian father's authority over his children does not allow for unreasonable demands and strictures that might drive his children to anger, despair, and resentment. Now, John MacArthur is saying here that it was common in the day of Paul among pagans and Jews to drive their families to bitterness and anger by being domineering and provoking them.

I would say that's not so much the case in our modern time. Most wives and children that I find bitter and angry, it's not because of a rigid, domineering husband. It's because of a husband who's never there.

A husband who just neglects. A husband who just comes home and declares it to be his time of rest. Children neglected all over the place.

Wives neglected everywhere. John Gill writes, fathers are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of family, and are apt to be too severe as mothers too indulgent. One of the great problems in the family today is not only is one of the parents unbiblical, but often both of them are, and they pull against each other from different extremes.

The father is often too severe and too rigid, while the mother is doing as much as the father to destroy her child by being indulgent and allowing the child to get away with absolutely everything and to get anything they want. Now, Albert Barnes writes, the apostle here has hit on the very danger to which parents are most exposed in the government of their children. It is that of souring their temper.

You say, yes, we've got to be very, very careful. We don't want to sour their temper. But you can do that not only with too rigid a discipline and too strict a rule, you can also do it with indulgence.

And that's probably the problem in your family. By and large, in America, we're not too strict with our children. By and large, we're too indulgent with our children.

And that will sour their heart just as quickly as anything else. Now, the phrase, provoke to anger. It's very, very important.

He says here in verse 4, fathers, it's a negative command, do not provoke your children to anger. It comes from the Greek word *parorgizo*, from a Greek word *orge*, which means wrath. And what it means is to be in a relationship with a child and acting in such a way that you're going to exasperate the child.

You're going to provoke the child to anger and wrath. You're going to make them bitter and resentful. Now, in a few minutes, we're going to explain that there's many ways to do that.

That's what it means. When He says do not provoke them, do not provoke your children to anger, literally don't provoke them to becoming wrathful and bitter and angry. It's not just an outburst of anger, but it's the idea of creating an angry, wrathful character and a sour character that does not respond, but always withdraws.

Now, in Colossians 3.21, it says, Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. Now, there's two things here in this passage. First of all, exasperating children, we're warned against that.

And also, if we exasperate them, we are told of the possibility of them losing heart. Now, the word *exasperate*, *erathizo*, means to stir up or provoke resentment. And to lose heart means to disheartened, to dis-spirit, to break the spirit, to lose heart when a child simply loses heart.

Now, how can we do this? I've written down some things that I believe, at least in our culture, are primarily responsible for having bitter children, discouraged children, children that have simply just given up on a relationship with parents. First of all, neglect. Sir, your child is only going to ask you to play so many times.

And then he's going to go find someone else to play with. And it's going to be very, very hard to get him back in the yard playing ball with you. You have only a certain number of years to create what many have called bindings or strings, to tie strings with your children, to bond with them and bind with them so that they know, I am beloved of my Father.

That's one of the things. They could crush Jesus. They could do whatever they wanted to Him.

He could go through immense trials. But the one thing He always knew, I am beloved of my Father. There comes a time, and it is a short window, when you can actually create these strings of binding.

You're the most important person in your child's life. But you can lose that status through neglect. When you neglect a child, as when you neglect a wife, they will simply become bitter.

Another way in which a child may become bitter and angry is expectation without investment. And this is... Fathers are given to this temptation. When their child, even at the age of three and four and five and on in, just keeps going.

When their child is not the virtuous person they want them to be, is not the disciplined or instructed person they want them to be, they make demands upon that children. What is wrong with you, child? Why can't you see this? Why can't you do this? They're demanding things from a child, but they never made the investment in the child. They never did all these things in the Bible.

It's just demand, demand, demand, but no investment. Do you know they did a survey on, I believe it was insurance salesmen, but I believe it applies just about everywhere. They found out that 80% of the insurance salesmen sell 20% of the insurance, and 20% of the insurance salesmen sell 80% of it.

And you know the differences between the two? The successful group did what they did not want to do. And the unsuccessful group did not do what they did not want to do. You see, sir, this is a battle.

You think of battle, you sing these Christian songs about victory and battle and against the devil and everything else, but the real battle is not quite so glamorous. The real battle is getting up every day and obeying the Word of the Lord. And it's doing it in the context of the family.

And God tells us that we are to invest in children. We are to invest in our children. Someone comes to me, you know, they're standing out in the middle of a field, and they're mad as all get out.

What's wrong? Look at my crop. I don't see one. That's the problem.

That's why I'm mad. There's no crop. I said, well, did you plow? No.

Did you sow? No. Did you cultivate? No. He's going to walk away.

Guy's out of his mind. But that's the same thing that happens. Children become bitter because their parents are angry.

And their parents are angry because the children didn't turn out the way they wanted them to. But when you look back on it, where was the investment? Where was the investment? Now, also, failure to teach, train, and illustrate. What we need to understand in the Bible, this was a revelation to me.

An older, wiser family shared this with me a few years ago. And it just hit me like a ton of bricks. It is not enough to teach your children.

You must train your children. And it's not enough to teach and train. You must illustrate.

Let me give you an example. A lot of times I love archery, and I'll find a boy that really just doesn't have anyone that's very much interested in him. I'll make him a bow, and I'll take him outside and teach him how to shoot.

Now, before he ever gets that bow in his hands, I teach him a lot of things. I teach him a lot of things about where you put your hand, how loose, how tight, how to pull the string back, keep your shoulder level, pull with your back muscles, all sorts of things, where to be looking at the target, everything. I tell him that.

But if I just tell him that and put the bow in his hands, he's not going to be able to figure it out. There's just too much. So then I take him outside to where I have my bag, and I say, now watch me.

Now, see how my feet are? Remember what I told you about shoulder? Remember what I told you about where your toes are supposed to be facing? Now, look at my elbow. See the way it's turned out just enough to keep getting whacked by the string? Now, I'm going to bring this bow up. Now, feel my back.

Put your hand on my back. That's the only muscle that's moving is my back. Now, watch my hand.

And then when I let go, this hand is going to slide off my cheek and keep going straight back so that I don't pluck the string. And on and on. I'm going to illustrate it for him.

And then, but that's not enough. Okay, he's heard teaching. He's seen an illustration.

But now what? Son, pick up the bow. Okay, now you're gripping too tight. Okay, now loosen up here.

Now, remember what I said? I grab his elbow and I turn it. And we go through this process hundreds and hundreds of times. Training.

It's the same way. Let me give you an example from Suzanne Wesley, the mother of Charles and John Wesley. She was to teach them, Charles and John, when an adult enters in the room, when you're seated on the sofa or whatever, an adult enters into the room, stand up.

When they leave, sit down. They said, okay, mom. She said, now I'm going to show you what I'm talking about.

She stood up, sat down. Now, she said, here's what we're going to do. Sit on the sofa.

They sat on the sofa. She walked out. She came in.

They didn't stand up. She said, what did I tell you? Oh, oh, oh. Stood up.

She walked out. They sat back down. She walked back in.

They stood up. Trained them. He said, boy, that will take a whole lot of time.

Yes. Yes. You see, one of the great problems in America is we want it all.

The problem is you can't have it all. I sit out there and, you know, I start working on something outside, building something, building a piece of furniture. I could build furniture a lot faster before Ian came along.

Because I can put his hand on that rubber mallet and I can drive in the peg of wood I'm going to use to make it look like very old furniture. And it does take a long time. But now, am I in this just to make furniture? Or am I in this to teach a boy how to build a cabinet? You see, it's not just teaching.

It's also illustrating. Not just illustrating. It is training.

Now, if you look at this, most children get very little, if not any, moral teaching from their parents until they've already messed up. And then the moral teaching always comes because they got in trouble. So they equate moral teaching with trouble.

So we have failure to teach, train, illustrate. Another is a lack of discipline. A lack of discipline.

My little boy is a wild man. He gets a lot of spankings. When we came here and you have an Awanas, someone said, just in passing, they said, why don't you put your boy in an Awanas? I said, because no one back there will spank him.

And Will goes, I'll spank him. I said, Will, will you spank him? Yeah, I'll spank him. You want to spank? I'll spank him.

I talked to him for a minute. Okay, he can go in an Awanas. You say, he touches my son and I'll... Yeah, I know.

Yeah, let's talk about that. And a biblical man, I talked to him, found out about his testimony, his integrity among the workers and the children and everything else. I said, this little boy gets out of line, you spank him.

Because then he's going to learn, what? That there are a lot of different manifestations of authority in the world. Not just my father. And I need to obey my elders, even if they're not my dad.

You say, I've never heard of such a thing. I know. But if I'm here for the next couple of months, you're going to hear this a lot.

That's the thing. You've got to understand that we have got to discipline. Now, discipline is not just spanking.

Some people spank and do all sorts of things and they're abusive. That's not what I'm talking about. But let me point some things out to you that are very, very important.

First of all, your child will become bitter if there are no parameters set for your child. He'll become bitter. They'll become confused.

They won't know if they're ever safe. Think about it. If I'm standing in the middle of the jungle, or I'm wading through a black swamp in a kocha on the Amazon, and I don't know anything about this whole deal, I don't know if I'm safe or not.

I could be as safe as a baby. I could be in great danger unless someone tells me, Paul, you get in that water, the alligator's going to eat you. Or, yes, you can get in that water and it'll be all right.

If someone doesn't set parameters for me, I never know if I'm safe. I never know where I'm at. I never know really what to do.

And so you must set parameters for your children. That is very, very important, is to instruct them in parameters. If you do not, they'll never know that there are moral certainties in the world.

And there are. And then, if there are not consistent consequences for violating those parameters, this is what they'll learn. I can get away with it sometimes.

And the chance is worth it. Let me give you an example. You tell your child, now, son, that vase over there belongs to your mother.

You're not to touch that vase. Do not touch the vase. Now you say, well, why don't you just remove the vase? Then you stop the problem.

No, you don't. You hide it. You child-proof your house, you ought to house-proof your child.

You tell them, don't touch that vase. You walk out of the room. You come back in.

He's touching the vase. You've told him, if you touch the vase, I'm going to spank you. But you go out, come back in, he's touching the vase.

And you said, what did I tell you? Don't touch the vase. Don't do it again. You lied.

You lied. You did not do what you said you were going to do. And the child has learned, hey, man, this authority thing isn't so bad.

Because it's just basically empty warnings. And that's all. Or you come back in and you go, what did I tell you? One, two, three.

How many of you have done that? Now what you're telling them is consequences may come, but they will be delayed. And if you can move fast enough, you can get out of them. Then 20 years down the road, when they've got to make a decision about whether they're going to obey the law or not, these things start coming into mind.

I can get away with this. There are no moral certainties. On and on and on.

Discipline is extremely important. But the right kind, a loving kind, a biblical kind, and we'll talk about that later. Let me say another reason that children become embittered.

Verbal and physical abuse. Physical abuse ought to be reported. It ought to be taken to the law.

It should not be tolerated in any society. I think we all could agree on that. But there's something else that goes on that is just as harmful as physical abuse.

Maybe not to the body, but in the long run, even more to the soul. And that is verbal abuse. And what happens? Most parents will not set parameters, and if they do, they will not discipline for those parameters.

And the child begins to just wreck havoc. As the child wrecks havoc, the parent becomes more angry and more angry and more angry to the point where the parent does no longer even like the child. And begins to attack.

What's wrong with you? Don't you hear? Were you deaf? Man! And then every time the child begins to enter into a relationship with the parent, it's always one of bitterness and anger instead of joy and love and everything else. That it ought to be there. Can you see why we drive such a wedge? It's not a mystery.

Verbal abuse. If your child breaks a law of the house, it should not be running over there, saying, oh, you idiot, what have you done? The parent should be always joyful. At peace.

Son, what did I tell you? Dad, you said don't touch that. What did you do? Touched it. Son, I love you very, very much, and I think that one day you're going to be a great man.

You must learn that there are authorities. And you must learn that there are consequences. Wow! Enough to sting.

Enough to get the point across. And then, son, do you have anything to say? Dad, I'm sorry. Would you like to pray about it? You know, when you disobeyed me, son, you disobeyed the Lord.

Okay. Lord, forgive me. Son, He forgave you.

Dad, forgive me. Oh, son, I forgive you. And I love you so much.

I love you so much. You are worth all the investment I could ever make in you, son. I love you.

It's over. No more. Hey, do you remember what you did yesterday? You did that again? No, it's all over.

Just like our father wipes away all our sin. It's all over. No yelling.

No screaming. I go into some houses, and it's like, my, I'm in a lunatic shop or something. Screaming.

Now, something that is very important, and we've got to talk about this later, so much to learn. You should never discipline a child for being a child. You discipline rebellion.

And there's a fine line, a difference, but you can recognize it. It doesn't take a rocket scientist. There is a sense in which those children should be running wild, in one sense.

The house should be full of laughter. It should be full of joy. It should be full of enterprise and just all sorts of things.

At the same time, there should be discipline. Also, failure to recognize the way a child is bent, promoting that bend and rejoicing in it. As I've said a million times, because I'm trying to get someone to take me hunting when my hand gets better, I love to be outdoors.

I love to be outdoors. I love to hunt. I love to do all those kind of things.

My little boy right now, he's unusual with regard to if he sees somebody hurt or an animal hurt or something. He gets very frightened, wants to go over and make it better. Someone shot a deer and it was in our yard when I came home and the coyotes were eating on it.

And we got in there and he goes, Dad, go out there and fix that deer. I said, Son, I think it's a little too late. I've got a feeling he may be a man of peace.

Maybe he'll be a man who loves music, poetry, writing, literature. Maybe he won't like the outdoors and all the other things. Praise the Lord.

Be one less idol he has to worry about. Praise the Lord. So what are you going to do? I'm going to sit there and listen to him play the piano.

And I'm going to love it because I'm keen on listening to all those really bad notes. No, but he plays it. I love him and that makes it wonderful.

You see, you recognize the way he's bent. He may not be bent. You might be a scholar.

He might not be a scholar. You might be given to a certain profession. He might not be given to that thing.

But you find out the way that God has bent your child. And you promote that bend. And you rejoice in it.

You have them prosper in that thing. Don't try to fix them. I remember when I was a little boy, all my uncles and cousins and everything, they're all outdoorsmen and mensmen and cowboys and everything else.

And I loved to read and I loved to draw. I drew all the time. All the time.

Even when I was eight, I entered a contest and I got second. And I mean, I just, I loved to draw all the time. And one day, an uncle and a few of my cousins, they started calling me every, you know, Sissy, what's wrong with you? You just want to sit and you just want to draw and all this stuff.

I put drawing behind me that day. A few years ago, I picked up some charcoals. Because my wife is an artist and I just started drawing.

And I realized, there were some people a long time ago who robbed me of something that I loved. There are men right now, working in jobs they absolutely hate. Because when they were young, they were given towards a certain thing that they greatly loved.

And they were not encouraged, but discouraged to go that route. And so they end up spending the rest of their life doing something they hate. God has your child bent in a certain way.

To do certain things. You are not Lord of that child. You are steward of that child.

There's a big difference. Now, we'll look at two more and then we'll stop. Next one, it fits just right with this.

Discouragement. A child needs more from you than just not being negative. Needs encouragement.

Discouragement. Honest encouragement. Where he is at, he needs to be encouraged.

I've got some magnificent works of art up in the office up there. One is a monster. And the other is a monster, I think.

Dad, I drew this. This is the best monster I have ever... My wife calls me Paul's superlative washer. Everything I look at, she says, everything you look at is the greatest thing you've ever seen.

But that's what he needs to hear. This is great. Somebody alert the media.

This is wonderful. Man, where did you learn to do that? You've been going to art classes at night? He's only three. He can't drive the car yet.

The point I'm trying to make is they need more than just, well, I don't discourage him. Well, do you encourage him? I notice this. That whenever I take my boy to the playground, usually there's a lot of other boys there on the playground.

Most of them are with their mothers. And when I put my boy up there on the monkey bars and I tell him, whoa, that's really good. You're so strong.

Immediately, boys come out of everywhere and say, hey, mister, look at me. I can do it too. Why? Because they want the affirmation of a man, even if it's not their dad.

How many of you played sports like me? And I mean, I would be there. And every time I scored two points or whatever, it was like, did you see that, dad? I didn't care if the coach saw it. I didn't care.

Where's dad? Did dad see it? Another thing is, it's the I just want to give my child the things I never had heresy. The things you never had are probably the very things that are the reason you have a character today. It's not the things we possess that built character in us.

It's the things we lack that built character in us. God never called you to give your children the things that you never had. God called you to give your children you.

You say, well, my children would rather have things. That's because they've already given up on you. Oh, my friends, what a culture of people we have become.

Things. A preacher one time got in an elevator, looked up, and there's Elvis Presley standing there. This was before he died.

I know a lot of people have seen him since he died, but I kind of worry about those people. And this preacher was really bold. So he looked at him and said, young man, you need to, you need to repent of your sins.

Believe in Jesus Christ. He said, Elvis looked at him and said, I know all about that, sir. I know all about that, preacher.

It was very nice to him. The preacher looked at him and said, then, son, what's your problem? And this was his answer. Things.

Things. I just like too many things. The goal is not to give your children things.

The goal is to give your children you. Just you. My little boy doesn't know that I'm 43 years old, broken down, and I've got more metal in me than a Tonka truck.

He doesn't know that I'm not very strong anymore and that I can't run very fast. He thinks I'm Superman. But that's not going to last long.

But I'm in a position to have an influence on his life. And I've got to use that. Every time he comes up to me when I finally got to a point where I think, well, you know, I'm going to be just have a little bit of free time here, maybe go out and do something in my woodshop.

He looks at me. And then it's almost like you can hear the voice of God. Paul.

You'll never get a chance like this again. You'll get to go out in your woodshop. But 30 years now, you will not regret that you didn't go to that woodshop to rest a little bit.

But you will regret of all the times that little boy looked up at you and said, Daddy, let's play. You said, I can't. One of the things I always teach the people that I teach is this.

I never use the word I can't. Now, I can't fly. That's true.

But when you say I can't. Basically, you're not telling the truth. Like someone says, I can't go with you today.

I have too much to do. No, you have decided you have a lot of things to do and therefore you cannot go. Now, that could be true.

But you need to use that type of language when you say I can't. You're somehow separating yourself from the responsibility. Because most time we can, but we choose to do something else.

And sometimes it's right to choose to do something else. But be very careful of your language. It's not that I can't.

It's that I choose not to. You see. If you have any questions tonight about your need of salvation or any other thing, then you come.

We'll talk about that. All right. You just come on up.

We'll talk as much as we need to. We're just going to pray and dismiss right now. I hope this has helped you with your children.

I hope it has. Father, please help me, Lord. I am so afraid.

There's so much as a father I've already done wrong. And so much that I will do wrong. And Lord, then again, even if I did everything right, which I don't suppose I will, it still doesn't mean my child will come out right.

For it is only by your grace, Lord, your regenerating power in the heart. Lord, I just cast myself down in front of you, Lord. And I say that there's no wisdom.

There's nothing that will bring me through this stage in my life except you. And Lord, I pray for the other men, Lord, that are feeling the same thing. That there's just no way I can make it work.

There's no way I can go back and make it right. Lord, help us. Help us, Lord.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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