

Family Series Part 4 (Father, Where Are You?)

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon addresses the vital responsibilities of fathers in nurturing their children and fostering a loving family environment based on biblical principles.

Duration: 52:18

Scripture: Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 6:1-6

Topics: "Family"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for biblical instruction and accountability among believers. He highlights the importance of learning from God's Word and not just settling for generalities in our faith. The speaker shares a personal story about getting lost on the way to a birthday party, illustrating the point that specific instructions are necessary for effective guidance. He then delves into the convicting aspects of biblical teachings, such as husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church and children honoring their parents. The speaker also discusses the discontentment and lack of character in the younger generation, contrasting it with the perseverance and strength of previous generations. The sermon concludes with the importance of teaching children through verbal instruction, demonstration, and illustration, using the example of a father teaching his son how to shake a man's hand properly.

Transcript

Let's open up our Bibles to the book of Ephesians. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.

Ephesians chapter 6, Ephesians chapter 6, verse 1, and let's stand for the reading of God's Word. Children, obey your parents and 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.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, and in sincerity of heart, as to Christ, not by way of eye service as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. Let's pray.

Father, we come before you in the name of your Son, and I pray, Lord, that you would speak through your Word. Grant us the grace, the fear of the Lord, repentance, hope that we might obey. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now, I included the part about slaves in this text for a reason. I wish I had just gone back and read through most of chapter 5 also, because what Paul is doing here is he set out for us in the first three chapters, as I have said, the greatest theological treatise that we have in the Scriptures. I mean, Ephesians 1 through 3 is a magnificent, magnificent portion of Scripture.

Then he goes on, and he begins to talk about the transformation. When he gets to chapter 4, how we're to live our lives. When he gets into 5, he gets down to where, well, where you just can't sneak away.

You see, when he talks about how we ought to walk with the Lord, and live for the Lord, and live in godliness, and live in love, and all these things, those are sort of generalities that you can amen them, but they really don't convict you that much. And then he gets to the fact of, well, husbands, you need to love your wives, as Christ loved the church. And that's when we begin to feel the pain of our disobedience.

Children, you ought to honor, not just obey, but honor your mother and your father. We begin to feel the pain, the ugliness of our own disobedience. Then he goes on and even talks about a slave-master relationship, which in our terminology today, in the context of our lifestyle, would be employee-employer.

What he's trying to tell us is that this good theology and this truth that we're learning, sooner or later, has to work its way down to the practical aspects of our life. And if it does not do that, then we are not obeying truth, nor do we even understand it. It is so easy for me to stand up here and speak.

It is so difficult for me to even live the things of which I speak. And that's what I want you to understand. It is so easy for you to hear the truth and to even rejoice in the truth, and say, yes, that's right, boy, that just warms my soul.

Well, that's all good. But here's the question. It warms your soul, but does it move your person? Does it move you to obedience? We've been working on children here in chapter 6, verse 1. We went on to fathers in verse 4, and it says, Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger.

It's a very, very important thing. Some have said that that's probably the chief sin of fathers, is provoking their children to anger, to bruising their spirits, to breaking them. Now, how do we do that? Last Sunday night that I was here, I preached on that, and I just want to go over it just quickly.

One of the greatest ways in which you can provoke your children to anger and exasperate them is through neglect. And as I said, your child is only going to ask you to play so many times, and then he's going to find someone else. Neglect.

I would say that in America today, the greatest problem in most normal families is not physical abuse, maybe verbal abuse, but not physical abuse. It is just neglect. Neglect.

Adam, where are you? I think today the cry is, Dad, where are you? Where are you? Where are you? One of the most important things, one of the things that I cherish more than anything in my life is the times that I had with my father. I knew my father for 17 years. He died in my arms when I was 17 years old, out in the middle of a cow pasture.

He used to tell me all the time, he worked very, very, very, very hard, very hard, was a very, very smart man. And he used to tell me, Son, one day when I'm dead, all this will be yours. Well, he's dead, and he's right, it's all mine.

The only thing I remember is at one time, for two and a half hours, my dad took me fishing at a pond. I can paint for you that pond right now. And it was a big one gallon ice cream bucket with a red handle that we put the fish in.

And the hooks were gold. And the bobbers were about this big around, and they were red on top and white on the bottom. And I can still smell the air that day because that day means more to me than absolutely anything on the face of the earth as far as a memory from childhood.

Father, where are you? Don't ever... I'm going to threaten you. Don't ever come to me and tell me that you don't spend much time with your child, but the time you spend is quality time. Don't ever, because I will make a whip out of cords, and I will beat you out of this sanctuary.

It's impossible. It is impossible to do that. Quality time comes out of much time.

Quality time. You will spend much time with your children. And out of that, some of it will just spring forth, this quality time.

It's not something you can orchestrate. It's not something you can manage. It's not something you can create.

It's going to happen. But it's only going to happen when you spend much time with them. One is neglect.

The other is expectation without investment. We become, as fathers, angry with our children when they do not obey or they do not look a certain way or act a certain way or walk a certain way or they don't perform as well in school and everything. And we become angry, but we don't realize we haven't made the investment.

You can only get out of something what you've put into it. Another thing, failure to teach, train, and illustrate. It's not enough to teach a child.

It's simply not enough. You have to teach them. Then you have to train them how to do it.

And then you have to illustrate that before them. All three of those are indispensable in the growth of a child, in the nurturing of a child. You teach them verbally, Son, this is what you're supposed to do.

You show them, Son, this is how you put your hand. This is how you walk. This is how you do this.

And then you illustrate it for them. Watch me. I can remember my father teaching me how it was proper, the proper way to shake a man's hand.

Son, back straight, shoulders back. You grab that hand and you squeeze with all your might and you look that man right in the eye. I loved it.

It was something he told me to do. It was like a step into becoming a man. I got this down.

I broke the fingers of most of the old ladies in our church. Another way that we exasperate and make a child angry is through a lack of discipline. When you set no parameters for your children, they never know if they're safe.

They don't know if they're in safe country or they're in a dangerous land when you set no parameters. And when you don't enforce those parameters, they begin to learn that authority is a lie. It's a joke.

Let me just give you some examples. If you touch that vase, I'm going to spank you. He touches the vase and you don't spank him.

Authority figures lie. Sometimes they don't do what they say they'll do, so it's worth the risk. Or you say, I told you not to touch that vase.

Now, one, two, three. Ah, you can disobey if you're quick enough to stop it before judgment comes. You see all the ways that you're sending your children to hell? Because the way they see your authority is the way they see God's authority.

They become angry because they don't know. They just live in a cloud of confusion. What's right? What's wrong? I just don't know.

And disobedience no longer brings loving discipline. The child disobeys and disobeys, and the parent doesn't discipline until the parent becomes so angry that then they discipline not in love, but in anger, which is wrong. But then again, that's a four-hour course, isn't it? We've got to go on.

They become angry with verbal and physical abuse. There's probably not a whole lot of physical abuse in this church, hopefully. But verbal abuse? What is that, Pastor? Raising your voice.

Now, there's a sense when you give a command to a child at times you need to say, stop that. There needs to be a change in your voice. They need to see the authority there and everything else.

But when we see parents finally, because they will not discipline, they will not set parameters, they get angry, what's wrong with you? That's verbal abuse. What's your problem? Can't you hear? Are you stupid or something? That's verbal abuse. You're not disciplining a child, you're destroying a child.

And that's all because when you don't enact God's plan, plan A, and you go to plan B, which is the flesh of your plan, the plan of your flesh and the devil in the world, you're always going to end in destruction. It goes on. Failure to recognize the way a child is bent.

It's very important. I'm saying this again because it's just so important. Failure to recognize the way a child is bent.

I'm bent towards the outdoors. I love the outdoors. I feel like I'm in chains when I'm in a building.

My son might be completely different. He might be a tender scholar. He might be given to music.

He might be given to the things indoors. And what am I to do? I'll tell you what I'm to do. I am to bless the way God made him.

To recognize the value of it and promote the way in which he is bent. I don't know if I shared this the last time, but until I was just almost a teenage, I loved to draw. I even entered some contests and won.

I drew everything. I just loved it. And one day, most of my family, they're all cowboys, hunters, fighters, you name it.

One day we were hauling hay. And we were in this barn. I'll never forget it.

My uncle and my cousins, they started nailing me, hey, the little sissy artist and all this and on and on and on. That day I put away my pencils. I put away my charcoals.

I put away my paper. And I stopped drawing. You've got to recognize the way a child is bent.

You've got to promote that bend. Now we go on by discouragement. A child needs more from you than just not being negative.

Some people think, I've raised my child good just because I haven't put him through a sheetrock or something. Haven't hit him so hard or abused him or left him out in the cold. They need more than just not abusing them.

They need encouragement. I need encouragement. You need encouragement.

How many times... I've studied this because of the effect it's had on my own life. How literally I can be doing okay and someone gives me some news that might not even be true. Some news or tell me something about somebody saying something about me or this or that.

And it just casts me down into the dust, one negative word. And then later on to find out that the complete opposite is true and see how it just picks up my spirit. Encouragement.

Encouragement. To encourage the child to be about that. We live in a world that just feeds on itself.

We need to be encouraging. We don't need to be like the father. You know the boy scores 20 points.

Son, you could have scored more if you had just paid attention. He gets an 85. Son, you could have got a 90.

Just encourage. Encouragement. And then the old lie, I just want to give my child the things I never had.

I hate that. Don't say that either around here. Because God did not call you to give your child the things you never had.

As a matter of fact, the things you never had are probably the very things that helped your character. I think about my mother and the others who came through the Great Depression, came through the Second World War. The character, the power that they have to withstand almost anything.

And I look at my own generation, how weak it is because of the things that have been given to us. We look at our parents' home, 20-year-olds, they're leaving home, they're going to get married. They look at their parents' home.

They don't realize that their parents began in an old dilapidated trailer with furniture borrowed from someone or drug out of some old warehouse somewhere. But not only are they not content with what their parents started with, they're not even content with what their parents have now. They want more.

They want bigger and better. And they want to start from the very beginning with the best. The things we give our children are sometimes the very things that destroy our children.

So these are some of the things that can really discourage a child. Now, it says, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Have you ever heard someone say, I'm raising children? That's where this comes from.

I'm raising children. I'm bringing children. Have you ever raised corn? I live in Illinois.

That's all we have is corn. How do you raise corn? You plant it. You fertilize it.

You care for it. You water it. You weed it.

You watch over it from things that can destroy it. The man who farms our land is one of the best farmers I've ever seen. You see him at times, a very wealthy man, but you'll see him walking out there in between the rows of that corn just checking every little thing, looking at the soil, looking at each leaf, looking at every new ear that's about to bud.

Nurturing it, causing it to grow. It says here, fathers, do not provoke your children, but bring them up. We're to nurture them.

The word bring them up comes from a Greek word, *ektrepho*, which means to nourish, to maturity, to nurture. Most men do not even have this concept. We think these words are woman words.

Nurture, nourish. But you, sir, are given the command to nurture and nourish your children. Their nourishment should come not from their mother, but from their father primarily.

All that they need to grow and to develop and become mature should come from their father primarily. And this is not just in the case of sons. This is also in the case of daughters.

Look what it says. It doesn't say mothers, but it says fathers, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Nurture them up.

Now, I want to read something from the Geneva Study Bible. The Greeks suggest the idea of nurturing and helping to flourish. I'm afraid to tell you this because it will indict me.

Do you want to know what kind of husband and father a man is? Do you want to know what kind of husband he is? Look at his wife. Is she flourishing? Do you want to know what kind of father a man is? Look at his children. Are they flourishing? Are they flourishing? Are they budding, bearing fruit, growing, productive? Or are they beaten down and afraid? Are they angry? Well, you can tell in a minute what kind of man a man is by looking at his wife and his children.

Now, parents are entrusted and look at this, with the minds, feelings, and bodies of tender bearers of the divine image. Yes, children are born radically depraved. Yes, children need to be saved.

But there is a sense that in even the lost man, there's a sense, a semblance of the image of God. And you are called upon. Mind, feelings, and body.

Mind, emotion, and body. How much time, sir, are you involved in the growth of your child's intellect? Well, that's what I send them to school for. Yeah, I know.

And that's why you send them to youth group too, to get the other part taken care of, isn't it? That's why you send them to Awanis, to get the spiritual thing taken care of, right? No. It doesn't say the school. It says you.

It says you. You say, oh, you're talking about homeschooling now. Not necessarily.

What I'm talking about is what Scripture says. That you are to be the primary mover in the intellectual development of your child. Whether that means teaching them in a homeschool or doing homework with

them.

Their mind. Who are you going to give it to? Some stranger you don't even know? You've got to get involved in whatever context you are, whatever context you feel led of the Lord to be in, you must be involved about their mind and then about their feelings. You take a child, you take a boy, neglected, battered, beaten, for the rest of his life he will be working to unscramble and untangle the mess.

It's not just mind. It's emotions. The emotional needs of people.

You can laugh about it. You can call it cycle babble. You can do whatever you want, but it's in the Scriptures.

Emotions are there. They're made by God and they're to be tenderly cared for. They can be tenderly.

They are to be tenderly cared for. You are to help the child develop emotionally and physically. Physically.

Children are supposed to eat right. I know this is a pulpit and I know this is a church and I know you expect to hear something spiritual out of me. But the fact of the matter is we are allowing our children to enter into a lifestyle of sin when it comes to food.

Think about it. We're to be over them. Nurturing them.

Wanting them to grow to be everything God wants them to be. It's to be a holistic type of teaching. Their mind.

Their intellect. Their emotions. Their will.

Their bodies. Everything. We should be caring about this.

It's extremely important. He goes on and he says, Accordingly, children do not exist for parents, but parents for children to help them come into their own personhood before God. Sir, one of the most important things you need to realize is this.

Your wife and your children are not an extension of you. They are not an extension of you. And they are not given you to serve you and your ministry.

We as men sometimes fall into this thing that our wives are simply an extension of us. I know what the Bible teaches about my wife being my helper, and it is true, but that does not mean she is just an extension of me. She will receive her own name on that final day.

A name that I will not know. She is her own individual before the Lord. My children also.

One of the greatest problems in America is we want everything. Well, let me just fill you in on something because if you can learn this, it will make you very, very happy or at least content. You can't have everything.

You have to make some choices. You can't have it all. That have-it-all type of lifestyle only exists on film.

I always tell young men when they come to me saying that they are in love, after I smack them across my office, then I begin to talk to them. I say, young man, if you want to live the life you are living now, running around with your buddies, spending your money like you want to, using your time like you want to, that's

fine with me. Go ahead and do it, but don't you dare get married.

And then I tell couples, you love your lifestyle of going out to eat, of wearing fancy clothes, of doing all this stuff all the time, and just kind of being free birds, Batman and Robin, a team of two going around doing what you want. Wonderful! Maintain that lifestyle, but don't you dare have children. You've got to make a choice.

There is a way in which, now this doesn't sound very pretty, but there is a way in which there are different deaths in the Christian life. But as we know from the teaching of our Lord is that death brings life, doesn't it? The first death, in a sense, a single man comes to know the Lord. There's a sense in which he dies to himself, comes to follow the Lord, but then comes a deeper death, marriage.

Really! You've got to understand these basic principles or you'll never understand marriage. Marriage is a deeper death, because now it's not about you, or even about your Christianity, or your lifestyle, or anything else. It's about now laying down your life, not just for the Lord, but for another individual.

And it's a lot easier to lay down your life for the Lord than it is another individual who will fail you and many times not deserve it. And then children, well, I suppose that's the deepest death. Because you and your wife take each other by the hand and you go into a deeper death.

Now it is not even me about laying my life down for you or you laying down your life for me, but us together going into a greater death and laying down our life for our children to help them become their own person before God. Now, he goes on, how are we to nurture up these children? He says, first of all, uses the word discipline and then instruction. There are two ways in which children are nurtured.

One is discipline and the other is instruction. Now most of you, when you think of the word discipline, you're thinking of spanking, you're thinking of some type of punishment, something they've done wrong and they ought to be corrected. That is not what this word means.

It is not limited to that at all. It refers to the whole training and education of children which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment, cultivating the soul by correcting mistakes and curbing passions. It is instruction that aims at increasing virtue.

Now let's go through that little definition just quickly. First of all, it is the whole training and education of children. And that's a proper word, discipline, for the whole training and education of children.

Why? Children are not born into this world knowing what is right and what is wrong. Children are not born into this world inclined towards the good, but the adverse. They are inclined towards the evil.

You say, how dare you speak that way? Because it's true. I never have to teach my child how to lie. I don't have to teach my child how to manipulate.

I don't have to teach my child how to be selfish and self-centered. I have to use discipline, holistic training to bring him out of that. Now, the whole training and education of children which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals.

Now think about this. Cultivation. It's easy for me to understand.

I'm from a farm. Cultivating. We just think everything is instantaneous.

We get some directions and then just expect everything to pop up like it ought to. But it is the idea of cultivating. And even in cultivating corn or cultivating a garden, there's no hard and fast rules sometimes because weeds pop up in the most unexpected places.

Varmints get through the fence. And you have to kind of daily be working, daily for years and years and years plucking here, trimming here, mending here, putting a stake like a tomato stake, slapping it down into the ground and fastening that vine around it to bend it in the way it ought to go. Praying for wisdom daily.

Lord, a new situation has arisen. How do I handle this? A new thing has happened. Lord, what direction do I go? It is a lifelong process until they finally leave and form their own family unit.

I love this word that it uses here, cultivation of mind and morals. Who's teaching your child? You say, well, they go to school and they learn science and biology and all these different things, mathematics. Who's teaching your child morals? Well, that's what I bring them to church for.

Well, then stop bringing them to church because it is most certainly not my job to teach them. And it is not the job of the Awana people or the children ministry and especially the youth ministry. It is not their job to teach their children morals or spirituality.

And that's where the church in the United States of America is just so unrighteously wrong. I hear parents all the time, I just don't understand. I feel like God failed me.

Why do you feel like God failed you? Well, you know, train up a child in the way that he should go and when he's old he'll not depart from it. And I've done that. How did you do that? Well, I took them to Sunday school.

That's not what it means. If you're like, and I can't judge you because I don't know you, but if you're like most American Christians, I'll tell you who's teaching morals to your ten-year-old. Hollywood cartoonists and the other ten-year-olds in their class.

Your child is a companion of fools. And do not be surprised nor angry with me for saying that a companion of fools will become a fool because that's what the Bible teaches. You see, we can't just sit back.

The church has just given away all its responsibility. Government takes care of the poor. The government educates our children.

The church teaches them about spirituality. The youth minister does this and that. No! They were given to us not to someone else.

And we have the obligation to cultivate their mind and to cultivate their morals. Most children only receive some form of moral teaching from their parents because they've disobeyed. And the parents are now coming down on them.

And we go on. He says, cultivation of mind and morals and employs for this purpose commands and admonition, reproof and punishment. You see, one of the greatest things that you can teach is authority.

God is really big on authority. If you don't believe that, ask the angels who stepped out of their place of authority. God is really big on authority.

And He's designated and decrees chains of authority. And the only way anyone is ever going to get along in this world is submit their life to the authority that God has placed over them. But they're going to learn not only about earthly authority like government and law, but they're also going to learn our children about God's authority through our parental authority.

Through our parental authority. So, what do we do? We give commands and prohibitions. We set boundaries around our children.

And then we explain to them the consequences of violating those boundaries. That it is a sure and just correction, even punishment, so that they learn our prisons are full of young people. Their parents ought to be in jail with them.

Now, I'm not saying here that as a parent you can do all the right things and everything is going to turn out just right. No. But I am telling you this.

That's really not the problem in our culture, is it? You have no idea what you do to your child, how great an impact that is. I was raised in a home of strict disciplinarians. A home of if you scored a 98, you should have scored a 100.

A father who said if you scored 22 points, you should have scored 30. On and on and on. And until this day, I struggle with understanding the love of God.

You have no idea what an impact you have on your children. You tell your children a command. Do not do this.

Or this will happen. They disobey you and you do not do what you said. So, one day, they've heard the teacher say it, they've heard you say it, don't be smoking dope.

Because if you do, you'll ruin your life. Well, I mean, all my life I've heard don't do this. And if you do do this, this consequence will happen.

Well, I did it. No consequence. It's the same here.

They disobey parents. They disobey teachers. And the law is no different.

Oh, I know I'm coming down kind of hard, but listen, these are just truths. These are just truths. They're just truth.

And they go on and he says, cultivating the soul by correcting mistakes and curbing passions. My sons have passions, wrong passions. Passions of selfishness and disorder and all sorts of things.

They do. They're to be molded. You say, well, you just got to wait until they're converted.

That's not what the Bible says. The Bible says I am to dedicate my life to training and teaching and nurturing, making. My goal is that those two boys far exceed their father.

And they have the opportunity to do that. Why? Because at least I'm trying to give them what I never had. Godly wisdom.

Godly instruction. Godly example. I fail.

Yeah, I fail. But this is what I'm striving for. Are you even striving for it? I remember in Peru.

Went up to a group of very, very dedicated ladies in the church. And I said, I rebuked them. I said, all of you just need to go home.

As a matter of fact, the reason why you're in church so much is your families are such a mess that you're just using the church to escape. You want to do all kinds of spiritual things. You want to witness to people.

That's good. You want to minister to ladies. You want to do all sorts of things, but your families are falling apart.

What do I care if the church is full, if it's full of people that are all broken and messed up? Fix your family. I'll tell you the same thing. I'm not concerned about this church being the biggest thing in Texas.

I'm not concerned about this church having a TV ministry. I'm not even concerned about this church having missions. Why should we do missions if we export the wrong that we're doing? Let's fix our families by the grace of God.

And then we'll have something to say when we open up our mouths. He goes on and he says, it is instruction that aims at increasing virtue. If I were to walk up to you, Father, and say, what have you been doing? What are your plans? What have you been studying lately about increasing the virtue of your children? Most American fathers would look at me and go, what? I mean, how's it going? I don't even know what you're talking about.

William Hendrickson said this, discipline may be described as training by means of rules and regulations and rewards and when necessary, punishments. That's what discipline is. Now, I want us to look just quickly at the word instruction.

The word instruction comes from the Greek word, which denotes instruction, admonition, exhortation and warning. This is very, very good to remember. Discipline is what is done to a child while instruction is what is said to a child.

See, there are two things. Instruction is teaching the child verbally, teaching them, teaching them. That is instruction.

Discipline is when you work that out in their life through commands and admonitions and corrections. I brought Ian with me here just before church started. I got here just a little after four and I brought him with me.

He didn't let me do anything. I mean, we ended up drawing Bob and Larry the whole time on my computer. But I said, okay, Ian, Daddy's got to go preach and we need to pray.

So I got down on my knees and I put him in front of me, got down on his knees and I grabbed him by the hands and I said, okay, Daddy's going to pray. And I prayed for the service and everything. Pretty short prayer.

Don't test a child beyond what they can bear. And then I said, okay, Ian, you pray. He said, Lord, help Daddy see all the nice penguins, the nice giraffes, and Larry boy.

I thought from the mouth of babes. No, it wasn't the most spiritual thing I've ever heard in my life. And I don't even understand it.

Matter of fact, it scared me a little bit. I'd like to know what these penguins are he's seeing. The fact of the matter is, he was down on his knees with his father, praying.

He'll remember that. He'll remember that. That's why I really don't care, folks, if my message gets interrupted.

I don't care if you have to call the kid out screaming. I don't care. I really don't care.

Because I'm not about cosmetics. I'm about reality. It's about reality.

Making our Christianity real. Making it real. Now, just to go on quickly here.

Something from Matthew Henry. It is the great duty of parents to be careful in the education of their children. Not only bringing them up as the brutes do, as animals do.

Animals provide things for their children. Taking care to provide for them, but bringing them up in the nurture and admonition in such a manner as is suitable to their reasonable natures. Nay, not only bring them up as men in nurture and admonition, but as Christians in the admonition of the Lord.

Let them have a religious education. Instruct them to fear sinning and inform them of and excite them to the whole of their duty towards God. That's where it's going to begin.

That's where it is going to begin. Let me just give you an idea. How do you do children's church? How do you do children's ministry? Let me put it that way.

I'll tell you how you do. You put somebody on staff full time that never touches your children. That's how you do children's ministry.

You say, what are you talking about? The person who does children's ministry in this church ought to be dedicated to teaching the parents how to raise their children. How do you do youth ministry? I want to tell you, if anything is a joke in the church in the United States of America, it's youth ministry. And I've been in some of the biggest.

It's a joke. It is a joke. Why? God doesn't have a plan B, church.

He doesn't. He has plan A. And plan A is parents, you are to teach your children and teach your teenagers. What's youth ministry? Have someone here who can train parents on how to raise up youth.

That's how you do it. You know what? Most churches don't want that. Most churches don't want that.

Because they want someone else teaching their teenagers. And they want someone else teaching their children. And they are wrong.

That's how you do youth ministry. That's how you do children's ministry. You teach parents how to assume the responsibility.

That's how you do it. Well, are we going to have any youth group? Well, first of all, you can have youth group, but the parents ought to be there. So we want to do something by ourselves, the kids say.

Why? Is their relationship with their parents so estranged that they don't want them around? Well, they cramp our style. Well, what's your style? Can you have a youth group? Yes. To get together and celebrate all the things you have learned from your parents through the week.

See, most people don't want a church like that. They really don't. Because it means that you have to assume the responsibility.

And it is hard. And it will make you tired. But then again, you should have thought about that before you got married.

You'll grow to hate me. This is what I want you to see tonight and we'll continue on next Sunday night again. Now, I haven't given you answers.

I've just pointed out problems and I'm aware of that because I want you to know. Do you know what this church needs? I'm going to tell you what you need. First of all, you need training in family.

I need training in family. You need to literally have courses here. I mean courses that are just about mandatory.

Where godly men who have demonstrated themselves to be godly husbands are teaching men how to be husbands. And where godly fathers who have already demonstrated that they are godly fathers are teaching the rest of us how to be godly fathers. And then also, there needs to be in this church a course on biblical finances and every one of you need to be in it.

If you have any credit card debt whatsoever, you need to be in that course. You have no idea what could be gained by doing things God's way and not our own way. And you can't just do that from a pulpit.

You've literally got to say, okay, I'm taking finances 101 this semester. What are you taking? I mean so that you can actually learn. I'm just pointing out from the pulpit things that are wrong.

I'm giving a bunch of general speaking, but that's not good enough. You're just going to feel bad and walk out the door. Go drink a milkshake and lose yourself in it or something.

This has to be followed up with biblical instruction. Grinding, difficult, but also joyous instruction. And we need to hold each other accountable.

We need to hold each other accountable and learn from God's Word. Amen? Amen. Now, before I finish, let me tell you a story.

This might not seem funny to you, but I'm not kidding you. I laugh so hard. I cried two nights ago.

We had to go to a birthday party at the Vadas. And they live... He told me he was from India. He lives in India.

I drove so far to get to his house. All the instructions, directions that Susan gave me were really messed up. And I ended up in some very strange looking places.

Well, anyways, we finally get to at least the neighborhood. But I'm on the wrong street because the street they told me to be on apparently was not the street I was supposed to be on, Susan. Well, anyways, I'm driving along and my wife goes, Hey, look, there's a kid's birthday party.

And sure enough, the garage door is thrown open. They got a table in there and there's balloons and a little kid running around. I thought, great.

Opened up the door, I grabbed in. And I walked in there just as big as they... Happy birthday! Everybody turned around and went... And I noticed they were all Hispanic, so I went, Feliz cumpleaños! And then I thought, something ain't right here. And everyone started grabbing their children and holding them like this.

And so I said, Ian, come on. And I picked him up and I turned around and my wife is in the middle of the road, bent over like this. Evan's head's going down like this.

She's bent over and she's going... And tears coming down her eyes and she's walking around looking like a chicken out there like this. And so everybody walks out of the garage and they're looking at my drunk wife there in the middle of the road. She can't even get back into the car.

She's trying to get in the car and she's laughing so hard. I can't even get the keys and the ignition. Tears going down my face.

And all those people are thinking, should we call 911? So if you hear anything very strange about the guy that's been preaching here lately, you probably ought to believe it. I just thought I'd leave you in kind of a joyous mood there. Alright, well, have we done everything? Alright, let's pray.

Father, I come before You and I pray that, God, I need to be helped probably more than anyone. And I know so little, Lord, about raising my own children. If I've got one finger, Lord, pointing at them, I've got three pointing back at me.

I need Your help. I need Your help, Lord, to be a godly husband. And I need Your help to be a godly father.

And I don't know what to do most of the time. I pray that You would raise up men in this church, Father. Older men.

Or maybe even men my age, Lord, that have already shown themselves to be godly fathers and husbands. And I pray that You'd maybe raise them up to help teach us. Lord, with finances, I pray that You would raise up men to instruct us.

That we would do everything in Your will. In Jesus' name, amen. God bless you.

You can all go home.

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