

Changing the Heart of A Rebel (Video)

by S.M. Davis

Transcript

All right, if you'll turn your Bible with me to the book of Proverbs chapter 23. Proverbs chapter 23 and I'm going to share with you something this morning that I think will be a really special help in every family and every life in relationship to parents and their children. Now for some of you this will be sort of like a dose of herbs and vitamins just to keep you healthy or make your family relationship a little healthier than it would have been.

For somebody else here this morning, this could literally be the paddles that the doctor uses in the emergency room in order to bring the person back to life. This message could literally bring a relationship back to life if you'll hear it and not just hear it but you'll heed it and apply it to your life. Let me start out by saying that raising kids is a challenge.

Raising good kids is a big challenge and raising godly kids is an incredible challenge. There are several important ingredients in raising good kids. One of the things, one of those ingredients is to teach children to obey.

The clearest command given to children in relation to parents is found in Ephesians chapter 6 where it says, children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Obedience, to be obedient, must have two characteristics. It must be immediate and it must be sweet.

If a child chooses how they're going to obey or when they're going to obey, then they have not obeyed. If a child does not obey immediately, they've not obeyed. If they do not obey sweetly, then they have not obeyed.

Obedience is not an option in raising good kids. It is vitally important but I don't think it is the most essential ingredient in raising good kids. There's something else that is vitally important and that is to teach a child respect and honor.

A child not taught to respect his parents will also not respect God. A boy who doesn't respect his dad and mom will not respect other girls, older people, other adults, or his wife. A child taught to respect others or excuse me a child not taught to respect others will grow up expecting the world to revolve around him instead of being a servant.

Teaching respect and honor is a very important ingredient but I don't believe it is the key ingredient in raising good kids. There's another vital ingredient and that is teaching. Deuteronomy chapter 6 talks about how we're to teach when we lie down, when we rise up, when we stand, when we walk by the way.

It is saying essentially that the parent is the teacher all the time. It doesn't matter where you have your kids. Public school, Christian school, whatever.

You need to understand this. You are your children's primary teacher. There's another key ingredient if you're going to raise good kids and that is to protect them from evil.

Evil in general and evil influences in particular. It is a false philosophy that says that you produce better kids by exposing them to the filth and garbage of this world. Bible says I would have you to be wise concerning that which is good and simple or ignorant concerning that which is evil.

Now I've given a whole bunch of ingredients that are very important in relation to raising good kids but I have not given what I believe is the key ingredient of all. In fact, you may have all that I just said straight and still not make it without what I believe is the key ingredient. Look at Proverbs chapter 23 verse 26.

My son give me thine heart and let thine eyes observe my ways. Then he tells why. Because he says if you give me your heart I will be able to steer you around two of the greatest dangers that can ever happen to a young man.

Those are the dangers of the wrong kind of wine and the wrong kind of women. Now turn to Malachi chapter 4 if you will please. The last two verses in the Old Testament, verse 5 and 6, before a 400 year period of silence, gives a prophecy of the coming of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Savior Lord Jesus Christ.

Very important verses. Malachi chapter 4 verse 5. Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he, what is he going to do? He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers.

Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Now that last phrase there is actually being fulfilled in our day as well. You need to recognize that we have a curse in our day, in our society in general, in relation to children.

When you see children, when you read in the newspapers about what's happening in the schools, they're having to put metal detectors in the schools. They've got guards sitting, standing in the hallways. They're trying to protect the teachers.

You read about the gang problem, the drug problem. We have a curse. Why do we have a curse? We have a curse because we don't have the hearts of fathers with the children.

Therefore we don't have the hearts of children with the fathers. Now if you'll turn to Luke chapter 1, you'll see the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy as the angel is speaking to Zacharias concerning the birth of John the Baptist. Luke chapter 1, verse 16, And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

And he, that is John the Baptist, shall go before him, that is Jesus, in the spirit and power of Elias or Elijah. He's saying there's going to be a mighty, a mighty anointing of the Spirit of God upon John the Baptist in a way that was similar to the anointing that was upon Elijah in the Old Testament. Now what is going to be the ministry of John the Baptist? John the Baptist was going to take the mountains and pull them down into the valleys, and he was going to make smooth and straight.

He's going to straighten out these crooked paths and make straight a path for the coming of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what were these mountains? What were these valleys? It was problems in the home. The hearts of the fathers was stuck on themselves.

The hearts of kids was stuck on themselves. Everybody was living for themselves, and because of that, the people were not ready for God to do work in their life. So he says, He'll come in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.

And what happens next? Notice the order here, it's very important. The disobedient, that's the children, to the wisdom of the just. Very important truth there.

Children will not give their heart fully trustingly to their parents until their parents are first seen as being just. The number one characteristic of wisdom is justice. When parents are seen by children as being just, then the children feel free to trust their heart to their parents.

So, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. Why? To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Young people are not prepared for God to work in their life until their heart is turned from themselves to their parents.

In fact, I've seen this over and over. Turn back while I'm talking here to 2 Samuel, chapter 13, if you will, please. I've seen this over and over in places where I've preached, and I've preached to hundreds and thousands of teenagers in the last few years.

And invariably, one of the key things I try to do is to get teenagers, especially in our fundamental churches, I try to get them right with their parents. You know what I've seen over and over? When a teenager gets right with his parent, or parents, he gets right with God at the same time. Just like that.

His biggest problem in surrendering to the Lord is surrendering his heart and will and mind and emotions to his parents. And if he can do that, then he can get right with God at the very same moment. Now, what we had previous to this now was the truth stated.

Now, I want you to turn back to 2 Samuel, chapter 13 and 14 and 15, and we'll see the truth illustrated. The story of Absalom and his rebellion against his father David is found in chapter 15, but actually the story of Absalom begins back in chapter 13. Notice in verse 1, if you know your Bibles, maybe you're thinking, well, that's the story of Amnon and Tamar and how Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar.

Well, that's true, but it's more than the story of Amnon. It is primarily the story of Absalom. It starts out by saying, it came to pass after this that Absalom, the son of David, had a fair sister.

Chapter 15 starts out the same way. Joab, the son of Zariah, perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom. Chapter 15 starts out Absalom, and it goes right through from chapter 13 to chapter 19.

The primary character involved in relation to his father David is this man Absalom. Now, what happened in chapter 13? Amnon, through the wicked, deceitful, subtle counsel of his friend Jonadab, and I believe it was his cousin, told or figured out how to rape his own half-sister Tamar, and he did. David did nothing about it.

Now, Tamar was Absalom's full sister, and Absalom for two years did nothing, and then he plotted and planned, and at the end of chapter 13, Absalom had Amnon executed. Two years have passed. He

executes his brother.

He flees to the country of Geshur, and he remains there for three years. Verse 38, and the Bible tells us in the last verse of this chapter that the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom. So David, with the heart of a father, is hungering to see his son.

And so at the first of chapter 14, you find Joab setting up to get Absalom to come back to Jerusalem, and he does. And Absalom spends two full years in Jerusalem, and never sees the face of his father, David the king. He finally, after two years, knowing that Joab was the key individual involved in setting this up, sends for Joab because he wants to talk to him about seeing his father.

Joab doesn't come. He sends for him again. Joab doesn't come.

And Absalom sends a servant to set Joab's barley fields on fire. Now, those fields burning is a picture of Absalom's heart burning over the relationship that has been severed between he and his daddy. Now, the barley fields are on fire, and Joab comes running in and says, what have you set my barley fields on fire for? And Absalom says to him, why did you bother to bring me back here if I couldn't see the face of the king? Take me to see the king.

If he finds any iniquity or any wickedness in me, then let him do whatever he wants to, but don't keep me separated from my father anymore. Verse 33 of chapter 14, So Joab came to the king and told him, and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom. That's it.

No conversation, no hugs, no how's it going, he just kissed Absalom. That was it. And the silence between the end of chapter 14 and the beginning of chapter 15, or chapter 14, the silence from the end of chapter 14 to the beginning of chapter 15 is a deafening silence.

And when you come to chapter 15, you read, and it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses and 50 men to run before him. And Absalom rose up early and stood beside the way of the gate. And it was so that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, that Absalom called unto him and said, of what city art thou? And he said, thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

And Absalom said unto him, see thy matters are good and right, but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. You notice what he's doing? He's undermining his father. Absalom said moreover, O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suitor calls mine coming to me, and I would do him justice.

And it was so that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand and took him and kissed him. And next three words, read them with me, would you please? On this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment. So now read the rest of the verse with me, out loud please everybody.

So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel away from David, his father, by paying attention to them, communicating with them, teaching or sharing with them how special they were to him. Now the rebellion is set up.

He comes in before his father the king. He says, I made a vow. I need to go to Hebron to pay my vow.

And he sends for Ahithophel, David's counselor. And in verse 12, the conspiracy was strong and the people increased with Absalom. Verse 13, there came a messenger to David saying, the hearts of the men of Israel were after Absalom.

And David sent unto all his servants that were with him in Jerusalem, at Jerusalem, arise and let us free, for we shall not else escape from Absalom. Make speed to depart, lest you overtake us suddenly and bring evil upon us and smite the city with the edge of the sword. Let's pray.

Father, thank you for this opportunity to look into your word. I pray, Lord, the truths that we want to share this morning might come alive in all of our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen. Now, listen very carefully. As I share with you one of the most important statements that I have ever made, that any preacher has ever made from the word of God concerning the relationship of parents and children.

Get this, listen very carefully. The key ingredient in raising good kids is to get their heart early. Keep their hearts.

Don't lose their heart. And if you do lose it, find out where and when you lost it, and go get it back quickly, no matter what it takes to do it. About a year and a half ago now, I was sitting in my office.

The telephone rang. Secretary answered it. She buzzed him off and said, Pastor, it's so-and-so for you.

And it was a preacher in a far-off state from here. Pastors, a good church running several hundred people. They have good strong standards.

They have an outstanding Christian school. I've been to the church. I've preached there.

As soon as I picked up the phone, said hello, and he answered, I noticed the tone of worry and distress and upset in his voice. Brother Davis, I've got a problem. I think you may be the only one who can help me.

I know you've been through some things, and God has taught you some things. I honestly don't know what to do with this situation. Let me tell you about it.

I said, well, go ahead, preacher, tell me about it. Brother Davis, let me say this before I tell you. I'm not sure there is a solution to this problem.

There's family in my church. It's concerning particular family, and I really wouldn't be surprised if they didn't wind up maybe leaving our church. I'm going to do everything in my power to help them, but I don't know what's going to happen at this point.

I said, well, preacher, go ahead and tell me about it. He said, well, the father and mother had been faithful in our church, good dedicated Christians, been faithful in our church for years. They have a 15-year-old son.

He's been in the church. He's been in the Christian school. He's gotten in some big trouble in our Christian school.

He's caused a lot of problems. We have to expel him. There's no choice in the matter.

In fact, I won't even tell you what he's done because it's immaterial. You cannot tell me that I need to let him stay in the school because there is no way we can let him stay in the Christian school. He must be expelled.

That is not an option. But his parents are coming in this afternoon. They're going to seek my counsel.

They're wanting to know what they can do to help their son. I'd love to be able to tell them something. Well, preacher, what's this young man into? Brother Davis, you're not going to believe what this young man is into.

I have never dealt with a young man who is into what this young man is into. I was shocked when I found it out. His parents are at their wits end.

What is it, preacher? Brother Davis, this 15-year-old boy is into death. What? He's into death. Death and suicide and gore and horror.

He's been checking out these X-rated slasher movies where right on the screen, literally alive, they chop people's heads off. They disembowel people. They hack people into pieces.

The most gory, filthy slasher horror movies you've ever heard of. He's hooked on those things. He sits around and writes words, whereas other kids may be writing their girlfriend's name or their boyfriend's name.

He sits around and writes the word death. He draws pictures of skulls and crossbones. He draws caskets and cemeteries and tombstones and pictures of corpses.

He writes all these words about death and horror. He's deep into hard rock music. Of course, that almost always goes with rebellion.

I'm not sure I've ever seen a teenager who was rebellious, who was not also hooked on rock music. He is not just rebellious toward his parents. He is defiant toward them.

They try to talk to him. He looks at him and says, I hate your guts. I wish you'd just leave me alone.

I don't want anything to do with you. I wish you weren't my parents. I'm ashamed of you.

He turns and walks away. Anyone he talks to about his parents, he talks down about his parents. He tells people how ashamed he is of his family.

They've had him in church for years. He claims to be Christian. His father, a very successful businessman.

He works a lot of hours. The mother is exasperated. She's wringing her hands, not knowing what to do with her son and feeling like that she's just lost him and that there's no hope for him.

Brother Davis, they're coming in a little while. I know they're going to want some counsel. I'm not sure they'll even do what I tell them to do, but I'd at least like to have some answer that I could give them some hope for their son.

Do you have any advice for me, preacher? And let me pause right there and ask you this question. Is there any hope for that boy? What would you tell them? You say, well, you tell them to pray. I got news for you.

They've already been praying. Well, you tell them they got to talk to their boy. They've already been talking to their boy.

In a little while, I'll tell you what I told them and what happened after that. But right now, let me lay some foundational principles in relation to this subject of changing the heart of a rebel by saying first to you, the heart of every problem is a problem in the heart. The heart of every problem is a problem in the heart.

Hebrews chapter 3 verse 10 says they do always err in their heart. Now, you know we say that all the time. We preach that, and we talk about that.

We say the problem is a problem in the heart, but you got to let this one sink in that the problem is a problem in the heart. The problem David had was that he had lost Absalom's heart and Absalom's life wandered because his heart wandered. Those parents that I just mentioned to you, what is their problem? They have lost their son's heart.

Now, it's easy for them to get caught up with his being hooked on these wild crazy things, death and rock music. It's easy for them to get hooked on his rebellious attitude and his defiance and not realize what is really going on. What's really going on underneath everything is they have lost their son's heart.

What do they have to do? The most important thing they can do is find out where and when they lost his heart and do whatever they have to do to get it back. I remember another occasion in the last few months where my telephone rang, and I counseled with a family who they'd called me long distance, and the mother was just terribly distraught. And as I talked to that family, I was amazed at what I heard.

Now, listen to me. Don't go to sleep on me. Listen carefully.

If I have ever in my life heard of a perfect Christian home, I was listening to it as that lady described to me her family. I couldn't find anything that they had done wrong. I mean, these folks, they had the boy in church.

They taught the boy at home. They had their home cleansed of all evil influence. I mean, they were careful about the magazines.

They didn't even have a TV. What do you think about TV? They didn't even take chance on TV. They were careful with the radio.

They had no rock music in their home. They did homeschool in order to teach their boy, and in order to keep him going the right direction. You go right down the line.

They were careful about their son's friends. They had done everything right. And this mother was so distressed because in the last few days, her son had become rebellious, and they had never dealt with him being rebellious.

It had never happened. Fifteen years, they had never dealt with him being rebellious before. And she's saying, Brother Davis, what do I do? Now, I said, the heart of every problem is a problem in the heart.

What was happening with that family, even that family? Something had happened that I'll tell you about in a little while that it was causing them to lose their child's heart. Earlier this year, my telephone rang again. A very distraught mother on the other end of the line calling from the state of Indiana.

Her 12-year-old daughter at that very moment had locked herself in another room and was trying to commit suicide at that very moment. Brother Davis, what do I do? I said, get off the phone with me and go save her life. I said, I'll tell you what to do later, but right now, just go save her life.

That's all. Now, why is this such a big deal about the heart? Because the heart controls everything else. The word heart occurs nearly 900 times in the Bible, and hardly ever does it refer to the organ that pumps blood.

But you can understand it better if you compare it to your heart. There is no more vital organ in your entire body than the heart. If you had to choose between an injured foot and an injured heart, which one would you choose? Now, hopefully you don't have to choose, but if you had to choose, in a second you'd say, I can live without my foot, but I can't live without my heart, right? If you had to choose between an injured hand and injured foot, or excuse me, injured hand and injured heart, which would you choose? You see, folks, you can live without your foot, you can live without your leg, you can live without your hand, you can live without your arm, you live without your ears, you can live without your eyes, you can't live without your heart.

Your heart is keeping everything else living. There's one thing I'm sure of this morning for everybody here, and everybody's listening to me, and that is your heart's pumping. Because if your heart were not pumping, you wouldn't be alive.

If a parent, get this thought, if a parent has access to their child's heart, they have access to everything else in their child's life. Dr. Bob Jones Sr. once said, give God your heart, he'll comb the kinks out of your head. If you have access to your child's heart, then you have access to your child's friends, your child's music, the places your child goes, the things your child does, the activities in which your child is involved.

Because if you have the child's heart, you have access to everything else in the child's life. Now listen to this, it is better in the long run to have a child who disobeys you, but you have their heart, than to have a child who is continually, compliantly obedient, but you don't have their heart. You say, why do you give that as an illustration? Because I have seen that.

I have seen kids who were just doing what their parents said, and they were like a volcano that was just waiting to erupt. There is a far bigger potential for a child to become a rebel regardless of how obedient they are, if you don't have their heart. If you have their heart, you have their respect.

If you have their heart, you can teach them. If you have their heart, you can protect them. Whoever has the heart, eventually has the child.

Now that is the reason the world all around us is working to tie the hearts of children with a whole bunch of things. Now everything I'm going to list to you, for you here in just a moment, is not bad. Some of it's good, some of it's bad.

I'm mixing it all together on purpose, but you notice that the world is continually trying to tie the hearts of children with babysitters instead of mom and dad. The world is continually trying to tie the hearts of children with TV, tie the hearts of children with school teachers, try to tie the hearts of children with cartoon figures. I've seen mothers who didn't know it, but Ninja Turtle had their kid's heart more than mama did.

The world's continually trying to tie the hearts of children with basketball stars, and football stars, and rock stars, and especially, well, the biggest problem areas in our day, the world is continually trying to tie the

hearts of kids with boyfriends and girlfriends. One of Satan's biggest ways of getting kids' hearts from their parents prematurely is with the boyfriend-girlfriend concepts of our day. You remember the boy that I just told you about, the 15-year-old boy that everything was right, his home was perfect, there was nothing his parents were doing that was wrong.

Do you know how they lost their son's heart? Because in their church youth group, there was a cute little teenage girl whose mama wanted that boy for her girl, and the parents trusting the church dropped the boy off at a youth activity, and that mama set it up for that boy and that girl to be paired off together by themselves at that youth meeting, and when the boy came home, his parents didn't know what had happened until they did some intensive research. I told them, I said, something has happened you don't know about. You've got to find out what is happening.

When they did a little research, they found out that this little girl had stolen in a moment that boy's heart away from mom and dad. Now, you say, Brother Davis, you know, I'm dealing with something that's just almost a sacred cow in our day. From the time boys and girls are little things here in America, we teach them, and on a rather dangerous thing, I think we don't realize what we're doing when we do it.

For instance, here comes this little five or six-year-old walking in the church, and we say to him, who's your little girlfriend? Oh, Johnny, is Suzy your little girlfriend? Oh, look, let's have them stand together. Yeah, give him, give her a little hug. Let's get a picture of them now.

Oh, isn't that cute? Look, Johnny and Suzy, little boyfriend and girlfriend, and we don't realize what's just happened. We just programmed little Johnny in little Suzy's mind. That click, you're supposed to have a boyfriend or a girlfriend all your life.

Something's wrong with you if you don't have a boyfriend or a girlfriend. And so, Johnny will spend his life watching for girlfriends, and from the time he's six years old, and then 12 years old, and 14 years old, and 16 years old, he's going to have this girl for a girlfriend, and this girl for a girlfriend, and this one for, and this girl over here is going to have boyfriend here, and a better idea. Plan and teach your children to give their hearts to one person in their life.

Now, let me ask you this. Physically, should our children only give themselves to one person in life? Is that the way God planned it? Is that true? Nod at me, say amen, something. Is that true? Yes, it's true.

Physically, that's the way God planned it. Now, wait a minute. Wouldn't it be better if they also only gave their emotions to only one other person? Where did we get the concept that we can give our emotions here, and emotions here, and emotions here, and we can covet this person, covet this person, covet this person, and then we get married, and well, it's all right now.

We just put all that behind us, and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Teach our young people, look, you don't have to swallow the world's line about boyfriend and girlfriend, and all of this foolishness, and all these problems that we're having in relation to our churches, and our homes, because of the whole boyfriend-girlfriend concept, and the dating game, and doing it like the world doesn't, and the rejection, and the impurity that results from all of this, and the bad feelings, and the division that comes from all of this, and we just say, look, seek God first. Seek the kingdom of God, His righteousness.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Be friends with everybody until the day comes when you're old enough to be married, and your parents see that you are responsible enough to take a wife, and

the girl doesn't have to look at all. The fellow is the one who does the looking to start with.

The girl is simply aware of what is going on around her, and then the son, the father having the son's heart, and the son having the father's heart, together they find the young man's mate for his life, and work through her parents, and then we don't have after marriage, all of these fantasies going through our minds about those former boyfriends, and those former girlfriends, and and the dreams about them, and all of this stuff. One of the biggest things is the boyfriend-girlfriend, and so we have the generation gap. Some people think that that simply means dad does things one way, and the kids do things another way.

That's not it. What the generation gap is, is this. The relationship between dads and their kids has been severed.

God says there shouldn't be a gap. The hearts of children should be tied with their parents, and the hearts of parents tied with their children. So the first thought is that the heart of every problem is a problem in the heart.

The second thing is this, and this is wonderful. I like this thought. Children want parents to have their hearts.

Did you know that's something that just sort of came with the package of being a human being? That's not something that you need to save people. From the time a baby is born, and dad and mom hold that little rascal in their arms, unless there's something bad wrong with them deep down, they love looking into the face of that little one, and say, this is my, and did you ever see this around church? You have a little two or three year old, and you'll walk up and say, come to me, come to me, and the little one will turn and grab daddy around the leg, or hug daddy around the neck, and say, and daddy says, oh it's all right, you can go to him, but inside daddy's sort of swelling with the right kind of pride. It's my kid, loves me.

Children want parents to have their heart. Parents want children to have their, parents want to have their children's heart. We're born with this.

David, hungering the heart, the soul of David, long to see Absalom, hungering to see Absalom, Absalom at the end of chapter 14, hungering to see his father. You know, Satan has put forth a lie to this generation that has been preached from the pulpits of some of the largest churches in America. I have heard it on national radio, preached by some of the most, some of the biggest experts in child rearing that you've ever known.

It is a lie being propagated that is destroying families and homes, and we don't realize it is. You know what the lie is? It says, some adolescent rebellion is to be expected out of every teenager. Now, why is that so dangerous? Because just a little bit of rebellion should be assigned to a parent that their child's heart has wandered and is hungry for love and attention and acceptance.

Now, if you expect your child, well, every child rebels a little bit, you just sort of expect it. If you expect it to happen, and when the rebellion takes place, you don't take action to do something about it to get the child's heart back, then the heart wanders further, and by the time you realize what's going on, it's almost too late for you to do anything about it. You know, most parents don't know when they've lost their children's hearts.

Let me ask you, do you have your child's heart? Are you thinking? Do you right now? How many of you have children? Let's see your hands. Okay, most people in this room. Think with me.

Do you have your child's heart? Now, don't fool yourself because it's not gonna hurt anybody but you and them. Whoever has the heart eventually has the child. Would your child rather spend time with you than almost anyone else? Does your child listen respectfully when you speak to them? Does your child want to know what you think about decisions? Does your child have a genuine desire to please you as a parent? Does it hurt your child if they realize they have done something to displease you? Are they loyal to you? Do they follow you? Do you teach them and they look at you and gladly listen? Do you know what is going on inside your child? Proverbs chapter 21 verse 2 says, The Lord ponders the hearts.

Third, the Bible gives an ideal example for the hearts of fathers and children being knit together. Preacher, do you ever think what is the Bible example of the ideal parent-child relationship? Was it Adam and Eve and their kids? No, I don't think so. How about Abraham and Isaac? No, still don't think so.

How about Jacob and Joseph? No, I don't think so. How about Moses and... No. How about Joshua? No.

How about Samuel? No, no, no. How about David? No, no, definitely not. Where is it? Do you know where the ideal picture is? And it is so crystal clear, it is incredible.

It is that of the heavenly Father and the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. John chapter 5 verse 19, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself but what he sees the fathers do. John chapter 5 verse 30, he says, I do nothing that I want to, but whatever is the will of my Father.

John chapter 8 verse 28, I do nothing of myself but as my Father hath taught me. John chapter 10 verse 30, we use this to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and that's right. But hear this in relation to the picture of a father and son.

I and my Father are one. The heavenly Father's relationship with the Son is the perfect pattern so that the hearts are perfectly knit together. The second picture that we're given in the Bible is the heavenly Father's relationship with us as his sons.

What is he always checking about us? What is he always after? 1 Samuel chapter 16 verse 7, Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. Parents need to be like God, always checking their children's hearts. Proverbs 21, 2, Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord ponders the hearts.

Romans chapter 10, With the heart man believes unto righteousness. It's the heart and the picture of the heavenly Father looking at us and looking at our hearts is what a parent needs to do always in relation to their children, not just what's going on on the outside. How do they look? Are they following my standards? Are they dressing like I tell them to? Are they cutting their hair like I want them to? Is she wearing the outfits that I want her to wear? Is she putting makeup on like I... Not that, not that.

All that's well and good, but the number one thing you got to be looking at is their heart. You got to be asking them questions. You got to be communicating with them.

You've got to get them to open up and share with you what's going on inside their hearts. Number four, there are three big dangers for the heart, and it happens in this order. Danger number one is that the heart can be lost.

Danger number two is that the heart can be hardened. Danger number three is that the heart can be stolen. It can be lost, then hardened, then stolen.

Now, here's the way it happens. First of all, the parent loses their child's hearts. Maybe they violate Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4, which is the most serious command in the Bible to parents.

It says, Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. Why do I say it's the most serious command in the Bible to parents? Because you can do everything else right. You can follow everything else in the Bible in relation to raising kids.

You violate Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4, you'll lose your kids. How do I know that? Because it is a negative command, and negative commands are the most serious commands carrying the greatest consequences in the Bible if you break them. In the book of Genesis, God gave Adam and Eve a positive command.

You can eat of all the fruit of all the trees of the garden. Well, they'd have had trouble carrying out all those positive commands. He gave them one negative command.

Don't eat of the fruit of that tree. They broke the negative command, plunged the whole human race into sin. Whenever you see a negative command in the Bible, it is a serious command.

The only negative command that I know of that is given to parents in relation to kids is provoke not your children to wrath. You provoke your children to wrath by raising a standard so high that they can't meet it, by raising expectations too high, by never praising them, by never giving them honor, by never letting them know that they're appreciated, by never letting them get your heart and your care and your appreciation. You do that.

You provoke your children to wrath, you'll lose your kids. You make them angry. You provoke them.

Maybe you lose your child's heart by not spending enough time with them. Maybe you lose your child's heart by not communicating enough with them. Maybe you don't talk to them when they need to talk.

Maybe you're watching too much TV. Maybe you're reading the newspaper too much. Maybe you're spending too much time on things outside the home.

At any rate, you lose your child's heart. The second thing that happens is the child to accommodate the hurt of not having their parent's heart, and the parent not having their heart, the child hardens their heart. And after the heart is hardened, somebody else can come along and steal the heart.

Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. David had lost the hearts of the men of Israel. And so when David wasn't dealing with their problems, they hardened their heart to him and gave their hearts to Absalom, and that's how the whole rebellion took place.

And the rebellion would have never taken place if David had done in relation to Absalom what Absalom did to the men of Israel. If David had communicated with his son, had talked to his son, had shared what was going on with his son, had not lost his son's heart, had not provoked his son to wrath, if David had spent time caring for his son and communicating with him and touching him and loving him, if David had gotten his son's heart, then his son would have never stolen the hearts of the men of Israel. Sometimes friends steal hearts from parents.

Sometimes family members even steal hearts from parents. Number five, only the heart can keep the heart. When the heart keeps the heart, then the heart stays straight.

The hand will not keep the heart. Now, I believe in spanking, but I want to tell you something. You won't solve a problem with a 15-year-old rebel by spanking them.

If the child is rebellious, watch me. You got a son who is rebellious, and you bring him in and you say, all right, you lean over. I'm not putting up with this anymore.

I'm going to give you a spanking. And you might get him to lean over, and you might give him a spanking. And what's he going to do while you're giving him the spanking? He's going to say, all right, just go ahead and do it and see what I think about it.

And say, I can put up with it. And you leave marks all over him. But if you don't get his heart back, your spanking won't accomplish one stinking thing.

The hand, and I'm not against spanking. I believe in spanking. I don't believe in spanking in anger, and I don't believe in child abuse, but I believe in spanking.

But only the heart can keep the heart. The first thing you do then at any sign of rebellion is not to do what is the normal expected thing to do. The first thing most people do is they throw up their hand, they get exasperated, and they shove away from the child.

Am I right? They say, I can't figure him out. I don't know what to do with him. Just let him go.

No. Draw closer to the child. Even a rebel hungers for the praise and acceptance of their father.

One of the most powerful, motivating forces in this world is praise. Think about the Heavenly Father's relationship with the Son again. You have about three times in the New Testament, if I remember right, that the Heavenly Father spoke directly to the Son.

What did He say? In the presence of others, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him. If my daughter was, if my third-born daughter was here today, I would stop right here and I would tell you how she went to Romania in March with us.

And while she was over there, she taught the missionary's wife how to bake homemade bread. Because they can't always get bread. They'd go to the market, couldn't always get it.

But now the family always has bread, because my daughter had the character to learn to make bread. And you know, there's something about cooking good bread. When a fellow walks in, he's hungry, and he smells that going through the house.

Amen, fellows? And he gets to thinking about slapping a big old pat of butter on there and pouring some honey all over it. Or if you're from where I am, maybe a little molasses or sorghum. And I hear some of you fellows about to shout, Amen.

And I'd tell you about how my daughter has decided she's going to serve the Lord no matter what. My son-in-law's sitting here today. Let me tell you about him.

Let me tell you seriously what a hard worker he is. How that average week, he'll put in 50 hours a week. How that our daughter that he married is expecting a baby just any day now.

And how he's caring for her and how she's having problems. And he's meeting her needs and making sure that she's taken care of. Now, why am I saying those things? Because he deserves that praise, why? That's why.

And because all of my kids deserve praise. And I want to tell you something. All your kids deserve some praise, too.

And there is no more powerful motivating force on the face of this earth than praise. You want to see something that's incredible? You turn through the Gospels. Get you a red letter edition of the Bible.

And that doesn't mean any words are more inspired by God than any other words. But it'll help you see exactly where Jesus was speaking. And you go through the New Testament and you see all the times that Jesus praised his disciples in the presence of each other.

Can you imagine? We read Matthew chapter 16 where Jesus said to Peter, upon this rock I'll build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. And we get the doctrine of the church and all of this. But you read that and you think about how Simon Peter felt when he was standing there that day.

And Jesus said, whom do men say that I am? Some say you're Elijah, John the Baptist, one of the other prophets. Who do you say that I am? And Peter spoke up. And there are a few times Peter stuck his foot in his mouth.

And when he did, Jesus rebuked him, rebuked him firmly, rebuked him quickly, rebuked him thoroughly, and was done with it and went on. It's an example of how you and I are supposed to do as parents. You don't drag it out forever and hold it over the child's head.

You did this yesterday. A week ago you did this. I mean six weeks ago.

You were doing the same stinking thing. What's the matter with you? They do something wrong, you forgive them and you go on. And you see Simon Peter saying, you're the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus looked at him and said, flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you, Peter. But my thought, can you imagine how you would have felt if you'd have been standing there that day and Jesus, the son of God, the greatest, wisest man who ever lived, is patting you on the back saying, that's great, I'm so glad. I want to tell you, when your child cuts up in church, you straighten them out.

But there's something more important than you straighten out your child when they cut up in church, and that is praise them for behaving. Praise them for sitting with you. Praise them for paying attention.

Praise them for taking notes. Praise them for being respectful toward the adults around them. Praise them for greeting visitors.

Praise them for their attention to the people and their needs around them. Praise them for their relationship with their pastor. There's so many things to praise a child for, if you will.

What does praise do? Praise creates an atmosphere of love and acceptance. When you walk into church here, what's one of the first things you do in almost every service? You sing. Mom and Dad, what were we singing a minute ago? Victory in Jesus.

And why do we sing? Because the Bible says, enter into his presence with thanksgiving, into his courts with praise. Why do we do that? Because praise creates an atmosphere of love and joy and acceptance. And often the pastor, a wise pastor like you have here, will stand up and praise his people.

Boy, I appreciate y'all being here today. Thank God for your faithfulness in going soul winning. Thank God for our teachers and what they did.

Boy, I appreciated that good special. Why do we praise the Lord? Why do we properly praise one another? Because praise creates an atmosphere of love and joy and acceptance. You get an atmosphere of gossiping and backbiting and nagging and criticism in a church.

What have you got? You've got something nobody wants to come to. Amen? Who wants to come to church when everybody's fighting? And who wants to come to your house when everybody's fighting? You say, well, it's the kids that do that. Yes, but Mom and Dad add to it by their criticism, by their negativism, by their never praising their kids and never saying, hey, this is good.

I want to tell you, I don't care who the child is. They deserve some praise. In fact, you'll never turn a rebel around unless you start praising them.

It is one of the most essential. You say, but if every day is how are you going to praise them? There's something to praise everybody for. If you look hard enough, somebody's doing something right.

You look hard enough, your kids are doing something. We start doing something in our church. Here a few weeks ago, it's one of the most powerful things I've ever seen in my life.

I had no idea how powerful it'd be. We passed out a sheet of paper that listed all the character traits. Diligence, respectfulness, resourcefulness, creativity, honesty.

Right down the line, 49, 50 character traits. We set those at the back of the auditorium and we said to parents, when your child has a birthday, we want you. When we have them, we have a list of all the birthdays.

We have the people stand up in the service on Sunday night. We sing happy birthday to them. And we say, we want you as parents to look at this sheet and tell us what character traits your child has developed in their life.

And last Sunday night, a young man stood up and I said, all right, mama, tell us. She pulled out a sheet of paper. She said, I looked through to find those character traits that he has best demonstrated in his life.

And she started listing those character traits in the presence of over 200 people present that night at church. And you see the young man being built. You could see his heart go gravitating toward his mom.

You could see that there was something special and powerful going on. Well, the greatest things you can do is praise your child. Not only praise them when they're by their self, but praise them in the presence of others.

Listen to your kids. I'm talking about how only the heart keeps the heart. You've got to listen to them.

You've got to listen until you understand them. Proverbs 24, verse 3 says, by wisdom is a house built, and by understanding it is established. You say, well, I don't understand my kids.

Then stop. Look them in the eye. Throw the newspaper aside.

Turn the TV off. Turn the radio down. Tune everybody else out.

Look them right in the eye. They're worth it. Amen.

Amen. And say to them, I want to understand what you're saying to me. Say it again.

Now, if you listen to your kids enough, you'll find out what's going on inside of them. You'll find out where they're hurting, and it's important to know where they're hurting. You'll find out what's bothering them.

You know what you might find out? You might find out that your teenager is terribly distressed because he or she just got their first two or three zits on their face. They're popping up there. And while the kid said, oh, look, Johnny's got zits.

Oh, look, Susie's got zits. Look, look, they're coming to big old hands. Here, let me squeeze that thing.

And it could be that they're really hurting, you say. And they come to talk to you. Now, how many kids will come and talk to their parents about that? I want to tell you, if you have their heart, they will.

And if you try hard enough to get their heart, they come home from school, and they're just a little bit melancholy. They're just a little bit distressed. And you say, come on, tell me what's... Oh, come on.

Come on, talk to me. What's bothering you? Now, wait a minute. When they say, oh, somebody's making fun of me because I got this acne on my face.

You don't look at them and say, oh, that's no big deal. Forget that, man. You say, you know, I remember how I felt.

I remember when that bothered me, too. You know, it's just something you have to learn to live with. And some people will never learn any better.

But, Paul, I want you to know, I appreciate you sharing that with me. I'm so glad. You know, there's not... There's a lot of kids who wouldn't have shared that with their parents.

They'd have felt like it was too foolish. You know what will happen? When she's got feelings for a boy, and he's the wrong kind of boy, you'll find out about that because you found out about the zits. Maybe you'll find out they're feeling like they're a little too fat.

Maybe you'll find out they feel like they're ugly. Or people are making fun of them because they're too skinny. Or maybe they're having... Maybe your son's having trouble with bullies.

Maybe they're having trouble getting along with other kids. I've had parents say to me, Bud Davis, my kids don't want to talk. That is not true.

Did you hear me? I said that is not true. Your kids did want to talk. But it was about stuff that you didn't think was important.

And so when they tried to talk to you about it, you just said, ah, that's no big deal. And I want to tell you one of the most important things you get out of this message, if you get anything, is this. If it's important to your kids, it's important, period.

Doesn't matter whether you think it's important. One of these days, there's going to be something that is important to you to talk to them about. And if you want them to listen to you when you want to talk to them about something, then you've got to listen to them when they talk to you about something, whatever it is.

What I see as my child's needs and what they see as their needs may be two different things. And I have to meet not only their needs as I perceive them, but I have to meet their needs as they perceive them. That means this.

Now listen to me. In my opinion, this is the most incredible sense in this whole sermon. In the long run, you coming home from work and finding out and listening attentively and with great concern as your little girl tells about how her dolly stubbed her toe that day and she had to bandage it up and she needs daddy to care about it and she needs daddy to kiss it and make it well.

You listening to that is more important for your future happiness when you get old than it would be for you to walk in and look at the president of your company and him tell you he's giving you a \$25,000 a year raise and a promotion to go with it. When you get old, mom and dad, and you start looking back, it's not going to matter a whole lot about how much money you made. And it's not going to matter a whole lot whether you got a big promotion or not, but I'll tell you what's going to matter a lot.

And that is if your kids love you. The older you get, the more you realize the main stuff that life is made up of is not money. The main stuff that life is made up of is relationships and the number one relationships of life are family relationships.

And if your kids love you and care for you and respect you as you get old, you'll realize there is nothing in this wide world that can take the place of that. This Bible does not say a wealthy son makes a glad father. It says a wise son makes a glad father.

A child that you've got their heart and you've given them character and wisdom and love and care and concern. Listen, your little boy, when he walks in and you come home from work and you're tired and you have a tendency to be irritable and he walks up with his little toy truck and he broke the wheel off of it that day. And you foolishly, stupidly say, son, don't bother me with that.

Dad's got more important things. You don't have anything any more important to do. That newspaper is not more important.

The headlines of the newspaper, what's going on in Russia is not as important as your little boy's toy truck. What's going on anywhere in this world at that moment is not as important as your little boy's toy truck. Your little boy comes in and wants to tell you what he and his doggie did that day.

You better sit up and listen to him. You may find out one of these days that you want him to listen to you. And if you listen to him, he'll listen to you.

Now, this one's a little tough on me, but I want to tell you, it's even important that you care about your little girl and her cat. How many of you guys are cat lovers? How many ladies are cat lovers? That's what I thought. How many guys are cat lovers? One fellow has the nerve to lift his hand.

I don't blame him. I'd have trouble too. I wouldn't want to admit it either.

That's all right. That's right. That's right.

He said, what's important to my daughter? That's important. I have a problem with cats. I got a male cat, got out into my storage building the other day and sprayed the building.

You know what that's like. Do you want to know what I wanted to do to that cat? It's tough for me to love cats, especially when you have immoral prolific cats like we have. Only this week, five more at my house.

I don't know how many we've had in the last five years. I think we're up to about 40. They've wandered off.

They've gotten killed. All kinds of things have happened. I think right now we have about a dozen, something like that.

Do you know what it's like trying to buy food for that many cats? I could feed the world, I think, sometime. A while back, I was at church. You hear me? I was at church.

I was in my office. I was doing church work, important stuff. I mean, stuff that was far more important than a dead cat, right? It depends on whose dead cat it was.

And how the cat died. And when my little girl had a cat that accidentally got killed, and she called me weeping to tell me about it. It don't matter whether I like cats or not.

I like my girl. And I knew she'd be hurting bad. And I got in my car and left all my important church work.

And I drove 14 miles, and every man couldn't do this. I recognize that, but I was able to, and I did. I drove 14 miles home, and I walked in, and I put my arms around her, and I said, it's all right.

Y'all didn't mean for it to happen. Daddy'll take care of it. And Daddy went out and buried the kitty.

And Daddy came back in and spent the next two hours just talking and loving and caring. And the next day saying, are you doing all right? You didn't mean to do it. It's all right.

And the next day, are you all right today? And the week after that, are you all right? And a week later, are you doing all right? You say, why? Because you're a cat lover? No, I'm a kid lover. And she loves cats. And that means that if she cares about cats, I'm going to care about what she cares about.

Why do kids give their hearts to their peers? Because their buddies listen to them. Why do kids get involved in gangs? Because they have somebody who'll listen to them, pay attention to them, and at least seem on the surface to care about what's happening to them. That's why.

You know, we have a philosophy in our churches. It's not a wrong philosophy. But I just I want to point out something to you here.

I want you to see something here that you might not see unless I point it out to you. The philosophy in our churches is this. Have a youth director.

And have the youth pastor or the youth director plan special times with the kids and spend time with the kids and keep the kids busy and keep them out of trouble and try to keep them in the right going in the right direction. And that's not all bad. Don't misunderstand.

You know, there's some kids whose parents really don't care about them and don't care what happens to them. And if somebody doesn't get the child's heart, and by having the child's heart, steer the child in the right direction, child probably doesn't have a chance. Child's probably gonna throw the life away.

That's one reason the bus ministry is still important. Because if somebody in this church will take it as their vision and their task and their burden and their opportunity to love and care about one little child, you don't have to, it doesn't have to be a dozen, but at least one whose parents may not care anything about them. Just get them out of the house.

They're in our hair. Get them out of our hair for the morning. We want them out of our hair so that we can do what we want to.

And yeah, we don't care if they go to church. Sure, I'm not going, but we don't care if they go. If somebody will care about that child and get their heart, since the parent doesn't care, and in the right way, show that child some love and give that child some direction, you can keep that child in church.

And you may see that child graduate from high school, even in the public school, and go the right direction, and maybe go to Bible college and maybe serve God and stay in church and raise a good family and have a good home, simply because somebody got their heart. Sometimes that works in relation to youth directors and the young people as well. Now, I'm saying that's not all bad, but I want to tell you this.

That is not the best way. The best way is for parents to have their children's heart, to know what's going on in their children's lives at all times, and to keep their children's hearts and direct them in the right way. I came across a phenomenal statement a while back.

I've thought on it an awful lot. Listen to it. Every year, I'm quoting here, every year children are schooled at home, they become less peer-dependent.

Every year children are schooled at home, they become less peer-dependent. I stopped and thought about that because we've been teaching our children at home for several years. I had two daughters who were married last year.

One of them, her husband is here right now. I talked about them a while ago. Let me tell you about the second one.

Andrew is 17 years of age, not quite 18 when she got married last year. Saying that, rather young. Yeah, that's rather young.

Would you recommend that for everybody? No, I wouldn't recommend that for everybody. I will say this. She was exceptionally mature for her age.

You can see that maturity in the choices she made of the friends that she wanted to be in her wedding. Do you know who she chose to be her mate? She could choose anybody she wanted to. We gave that as her choice.

Do you know who she chose to be her mate of honor? She wanted her mother to be her mate of honor. Do you know why she chose her mother? Because her mother was her best friend. Do you know why her mother was her best friend? Because they'd spent all those hours together at home.

And mom had sacrificed enormous amounts of her time in order to get her schoolwork done. Her bridesmaids included two ladies who were both between 50 and 60 years of age. When did you ever see a wedding like this? With a young lady standing on the platform and her mamas are made of honor and here's a 50 year old lady and here's a 57 year old lady standing right next to her and then here's a couple

of other friends who are closer to her own age.

Now, why did she make choices like that? Let me show you why. We've got this thing all messed up. We've got the concept in our minds but if you children have got to be with their own age group in order to be socialized, you better check that out again.

Do you know what happens if you don't do that? Children will be socialized better. As my daughter spent so much time with her mom and dad, she learned how to relate to adults instead of how to relate just to kids. Now, she could still relate to young people her own age but she related just as well or better to people she really needed to relate to.

She's going to live in an adult world for the rest of her life. She's going to need to know how to communicate with adults. I have seen others and I'm not just giving a flat endorsement of homeschool here.

I'm just making an observation about keeping your children's hearts. That's what I'm doing. Listen to it carefully.

I know everybody can't do homeschooling. I've seen children who would not dream of talking to adults. They just ran when they got shirts.

They just ran with kids their own age and then the parents switched and went to homeschool. And within three months, those same kids were coming up and speaking to me respectfully and openly like they were an adult themselves nearly. And going up to other adults in the church, little girls walking up to adult ladies and talking to adult ladies as freely as they talk to their own friends.

Who do they need worse anyway? Their own friends or people with the wisdom of age? Who would you rather your teenage girl be hanging around? Those her own age, and I'm not necessarily condemning that, or somebody who has been married and has a family and has been in church and has been living for God for the last 30, 40 years? Honestly, who's it best for your teenage girl to be talking to? I was glad my daughter counted those adult godly ladies. Her mama and those other two ladies she chose are, I don't know any more godly ladies alive than those. I honestly don't.

They're in our church. I know them. I don't know of anybody I was so thrilled.

I thought this is incredible. We talk about the benefits of socialization. And again, I'm not totally against the child being with those their own age, but think, think, what good thing does a 12-year-old teach another 12-year-old? Huh? Now, don't misunderstand me, but God knew what he was doing when he gave kids to parents, and he told parents to diligently teach them all the time.

I know everyone can't do homeschool, but if you want to turn out good kids, you'll probably have a greater possibility of doing so by teaching them at home than any other way. And there's probably no better way in this world to really keep track of what is going on in your children's lives than to have them with you all the time. You say, but you smother the kids.

You overprotect them. There is no such thing as overprotecting children as long as you have their hearts. Children don't go wild because they got overprotected.

Children go wild because you didn't have their heart while you were protecting them from the evil of this world. There are many people that you could look out that have trained their children with very strict standards going all the way to very loose standards. And ultimately, the key thing was not how strict they were.

The key thing was whether they kept their kids' hearts. You say, but Brother Davis, now, wait a minute. Wait a minute.

If you're homeschooled, how are you going to be able to teach them everything that they need to learn? I had a pastor friend. Oh, this was, let me see. It was a year ago now.

Visited our church on a Sunday evening. And after church, I noticed he was standing around. His family was standing around.

They were on vacation. Finally, he came up. He said, Brother Davis, would you have a few minutes so I could talk to you? And he said, I'd love for my wife and I to come back and talk to you if you've got a little time to spare.

I said, sure, brother. Come on back. And he came back in my office and he looked at me and he and his wife sat down on the sofa and I sat across from him.

And he said, Brother Davis, I need to talk to you. He said, we're not sure what to do. He said, we've been doing homeschooling for a number of years now.

He said, my wife has been teaching the kids at home, but she's gotten to a place where the older kids, she just can't feel it. She doesn't feel like she can do the higher math, the advanced algebra and the advanced English and some of those other courses like that. She just doesn't know what to do when she gets in that stuff.

And Brother Davis, the nearest Christian school is 50 miles away. And we feel like we would harm our children if we put them in the public school. We don't feel like that we should expose them to the evolution and to the rebelliousness and the peer pressure running the wrong.

We don't feel like we should do that. And our church is small and we just didn't feel like we could start our own Christian school. And now my wife is, we're just not sure what to do.

And we're wondering maybe if we just ought to go ahead and drive them. There is a Christian school 25 miles from us, but we don't feel good about it. Their standard's not good.

They don't teach like we teach. And should we drive to that one? Should we take them 50 miles away, Brother Davis? What should we do? We're just not sure what to do. And I looked at him and I said, you done? You been talking about 10 minutes? He said, well, I think so.

I said, sister, do you have time to say everything you need to say? Yeah, yeah. I said, are you ready for my response? Well, yeah, I think, I said, you're sure you're ready for my response? Yeah. I said, well, here it is.

Hang the education. What? I said, hang the education. Huh? I said, you heard me right.

I said, hang the education. I said, now that I got your attention, let me balance that a little bit better. I'm not against education.

I believe education is a fabulous thing. I think every child ought to get an education. But even we fundamental Baptists have been guilty at times of exalting knowledge to a pinnacle that God himself doesn't give it.

Second Peter chapter 1 verse 5 gives the order of these priorities. It says, besides this giving all diligence, add to your faith. That's number one.

That's your relationship with God. That's your walk with God. That's your trust in God.

That's the number one thing for a child to get. If they don't have that, nothing else is going to matter until they get that. Add to your faith virtue.

What is virtue? That's moral excellence. That's character. That's integrity in the inner person.

That's having a wise child. Add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge after they have the walk with God, right? After they have their character, right? Then they really need to get all the knowledge they can get. God was not guessing when he gave that order.

God knew what he was doing. Why? Because the Bible commentary on knowledge is this. Knowledge puffs up.

Knowledge without wisdom only leads to pride. Knowledge without wisdom is destructive. We see it all around us in our day.

Trust us. We're scientists. We have PhDs and DDDs and other kind of stinking degrees.

We're educated and we know what we're talking about. And you came from a toad frog. Oh, really? Trust us.

We're doctors. We have been to medical school. We have learned all about the human body.

It has a heartbeat, eyes and brain waves, but it's not really a baby. Trust us. We're psychiatrists.

People are educated. We have been to school many years. We have studied under the intellectual elite.

You can trust us. We're psychiatrists. People are born homosexuals.

They have no choice at all about the matter. As I dealt with a set of parents in the last month who had had some problems with their son, and he wound up being diagnosed by a state psychiatrist as having gender identity disorder. And that fool told those parents, your boy has not yet figured out what he is.

One of these days, he will decide what he is inside, if he is really a boy or really a girl. When he finds out what he is, then that's what he is, and that's what he is, and that's what he is. I'm talking about educated idiots.

I'm talking about men who have gotten knowledge to the peak of stupidity. Pardon me while I get personal and talk about the Congress of the United States and others in high elected office who are about to bankrupt America because they do not have enough wisdom with all their education to realize that if you

ain't got it, you can't spend it. I would rather my child say ain't and have enough wisdom to say I ain't going to the tavern tonight than to say isn't or is and say, I have studied and I have no problem with imbibing a bit of alcoholic beverage.

I'd rather my child, I'm not knocking knowledge. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? I'm not condemning knowledge. I'm saying to you, wisdom is the principal thing.

Therefore, get wisdom. You get your, listen to me. You get character and wisdom in your child and your child will get knowledge.

Proverbs says the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge. I'm not knocking knowledge. I graduated from high school, started the college while I was still in high school.

Went to a four-year college and graduated from it in three years. Went every summer, took 21 hours one semester and 20 hours another semester and 19 hours another semester and went to summer school and took three years of Hebrew and two, excuse me, three years of Greek and two years of Hebrew and one year of Aramaic and majored in biblical language and minored in Bible and went on to seminary and I thank God for all I learned. But I want to tell you, I had some fools teaching me a few times.

I had men who thought, I had men who said that Jesus didn't, excuse me, that Moses didn't write the first five books of the Bible, that it was written by four fictional characters by the name of J-E-D-N-P. Would you find that for me in the Bible, please? And I looked at him one day and I said, I'm just a kid going to college. I don't know very much, but I read over in the New Testament where Jesus said, Moses wrote of me.

It doesn't take a whole lot for me to realize. You say, what are you saying? I'm saying, that's what David's talking about in Psalm 119 when he said, I have more understanding than all my teachers. I wasn't smarter than that man, but I had enough wisdom to believe the book.

I'd rather have a child who has an education, yes, and if he gets wisdom, he will get all the education he needs to become what he needs to become, however many degrees he does or does not get. I'm all for algebra. You know, I have to be honest with you, I've hardly ever used algebra.

I'm all for geometry, but I'm being honest with you, I've hardly ever used geometry. I understand how to use English. I can use big words sometimes.

Not as big as my son-in-law, because his dad, he's been hanging around, uses bigger words than anybody I've ever heard, but I've used some big words. I know how to do sentences. I know how to write.

I can write letters that make sense. You know, there's some of the higher rules of English that I never did figure out. Are y'all getting what I'm saying? I'm all for you getting all the education you can get, but with all thy getting, get wisdom and understanding.

That's the big thing. Better to know about God than government. Better to know about Christ than chemistry.

Better to know about authority than algebra. Better to know about freedom than physics. Better to know about responsibility than arithmetic.

Better to know about Bible than business. Mo Davis, his family's in big trouble. They're coming in this afternoon.

I'd love to be able to tell them something. Can you tell me anything that I can tell them that will give them any hope for their son? Preacher, you got a pencil and piece of paper. Write swiftly.

Tell them, I know what will work, but I don't believe they'll do it. Because it's going to be one of the biggest challenges of their life, and it's going to require quite a bit of changes in the way they've been doing things. Tell them they got to start by removing all negative influences from their home, impersonal and personal.

All negative influences. Go through the house. Some people might get by with a TV.

They won't. It's got to go. Most people can get by with a radio.

They can't. The radio's got to go. Go through and cleanse the home of almost all the magazines and catalogs you've got in the home.

They've got to go. Almost any friends that their son has, they are going to have to totally end his contact with all of his friends. Either he's bad for them or they are bad for him.

Everybody doesn't have to do homeschool, but they really have no choice. If they put him in the public school, he's a goner. If they put him in another Christian school, he's a goner too.

They've got to do homeschool. Tell them they better fall on their knees and pray, and pray specifically this way. Pray and bind the demons of death and suicide and rock music.

Here's one of the biggest things of all that they have to do. Get this very clearly. You told me that dad was working 70 to 80 hours a week.

He'll never straighten out his son that way. He's got to get his son's heart back, and that's called love, and love is spelled T-I-M-E. Tell the dad he's got to cut back to 40, and no more than 50 hours a week.

He's going to have to do it for a period of at least six months, and preferably one to two years. In fact, the instruction I'm giving, he's going to have to give up. He's going to have to do this for at least six months.

Tell the dad he's got to come home and spend two hours every night with his son. Every night. Preferably three to four hours, but a minimum of two hours every single evening.

He starts by confessing his failures. He starts by telling his son that he's sorry for having worked so many hours and not spending enough time with the boy. He starts by confessing that he lost the boy's heart, that he's been critical, that he's had a bad atmosphere in the home, that he hasn't shown the attention to the boy that he needs to.

He starts by asking his son to forgive him for failing as a father, and then he and his son need to just do things together. They need to go places together. They need to work and play and read the Bible and study and pray and laugh and repair things and build things and go soul winning and do all kinds of things together.

Forget the job. This has to be done. He's got to praise his son.

By now, the atmosphere of that home is so negative and critical that the boy is just, it's going downhill. They've got to find something. The boy's bound to be doing something right.

Maybe he knows how to tie shoes in an attractive manner, but maybe the boy shines his shoes, but the boy's doing something right. He's got to start praising him for what he's doing. Tell them to better hold on because they're all in for the wildest ride they've ever had.

They're going to think they jumped on the ninja black belt roller coaster without any seat belts and any lap bars. I'm telling you, they're going to be going round and round and up and down, and before their boy gets better, he will indeed get worse. They think he's rebellious now, warn them.

They hadn't seen anything like how rebellious he is going to get. When they cut him off from his friends, they're going to get pressure from outside. The people in the church are not going to understand what they're doing.

Their family are not going to understand what they're doing. Their friends are going to think they flipped out and lost their mind. The pressure is going to be on them from the outside.

People are going to be, what are you doing? Why are you doing this? And then the pressure from the inside with the boy himself becoming more rebellious before he gets less rebellious. Hold on for at least six months and tell them, preacher, one more thing. What's that? Tell them if they're not willing to do what I told them, tell them to go pick out their boy's casket.

From what you've described to me and all the teenagers I've preached to and counseled with over the years, I'd say their son has less than six months to live. With his fantasy about death, it won't be long till he commits suicide. The demons of suicide are already working on him, taunting him every hour of the day.

Say, Brother Davis, what happened? They did it. They did it. The dad cut back on his hours.

They put the boy in homeschool. Every night, a father came home and spent two hours with the boy. They came to church and they didn't let the boy go to his Sunday school class.

They walked into the adult Sunday school class with their boy sitting next to them. When they went out to get a drink of water, dad went with him. When they went to the restroom, dad went with him.

When they came back in, dad sat with them. When they walked out of church, the boy wasn't allowed to speak to his friends. Dad and mom walked out with him.

The preacher said to me, Brother Davis, I have never seen a boy so rebellious. He said, I thought I'd seen the ultimate. Till that Sunday, they walked in with their boy between them, and I looked down at him and him sitting there in the pew.

He said, I have never in my life seen such a look of rebellion on the face of any young man in my entire life. You would not have believed what it was like. What happened? For a few days, it was the wildest ride they'd ever experienced in their life.

You know, the amazing thing to me about this is not how long it takes to work. The amazing thing to me about this is how well it does work. Because within about a week to two weeks, what I've just described to you will turn almost any rebel around.

Now, that won't solve all their problems, because the problems are much deeper rooted than that, and it'll take about six months. And the home can never go back to being like it was before. The home must be corrected.

In fact, I'm talking to somebody today, you're not dealing with nearly the problem I'm dealing with, but as I preach today, you've seen areas where there hasn't been praise, where you've lost your kid's heart, where you've not been communicating, where you're not being caring about what they cared about, and on and on. And you need to go home and correct those things right now, and thank God it hadn't got any worse than it has. The boy turned around.

In fact, I talked to the preacher a few months ago, and he said to me, Brother Davis, the boy is probably the most dedicated young man in our church now. He said, we don't have a finer, more dedicated young person in our church than that young man. He said they were in a team meeting a while back, and the boy stood up and started crying, and said, I want to thank God for my parents who love me enough to do what they did for me a few months ago.

And I want to thank God for our pastor who had enough wisdom to tell him what to do, and I'm so glad they didn't give up on me, and if God will help me, I want to live my life for Jesus Christ now. David did not do it with Absalom, and Absalom's rebellion got worse. And if Absalom had followed the counsel of Ahithophel instead of following the counsel of Uchiah who had been sent by David, David and his army would have been wiped out.

But they waited until David was able to regroup his forces, and the day came for the battle, and David turned to Joab, and Abishai, and Iddiah, and said, we divide the army among the three of you, and you are to be the three commanders, and the battle was joined, and it was in a woody area, and it said in the word of God, 20,000 men shed their blood and gave their lives that day, and Absalom's army was defeated, and Absalom was on a mule riding for his life, and they were chasing after him, and the long hippie hair that he wore got caught in the bowels of an oak tree, and he's hanging by this hair from the oak tree, and one of David's men come running back to Joab and said, Joab, Absalom is hanging by his hair from the bowels of an oak tree down yonder, and Joab said, why didn't you kill him? I would have given you a tremendous reward, and he said, sir, respectfully, Mr. Joab, General Joab, I heard the king say to you and Abishai and Iddiah, please deal gently with a young man for my sake. David still loved his boy with 20,000 men dead with David on the lam running for his life because of it. He still loved his son.

He didn't want his son to die. Deal gently with a young man. Joab said, get out of my way, and Joab mounted his steed with other warriors and went to where Absalom was, and I can see him in my man's eye as something like this may have happened as Joab pulls up and gets off of his steed and looks up at Absalom and says, rebel, your turn, rebel, and he pulled it back, and Absalom says, no, no, no, and he lets it fly, and it smites him in the breast, and Absalom screams, and the blood gushes out, and another error, and another error, and then study the Bible and see what it says.

The 10 soldiers that were with David or with Joab came around and with their swords started hacking Absalom's body to pieces. A messenger is sent to the king, and the king says, is the young man safe? And the messenger says, may all rebels be as is the young man Absalom. And David says, no, no, my son Absalom, oh, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee, my son Absalom, my son.

David had the chance. He just didn't take it. Would you bow with me, please? Every head bowed, every eye closed.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/sm-davis/changing-the-heart-of-a-rebel-video/>

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