

Revival in the Home

by Tom Allen

A revival of love in the home is necessary for a strong and healthy family, and this can be achieved through a revival of partner love and parent love.

Duration: 59:53

Scripture: Exodus 20:5, Numbers 32:23, Psalm 14:5, Hosea 4:6, Ephesians 5:17-18, Ephesians 5:21-22, Ephesians 5:25, Ephesians 6:4

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a revival of spiritual genetics. He highlights the importance of parents and partners in the revival of love, and the role of giants and genetics in the revival of leadership. The preacher references several Bible verses, including Hosea 4:6, Psalm 14:5, Exodus 20:5, and Numbers 32:23, to support his message. He also discusses the negative influence of sinful superstars on Christian youth and the importance of instilling scriptural value systems in children.

Transcript

Thank you so much for that beautiful music, brother. Now, I feel a little bit like the Egyptian mummy tonight. I'm pressed for time.

Not that, not that I haven't been put on in time, but there's so much ground to cover, and I want to trust the Lord that we'll be able to do it in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 5, and while you're turning there, I'll just say a word of thank you to my host and hostess. Della and Homer have done this for the second year in a row now, and they've always had to put up with at least one of my children.

And they've just been so kind and helped when I needed some time away to minister to my eldest daughter. And they've just been so very kind, and I appreciate that. And my thanks again to the Soterra twins for letting me be a part again of this wonderful weekend.

I heard the announcement about next year, and I wonder what we're all going to do with that weekend itself. It's going to be interesting. Ephesians 5, verse 17, Wherefore, don't be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Now, what's God's will? Verse 18, Don't be drunk with wine wherein is excess, but, and the best translations here would say, be being filled with the Spirit. What a tremendous verse, a revival verse, and

one that must precede all that Paul has to say about the family and the home. It's as if he's saying, apart from the continuous filling of the Spirit, there's no hope for us at home.

And then he goes on in verse 21. Some of the men would like to skip that and get into 22. But 21, submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God.

And what an important prerequisite that is to verse 22 and 25. And then wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. Verse 25, Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.

And then over in chapter 6 in verse 4, You fathers, don't provoke your children to wrath. Rather, bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. Dear Lord Jesus, minister this truth to our hearts tonight.

We believe we've already heard about revival in the home, just from these wonderful testimonies. And Lord, capitalize now on all the things that you've been trying to say to us this weekend. I realized that this isn't the big service.

Lord, there have been a lot of big services here, some in very small groups, where the Spirit of God has been brooding. And it's my privilege tonight to reap what many others have sown throughout this weekend. And so Lord, we would turn our eyes away from all of your servants who have ministered this weekend and give the glory to Jesus Christ ahead of time for yet another work of his spirit tonight.

In Jesus name, Amen. I've had the wonderful privilege of being raised in a Christian family with nine brothers and sisters. My five sisters are Peggy, Patty, Polly, Pammy, and Penny, affectionately referred to as the five sweet peas by my father.

My brothers are Bill, John, Jim, and Tim, and I'm the youngest son, number eight in the litter. My father's often been asked by other minister friends, why such a large family? And of course, his reply was always based on Genesis 128, multiply and replenish the earth. And one of his preacher friends said, yes, but God didn't tell you and your wife to do it all by yourselves.

Mother got on a bus one time with all 10 of us and the bus driver said, ma'am, are these all your children? Or is this some Sunday school picnic? My mother said, they're all mine. Believe me, it ain't no picnic. She'd like a dime for every time that story's been told, believe me.

But you know, I'm happy to report to you this evening that everyone in our family is living for the Lord Jesus today. And several of us are involved in full-time ministry. Mom, I ought to have you stand.

They haven't seen you yet from the front. Would you just stand for a brief moment? And I want to draw upon my experience both as a son and a father to speak to you tonight. That's what may be unique about what you're going to hear.

So often you hear a subject like this addressed by someone who has raised the family successfully. Written books on the subject, perhaps, but I'm going to come at this from a totally different angle this evening, the viewpoint of the son and then just slightly the viewpoint of the young father. So I trust that God will use this in a very special way to meet needs this evening.

Now, I want to go two directions. I want to talk first in the first part of my message tonight on a revival of love that we need, and then in the second part of the message on a revival of leadership that we need in the family. So revival of love.

We'll have a couple subpoints under that and revival of leadership with two under that to consider. First of all, this revival of love, the revival first of partner love. We'll consider parent love in just a moment, but first the revival of partner love.

Perhaps you heard about the wife who complained to her husband, you just don't tell me you love me anymore. And he replied, now, dear, don't worry. I told you I loved you when we got married.

And if I change my mind, I'll let you know. You know, unfortunately, that's about the amount of expression of love in many, many Christian marriages. The apostle Paul gives a clear word from the Lord for both partners in a marriage to the husband.

He says, love your wife as Christ loved the church to the wife. He says, submit yourself unto your husband as under the Lord. Now, both of these, I believe, will lead to a revival of partner love.

Husband, love your wife as Christ loved the church. This is a stunning statement. What does Paul mean by this? Well, I believe an examination of the love of Jesus for his church will point us in the way.

Jesus first loved his church selflessly in the garden. He prays, not my will, but thine be done. Selfless love.

And how many selfish husbands there are in this world today, many of them in the church. The modern day view of being a leader in your family is the man propped up in his lazy boy chair with a Coke in one hand, bag of potato chips in the other, barking out orders as to what channel he wants the television turned to. He's Mr. Leader, you see.

He's the top dog. He's in charge. And how far removed that is from the servant role where Jesus said, whoever will be the greatest, whoever wants to be on top, let him serve.

Our Lord expressed his love not only selflessly, but sacrificially. We're told in Hebrews he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Are you sacrificing anything for your wife, sir? Anything practical at all? Whether it be some time at the office, you didn't really have to be there.

And then Christ loved his church unconditionally. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly likes of each of us. Some fellows say, well, she submits, I'll love.

You know what Jesus would say about that? Rather sarcastically, I might add. Even the publicans do that. If you love those who love you, what reward have you got, says Jesus? Oh, it's such a higher form of love to which the Christian husband is called.

And the Lord Jesus demonstrated his love for the body of Christ through submission in Pilate's judgment hall. Jesus says, no man takes my life from me. I lay it down of myself.

He submitted himself to the authorities. Someone has said a submissive husband is one who puts his wife's before his own. That is a challenging definition.

Notice in Ephesians 5, that verse 21 precedes verse 22. It must in real life as well. So it's a high and holy kind of love to which the husband has been called.

And every Christian husband has to come to the place where he realizes the impossibility of fulfilling this command through human strength and ability. No man, get this, no man has ever loved his wife selflessly, sacrificially, unconditionally, and submissively through his own virtue. It's never happened.

The only possible way to love as Christ loved is to allow Christ himself to do the loving through us. Christ in me, the hope of a glorious partnership. If you don't know you're truly born again here this evening, I want to say to you this is your starting point.

And there may be some husband like that here tonight. Only Jesus can love through you in the way a wife is to be loved. Now this Christlike love of the husband for the wife is central to the structure of the home.

It could be compared to gears in a machine. As the main flywheel is operating smoothly, all the other gears know how to cog in together to produce the desired result at the end of a machine. That's how it is with a husband.

The loving husband inspires a submissive loving wife. And these parents together stimulate obedience in the children. The world in which we live suggests that mom is the love center.

But what a direct contradiction to Scripture's plan. Oh, do you love your wife tonight as Christ loved the church? Will you surrender to his power and control? Would you admit tonight, oh God, I'm unable to fulfill this command? That's a humbling thing to admit. And we men are so proud.

We want to think we're good lovers. Oh, I can love her if I just try harder. No, it's not trying harder.

It's trusting in Christ to do something in me I cannot do for myself. Maybe some husbands in the audience ought to ask forgiveness to that dear wife for failure in this area. Wife, submit yourself to your husband as unto the Lord.

That's the word that will bring revival to the partner love on the wife's side. Now, Petra stole my thunder with his joke. I have one with the same exact punch line.

It's just different characters in the story. So review that in your mind now. Laugh one more time and I'll get on with it.

But there's a scriptural principle to focus on in Ephesians 5.22. It says, as unto the Lord. And you see, this refers to the submission of every Christian to the leadership of Jesus Christ. In the same way, Paul commands every wife to practice this same subjection in relation to the human head of the family, the husband.

This is not to imply the husband's better or smarter as persons. Men and women stand before God in absolute equality. Paul says, there is neither male nor female in Christ.

Persons, yes, absolutely equal. Where's the difference? Oh, it becomes clear in the area of function. God has ordained that the man function in the role of the leader and the woman is to lovingly follow that lead.

Now, the husband at times may be a dumb head or a fat head or a slow head, but he's still the head. You see, that's what the Bible teaches. One of the most loving gestures a wife can make is to allow room for her husband to make mistakes.

I've seen that as every child has, that look on my mother's face when we all knew dad was wrong. He hadn't found out about it yet. And I always thought that was so funny until it started happening to me.

Even the laundry gets that smile on her face. Oh, many times the man has to eat humble pie and say the wife was right. But oh, how there has to be that freedom to make a mistake, the freedom to lead and to direct as God would lead.

I've counseled several young couples before the wedding, and I always ask this question. What if you both prayed about something and you disagree as to what you think God is telling you? How often they look at me with those dreamy eyes and say, oh, we believe God will give us unity in every decision. Well, now, God may want to, but marriage doesn't work that way.

Not in this world and in this body. And the provision God has wisely made for disagreement in the home is simple. The husband is to make that final decision and then live with the consequences.

That's not always easy. That's not always pleasant, but it's scriptural. Please understand that tonight.

The working mother and wife must be careful. Often the job and the personal income serve to create an attitude of independence when God's plan for marriage is interdependence. And woe be to that man who comes home with the attitude, well, I earned the money around here.

Listen, if you paid your wife for the time with those dear children, it couldn't be calculated. Are you demonstrating real love for your husband, ma'am? The practical evidence will be found not only in the attitude, but the action of submission. This is the revival of partner love we need.

The husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church. The wife submitting to the husband as the church is subject to Christ. Now, under this same heading of a revival of love, we ought to look at parent love.

We need a revival of parent love. A wealth of wisdom is found in that one verse, Ephesians 6, for you dads don't provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. Here the apostle pinpoints two extreme viewpoints on love, and I want to say to you, they will devastate children rather than develop them in righteousness.

One extreme we could call over pampering. Some parents feel that love is only gentle and kind. Children don't need to be corrected, just let them express themselves.

Well, that sounds like Dr. Spock. Pardon me. But God's word teaches us that we're to raise children in the nurture that is the whipping and the admonition that is the warning of the Lord.

Our sons and daughters simply must have a good, hard spanking when necessary. That's what the word teaches. I always took Proverbs 19, 18 to be my dad's life verse.

Chasten thy son while there is hope and let not your soul spare for his crying. Notice this verse begins with you fathers. Uh-oh.

Not only is dad to be the love center of the home, but also what? The leader in discipline. Many fathers let the mother do all the nagging and the hand slapping. Dear old dad sits quietly and casually by, just waiting to bail out a child who's in trouble with mom.

Well, the kids love it because it usually leads to no punishment at all. Remember a father in Tennessee and Doris and her revival team would remember this particular church and maybe even this particular testimony of a man I stayed with. He said to me, Tom, when my kids were growing up, I wanted to be the popular parent.

I was dear old dad. You know, the kids could come to me when mom was being mean and dear old dad would get them out of the trouble every time. She did all the nagging and the correcting.

She said, he said to me, you know, Tom, my kids are teenagers now and with tears in his eyes. He said, guess who they don't have a minute for. I said, dear old dad.

He said, that's right. He said, they don't have any respect for me, but oh, how they love their mother. I thought to myself, what a tremendous way for God to underline this principle in the word.

Oh, you fathers take the leadership in this. Sometimes because dad's away, mom must step into his role of disciplinarian. It's unwise for mother to always be threatening as we hear so many these days.

You wait till your father gets home. Oh, no. Remember a time when my brother Tim was cutting up and dad was away preaching.

And of course, I never did when he was away. But if you believe that, I've got some land just south of Fort Myers. I'd like to show you afterwards.

Be glad to sell it. But Tim was cutting up and mom had to get out one of those little paddles. Some of you remember they used to have the rubber ball, the rubber band on them.

I saw one of those late. I think there's a revival of those crazy things. They're coming back.

But she took after Tim of that thing. And he's kind of got elephants hide. He's always been a little big for his age.

And she cracked him and then broke the thing. Big old Tim put his arm around mom. She was crying away.

Oh, mom, it's all right. It's funny he never did that when dad punished him. But the point we're making tonight, friends, is that genuine parental love is not over pampering.

But get this. The other extreme and the devil is the master of extremes. He tries to get us going one way or the other.

It's this over punishing. Paul says, don't provoke your children to wrath. And some parents are constantly nagging, constantly punishing the children.

They can always point out the things that are wrong while neglecting when the child does something right. The attitude is, is they silently stand by. Well, it's about time you got it right.

This pitiful style of parenting not only destroys a self-image, but it works in the reverse direction to produce rebellion. You see, the parent who is forever whipping rebellion out of his child will only double his chances for producing a rebel. Oh, how our children need a balance in this area.

I asked you tonight, when's the last time you said, that's a great job. You did it right. Good work, son.

I'm thankful I heard that often growing up. So the scripture indicates the all-important factor in the midst of this revival of parent love is motivation. All that the discipline would be properly motivated Hebrews 12 has a powerful passage on this.

Starting there with verse 6, it talks about how God disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts. You say, what should my motive be in punishing the children? So the kids will look good at church and everybody will say, oh brother, you have such a lovely family. That's so carnal.

No, what's the motivation? It's much deeper than that. It's love. God disciplines those he loves and that's where the parents should follow.

So many times our motive is selfishness or impatience or an uncontrolled temper. In verse 9, we're told we've all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for that. I know my daughters respect me because I've spanked them when they needed it.

I have tremendous respect for my own parents for the same reason. In verse 10, our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best, but God disciplines us for our good. What does that verse say to mom and dad tonight? It says, parents make mistakes.

And all the young people said, bless your hearts, I'm in trouble now. Parents make mistakes. Imagine the family of 10 when a group scandal was on.

Sometimes you whip the wrong kid. You think we were overflowing with honesty and they were trying to pin down who did it? My sister, Pat, is from a generation that I'm not allowed to talk about because it would tell her age. She's getting sensitive these days.

She's in the neighborhood of 30, but it's a big neighborhood. But this is the time when all the major things in life Oh, everything was just flooding the market and bright red this. Boy, dad was against it.

More recently, he feels that the barn needs painting. He probably ought to paint it. But back in those days, he was against it.

And mom and the girls had a shootout against dad and he kind of lost. And he wasn't going to be outdone. No, sir.

He stuck his head in the door as Pat was getting ready that night. Have a nice time on the date, Jezebel. Glad we're in a revival audience.

You can all relate to that. Nobody here is shocked that a preacher might talk like that. But you know something? There was a difference that night.

Because something I've watched my father practice through the years is humility when it was necessary. And God got a hold of his heart. The devil was saying, oh, don't you dare admit to her that that was a bad thing to say.

If you do that, the respect will go down the tubes. You're Mr. Right. You've got to maintain that whole mentality in your children's thinking.

And God was saying, humble yourself and let me see to it that you're lifted up. You worry about the humbling. I'll take care of the exaltation.

Well, thank God he listened to the Lord's voice that night. And as Pat came in from that date, he asked her into the living room and they knelt together and he asked her to forgive him and to pray for him. And as Pat would tell this story, she would tell you tonight, that's when God impressed upon her heart the spiritual depth of her father.

Just the exact opposite of what the devil had said. He didn't lose respect in those young eyes. It was rather catapulted.

Oh, I say especially to dads, I think we've got more trouble with pride. Some reason, men, it's just this macho image today. And we've got to be Mr. Right, as Don Godfrey talks about.

Listen to me. You take care of the humbling. God says, I'll take care of the exaltation.

It works. That's a scriptural principle that works. Glory to God.

Verse 11, no discipline seems pleasant but painful, but it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace. Oh, do you see it? If love is the motive, what's the goal of all punishment? Righteousness and peace. That's the opposite of the way so many young people are living today in rebellion and unrighteousness.

Oh, wouldn't you want those two qualities in your children? Righteousness and peace. That's the motivation. That's the goal.

It's not easy to discipline children in a loving and consistent manner. But I say to you, the rewards are marvelous. All five of us boys slept in the attic on Brinkeroff Avenue.

It was a nice attic. It was hot in the summer and cold in the winter. But besides that, it was nice and wood paneled.

We had four single beds and one double bed, and the double bed was for King Tut, the oldest son. And by the time I edged my way along there, everybody else was in college and it didn't matter. But it was a famous place.

And one of these days when I get back in that area, I just want to go in the house again and see it after telling this story so many times. Well, we were playing trampolines on the bed one night. Your kids don't have anything to do with that.

But dad came to the door. He said, boys, I want it quiet up there. But we knew the voice of our father.

Rarely did he speak twice on anything related to discipline. But this is one of those special nights. One giggle led to another and another.

And before long, there was some noise going on again. And dad came to the door the second time. Boys, I said quiet up there.

And about this time, the oldest brother, shh, quiet, you guys. He's serious. We're going to get it.

Now shut up. Well, that lasted for about a half hour. And it didn't take much the third time, but dad came to the door a third time and didn't say a word.

Two very familiar sounds took over, however. One was the sound of his belt escaping loop by loop. Snap, snap, snap, snap, snap, snap.

Oh, that's a vivid sound tonight. What a memory. The other was the sound of his rather large shoes coming up the stairs.

We knew it was dad. He turned the light on and he called my four brothers to kneel alongside one of the beds. And it wasn't for a prayer meeting.

We could have hoped it was for a board meeting. And I was laying over in my bed playing possum, you know, laying there in the funeral position. And dad knew me too well, and he didn't lay a hand on anybody.

He just went over and stood at the end of my bed, hands behind his back, and he stared at me. I was preaching in Canada in a Presbyterian church in Ontario several years ago, and I got to this point in the illustration. I said, he stared at me, and a little boy in the front row went, oh.

And that's just how the Presbyterian church is. Presbyterians reacted. First time in their history.

But finally, I looked up with one eye and sort of smiled and got up and joined the rest of them. Now, the nice thing about this was when a group scandal was on, you see, whipped according to the age. And sometimes by the time he got to me, he was too whipped to whip.

But as I recall, he had a real spurt of energy that night. And he got us all a good one. And he went back downstairs, and we wept and wailed for a while.

We had something to weep about. And he came back up again, I suppose it was 20 or 25 minutes later. Turned the light on again, and he asked us to all gather on a central bed there.

I remember it was kind of hard to sit. He said, boys, he said, I want you to know why I just did what I did. If you'll learn to listen to my voice when I speak to you as your earthly father, someday your heavenly father is going to speak to you.

And you're going to find it a whole lot easier to listen to him. And you know something? It's much more important someday that you listen to him even than me. But for now, if you won't listen to me that you can see, you'll not listen to him who you cannot see.

They went around the circle. Bill, I love you. John, I love you.

Jim, I love you. Tim, I love you. Tom, I love you.

He prayed with us, and he went back downstairs. And I say to every parent in the audience this evening, Oh, please, don't think that you can be raised in a balance of this kind of love and discipline and then grow up and hate your parents. Grow up and rebel against their values and the home.

No, you can only say, God, make me like them. Give me that balance in my life as a parent. And know I want to raise my daughters to love and respect me as much as I admire my own parents.

This is the revival of love we need, not just partner love, but parent love. Now, consider with me the revival we need in the area of leadership. And under this heading, two very brief things that I want to say.

First, we need a revival of spiritual giants. And that's going to lead to what I want to say about spiritual genetics. We need a revival of spiritual giants in the home.

Now, all of us would do well to know who our children regard as their heroes. You see, this is the generation of young people who have idolized the rogues of rock and roll and the hollow heroes of Hollywood. It would appear that the degree of popularity of any given music or movie star these days is directly related to the degree of moral decadence.

Little shame, more fame. So the rock star Madonna appears in Playboy and Penthouse magazines and everybody involved with her promotion says, this will do wonders for our album sales. Christian young people have been so overexposed to the sinful superstars of this world that the concept of spiritual giants seems strange.

It seems irrelevant to this generation. By the time our youth enter the teen years, many of them have sold out to the wrong heroes. Parental scriptural value systems no longer are a controlling factor in their life.

The sad verse in 1 Samuel 8.3 is descriptive of many Christian homes today. It says Samuel's sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain.

They accepted bribes. They perverted justice. Perhaps the most important question we can ask in this context tonight is this.

Why have our children chose the wrong heroes? I believe the answer is this. The church in general, parents in particular, have failed to provide exciting models of the abundant Christian life. I say it again.

The church in general and parents in particular have failed to provide exciting models of the abundant Christian life. This is the message of revival. That God can so touch a parent's heart that it will sift down to the children.

They'll see the change in mom and dad. Oh, where are the spiritual giants? Where are those parents who by their lifestyle will call their young people from apathy and mediocrity to the jaw and challenge of full surrender? We simply must have a revival of spiritual giants. It's God's perfect will that every child be able to find in his parents those virtues, those values that will guide them in the path of righteousness.

The home and the family are the most powerful forces on earth for shaping the will and the value system. And I add, God planned it that way. At church and at school, sure, children hear about the life we are supposed to live.

But at home, the children see our lives. They cannot speak for the way the pastor practices what he preaches. But they're watching mom and dad seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Do you see how this completely destroys the age-old theory? Well, if I just get them to church regularly, they'll probably turn out all right. No, a thousand no's. The Bible says to each parent, train your children in your family life every day in a way that pleases God, and they'll grow up to continue pleasing God.

That's what the Bible teaches. How can parents become the spiritual giants that God would have them be? Quickly consider these things. First, parents need to be respectable in their daily life.

Contrary to popular opinion, respect is earned as well as deserved and expected. As John Housman would say for Smith Barney, you get respect in the family the old-fashioned way. You earn it.

Many parents lose the respect of their children because of pride. We've heard illustrations of that and testimonies of that. When's the last time you said those three words? I am wrong.

Oh dear friends, as far as I'm concerned, those three words are as important as the other big three in marriage. I love you. I think they're on equal par.

Dear evangelist friend of mine used to say, he's gone on to be with the Lord now, but he used to say, if you haven't said you were wrong about anything in the last two weeks, husband, you've got some making up to do. He figured two weeks is about the time it would take. And many of us would be less than that.

Oh, young people don't respect parents who are hypocritical. You see, passion for missions can't mix with a passion for materialism. Our children are quick to discern the difference between talk about total commitment and the time in front of television, especially Sunday and Wednesday nights.

Oh, they're sharp on that. Many teenagers have spoken to me about how their parents are so sweet on Sunday and sour on Monday. Evidence of hypocrisy.

Oh, how God wants parents to rise above, to become true spiritual giants, consistent men and women of God who walk what they talk. Second, parents need to be radical in their dedication. How can I be a spiritual giant to my children? Radical in your dedication, not just respectable in your daily life.

Oh, I'm thankful to be raised in a home where I often heard the name of Jesus Christ. It wasn't a Sunday word. Christ was an integral part of our family life and conversation.

I grew up in the atmosphere of Jesus' love and presence. I was blessed the other day. I was swinging my oldest daughter, Andrea.

She said, Daddy, I just love Jesus because He died for me. Recently, she told us she wants to be a missionary cheerleader. Bless her heart.

I said, why honey? She said, because I want to tell people that Jesus loves them too. What a blessing it is to me as a father. I want to ask you tonight, would your children say you seek first the Kingdom of God? Do they see that radical commitment to Jesus Christ in your lifestyle and daily conversation? Believe me, I've talked a lot with my little daughters about why Daddy has to go away so much.

Little Mandy can almost guess ahead of me now. She says, you're going to preach for Jesus? And I try to balance it. God's helping me.

I'm trying to find that important balance that needs to be there and I know it can be overdone. God's helping me. But oh, they need to see that radical commitment.

Third parents need to be relevant in their discipleship. This is how we become spiritual giants. When we're relevant in our discipleship.

I couldn't help but think as my parents are here cheering me on tonight and I need that. How 20 years ago this very time, Dad was on the sidelines of a basketball court where his kid was usually about the 12th out of a team of 12. You know, I mean really folks, I was a short kid in junior high school and we had a team with some big guys.

They went undefeated three seasons in a row. Tremendous basketball players. Some of them went on to state championship teams in high school.

But Dad was there cheering me on. He was relevant in his discipleship. Whatever I was interested in, He got interested in it.

He was there. See, in the midst of building a big church and having an effective ministry. Yes.

Deuteronomy 6. Impress them on your children these commandments I give you today. Talk about them when you sit at home, walk along the road, when you lie down, when you get up. What's He saying? He's saying, Mom and Dad use every opportunity to influence your children for the sake of godliness.

Oh, the everyday experiences of life can become a relevant way to teach our children important spiritual lessons. Last summer, a little boy threw sand in my oldest daughter's eyes and you know as parents what it's like. Your first reaction in the flesh would be to just crown that little kid.

Oh, you know, how dare he. Through the tears as we were putting water on those eyes to get that sand out. God gave me the grace and it was only God.

It was Jesus in me to be able to talk at that very point with my daughter about forgiveness. We need to forgive that little boy, don't we honey? My dad's been a prime example of Deuteronomy 6. He'd always take one or more of his 10 kids along for summer camp meetings and other trips. As I've been traveling the circuit in our camps, it hasn't happened yet where I didn't run into somebody who said, Boy, do I remember your dad coming with all those kids.

I remember going along and I was the altar boy, you know, five, six years of age. I'd go along the altar with Kleenex and hand them out. I didn't understand what I was doing.

I didn't realize, hey, these people come forward crying and they leave smiling. I remember thinking in my little boyish heart, Boy, it'd be great to help people feel that way someday. Of course, I didn't know what the Spirit of God was doing.

But oh, the deep impression those experienced left. Dad was quick to show spiritual lessons in the routines of life and so was my mother. I remember getting taken out of that ninth grade class to go see a professional basketball game.

Boy, did I give the guys a hard time on that one. They saw me leaving the class and said, Where are you going? I'm going to see a professional basketball game. I'm going to meet Kазzy Russell and Bill Bradley.

Boy, I rubbed it in. But you know, I didn't know what. But that particular journey became an open father-son talk about sexuality and moral standards.

You see, Dad was anxious to let me see the beauty and the joy of sex as God had planned it and the misery of sex as the world had perverted it. From that day on, I was able to talk freely about sex-related questions, concerns. And I've been thankful to have my course in sex education under the tutelage of my own father.

Later, I discovered my other brothers and sisters had the same course and the same teacher. Have you got any time to talk? Are you discipling? Are you listening to your children as you sit in the house, as you walk by the way? I believe that a parent with limited family time can have a powerful impact on sons and daughters if they'll use their time wisely. So respectable in their daily life, radical in their dedication to their family, relevant in their discipleship.

One other thing about spiritual giants, they are regular in their devotions. They're regular in their devotions. Proverbs 4, what a challenge to every father.

Oh, hear the instruction of a father, attend to no understanding, for I give you good doctrine. Don't forsake my law. Oh, Dad, could you say that to your kids tonight? I've given you good doctrine.

Note the clear emphasis on the word father again. Do you see it? He's not only the leader in love and discipline, he's the leader spiritually. He's the man responsible to give good doctrine to the kids.

I realize many families don't have any time to be together, let alone have devotions together these days. But you know, that doesn't change the importance of what I'm talking about one iota. One preacher told me, I can't preach on the family altar, Tom, because I don't have one myself.

A man in California said, I'm the boss in my home, but I'm not the leader. What a telling statement. It amazes me how many parents are taking on extra jobs these days so their children can attend a Christian school.

I'm concerned that many moms and dads will never obtain their goal. The children need the training of parents in the home more than they need anything else. And we must never assume that Sunday schools and Christian schools and Christian colleges will make up for the failure of Christian parents.

Hear me clearly tonight. Listen to me, fathers. God wants you to be the main spiritual influence in your son's life, your daughter's life, even more than a pastor, more than a school teacher.

I have nothing against the right kind of Christian education, but it must begin with the home and family life. Some churches start schools and hire youth pastors for all the wrong reasons. Schools and youth groups should merely be an extra blessing for young people who are already being trained for Christ at home.

I'm thankful to have been raised in a home where I didn't always have a choice. I remember the neighbor kids banging on the door, can he come out? Not yet. If dad had taken a vote, he'd have been voted down sometimes.

How many want devotions? You know? But no vote was taken and I've learned since that God doesn't take a vote on a lot of things either. It was a good spiritual lesson. We had family night.

We had a family dinner. Once a week, usually Friday night. I'm going to take you back in time now to a time when the Flintstones were on Friday night at 8 p.m. See, that dates me.

I really am getting older. Not quite as old as either of these. But someone said amen.

Bless you, brother. We'd go to the YMCA. We loved to swim as a family.

Sometimes we'd go to McDonald's. In those days, you know, you could eat for the whole family of our size for around five or six dollars. Imagine that.

Then we'd come home and popcorn and pop was a family tradition on family night. And though devotions was usually a brief five to ten minutes after supper, on family night it was a little extended time later on in the evening. And I especially remember the Ohio winters around the fireplace in the living room there.

You know, it's wonderful the large family had so many options. We could break up into small groups for prayer. And, you know, but I tell you, there's nothing like those memories in my mind tonight.

Oh, that is so dear to me. Time spent in the word and prayer, singing together. And then don't forget the most rousing stories of Tarzan just before bed.

Those are the things you remember. Family conference was once a year. We didn't call it that particularly, but it was kind of a time around Christmas when we'd all get together and Dad would say, now, you can say anything you want to anybody and you won't be punished.

In other words, let's be honest. If we've made mistakes, if you've got to get right with somebody, there's something you're holding. Let's talk.

We have to be honest. We had our own little revival. Almost each year in that kind of gathering, some of you need to have a family conference.

You need to have one soon. Oh, how things have come between you as the kids have gotten older. This thing and that.

Oh, my prayer is that God will deliver the church from the rot and the rut that we've gotten into. How we must return to regular family devotions. Some of you know what I say when I tell you it isn't easy to have devotions with a four- and a two-year-old.

But I thank God the effort pays off. Little Mandy's been praying about her potty training lately. But you know, in all seriousness, the girls are memorizing verses.

They love to read stories and sing and pray. It's been such a precious time, even here this weekend, to be with my little girl and have those devotions together. Oh, we need a revival of spiritual giants in the home.

Would you commit yourself anew tonight to this task? And in closing, I promise this is very brief as we close. We need a revival of spiritual genetics. See, the revival of love has to do with partners and parents.

And the revival of leadership has to do with giants and genetics. Hosea 4, 6, Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I will forget your children. Psalm 14, 5 God's in the family of the righteous.

Exodus 20, verse 5 I am a jealous God. I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation. Numbers 32, 23 Be sure your sin will find you out.

All these four verses carry the same theme. What is it? Spiritual genetics. Just as the parents transmit genes in a physical sense to produce similar hair color and eye color and body shape and facial features, so it is in a spiritual sense.

Oh, what a difference Christ can make in a family tree. Some of you would think just by the stories that you've been hearing that my grandparents must have been tremendous Christians. I ought to tell you tonight that my grandfather came to Christ seven years after my father's conversion, largely in part of great prayer and fasting on his behalf and just seeing the life of his son, my father.

You can break the chain of spiritual genetics in your family tonight. Praise God it can be broken. By the power of His Spirit, things can be turned around.

Everything I've talked about tonight is above and beyond our ability as parents. That's why we've got to get back to Ephesians 5, 18. The simple profundity of that verse be being filled with the Spirit.

Oh, mom and dad, wouldn't you admit with me that too often we trust in ourselves to be the parents God wants us to be. He's the one who can make us spiritual giants so that we can transmit the right spiritual genetics. He's the one.

Parent love. Partner love. Spiritual giants.

Spiritual genetics. I'm going to read you a note from my brother, John Hicks. My brother, John, prosecuting attorney in Richland County just down the way, wrote this note to my father on Father's Day of 1978.

I've used it all over the country. And I quote it for you now. Happy Father's Day.

Troll this lure outside the wee beds and hold on tight. John had gotten dad a lure. I love you, dad.

Thanks for being so true to our dear Savior. If I had to do over again, I'd pick you for dad hands down. Many times as a teenager, young man and father, I lost my sense of the Heavenly Father because I couldn't contact Him with my five senses.

But I never lost a sense of your love for me or my love for you. I often thought of how much you loved me and related this to our all-loving Lord. This many, many times was His way of keeping me in check.

I just meant to write a quick note. Excuse the rambling. I love you, John.

Let's pray. With our heads bowed and our eyes closed this evening, concentrating deeply on the Spirit's message to our hearts, I want to ask you to say a few words. Please let me underline that I trust a revival group like this who has heard the truth that you've heard would not mistake what I've been trying to say this evening.

Because you see, I've not really been pointing to two parents, but rather to the Jesus Christ who can so live His life through you as He did through them, as He did through you in your kids' life. Some of you are here in your grandparents tonight, and you're saying to yourself, I wish I'd have heard this 30 years ago. But listen to me.

It's never too late to repent. If God has been speaking to your heart as the invitation is given, I urge you to come this way. Some of you are here with an unsaved spouse, perhaps not with you.

And you're struggling with this truth tonight, and God is simply saying to you, make sure your heart is right. You can't answer for that unsaved spouse, but oh, how God wants you to be right with Him and with that spouse and with those dear children. Maybe there are young parents here tonight with little ones like me, and you just want to come and commit yourself in a brand new way.

You've seen sin in your life tonight, sin in your marital relationship, and you want to bring it to the cross and find cleansing. And then I know there are parents with teenagers here and the struggle that's going on. Maybe some bad habits that started way, way back are just now showing their fruit on the trees.

And as a parent tonight, you'd have to come in humility and say, oh God, I've made some big mistakes. I've sinned not only against You, but my children. But there is forgiveness with Thee, and by Your grace,

by the power of the Holy Ghost within.

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