

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

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Raising Kids

PART

2

TITLE

Showing, Teaching, and Training

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 6:4



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Well, Providence family, good morning. I hope that you are doing well. And if you're a guest with us, we're really glad that you've joined us. If you have a Bible in your hand, if you want to turn with me to Ephesians chapter 6, and we're going to look at verse 4 this morning. Just one verse. Don't worry, it'll be long enough. Not the verse, the sermon. But it is good to see you. We're in a series. It's called Raising Kids. And I think it's important for you to know just a little bit about my wife and I. Tabatha and I, we have three sons. They're 21, 20 and 19. And it's been the hardest thing in the world, and as well as just a great joy. And the fact is, is I can say this of both of us. But I'm going to use the pronoun that's just for me because it's true of me. And I didn't consult her before I'm about to say this, so I didn't want it to be true of her.

But we and I, we were present parents. We were active parents and still are. I was not an abusive dad. I taught them the scripture. I taught them the gospel. I tried to show them the truth. There was a lot when it comes to parenting, that I look back and I think I yielded, we yielded, to the Lord. And as a result of that, there was a lot of really, really good fruit, a lot of sweet memories. But if I were to be totally honest with you, and if I were to stack up, I've not done this, but maybe 10 or 15 of my greatest life regrets, the vast majority of them would be related to my fathering of our three kids. Looks that I gave them, the use of irritability or intimidation to get them to move from one place to another quickly as opposed to using grace and kindness. I was a good dad. And yet I feel a sense, I wish I had a mulligan where I could go back. And some of those moments that I can see their eyes, where they look up into my eyes. And in that moment, I remember thinking, "This moment, they think of me that this man who's looking at me feels like I am more of a burden than a blessing right now."

And those are moments that it's hard. And I tell you that this morning because if you are a parent, you feel a sense of regret anytime you look at the example of scripture that tells you how to be a parent. And I just want you to know there's hope. There's hope. This is the first day of the rest of your life. Even if your kids are grown and out of the house, there's still ways that you can influence them by loving the Lord, storing up His word, encouraging them, teaching them. If they're in the house, you still have an opportunity. And so let me encourage you. If you feel any sense of regret or hopelessness, or if you walk out of here and go, I just feel guilty. That was, I promise you, that was... I've been praying. God, help me not to guilt them into parenting well. Please, because I know what that feels like, and it feels terrible, and that's not going to help you be a better parent. God's grace, His love in our life. And so I want to pray for you again, as I've been praying over the last several weeks.

Father in heaven, we bow for You and pray that You would pour out Your spirit upon us. That You would remind us not only of the areas where we need to improve as a parent, but God would You startle us of how amazing You are as our Heavenly Father. Would You remind us that there's grace in Jesus Christ to cover our sins and our failures, our weaknesses. And I pray, God. I pray for parents. I pray for step parents. I pray for foster parents. I pray for single parents. I pray for legal guardians. God, I pray for anyone who has kids near them as an uncle or an aunt, grandparent, that You would help us to see some things today and You could help us to address an area of our life. Take one little thing out of what we're going to find here and use it to

encourage and inspire. And so take all those feelings, please. God, would You take those feelings of regret and would You transfer them into fuel to create strategies of righteousness that might just break through some of the ice? And so we look to You in faith for the sake of Your great name, pour out Your spirit upon us. We pray, in Christ's name. Amen.

Roughly 50 years ago, social scientists in our country and in the west, they began to attribute the societal ills to many things. But one of them was a low view of self. They looked at things such as crime. And they looked at things such as poverty, racism, self harm. And they thought and theorized that a lot of this is due to the fact that people don't know how amazing they are. They don't have a high view of themselves. And so as a result of that, there came a strategy. And the strategy was, if we would simply teach kids self-esteem, then they would grow up to be better people. That they would not throw their trash on the ground. And they wouldn't hate people whose skin color doesn't look like them. And they wouldn't want to harm themselves. And they wouldn't want to commit crimes because they feel good about themselves. And thus began a movement, not only in homes, but also in schools and media, that was intentional to elevate the self-esteem of each individual, as well as to fight against anything that might question a child's unassailable capabilities, entitlements, and wisdom to make any decision whatsoever.

And the fact is this contributed to what we're experiencing today and that is that social ills remain. Racism remains. Self harm remains. Crime, poverty. It remains. And yet kids in this generation are hanging on by a thread. This week I read an article from the New York times that was citing data of a study from the CDC on kids ages 10 to 19. It was an article. It was called It's Life or Death. I don't have the date. I'm sorry about that. But if you want to look it up, It's Life or Death. And what it said, at least two things I want to share with you there. And that is that in the last 20 years, kids ages 10 to 18, their visitation to the emergency room for self harm rose 88%. And they polled American high school students today. And in that poll, they found that 44% of all high school American students today feel persistently hopeless and dark.

Among other things in our country, one of the solutions is not a low view. It's not to plant low view or a low self-esteem. No, the answer I believe, and the scriptures would affirm, is to show, teach, and train an accurate view of self. An accurate view that says that you are created by God, for God, in the image of God. That's what makes us special and unique. We're created in the image of God. Endowed with capabilities, aptitudes, intelligence that drive us toward particular things that align with God's purpose for our life of how we are to honor Him on the earth. That we are to live in a relationship with Him and one day we will be held accountable to Him.

This is what we find in the scriptures that's healthy for, not just kids, but people. And this is what we find in Ephesians 6:4, He wants to tell us an instruction that's really built on the back of how do we teach, train, and show an accurate view of who we are. And this is what Paul says. He says, fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. And so three things I want you to see here. The first is this. It is really important for us to submit to our child's needs. And we do so

out of reverence for Christ. Now you can't find that in that verse. And so I need to connect that verse to not only Ephesians but to the Bible. So that you're like, where'd you come up with that?

So let me show you, the Bible begins with these awesome words, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The Bible says He created the world in peace. So if you can imagine, let's just imagine what it might be like in one arena of life. Let's just say you love fishing. And so just imagine that there's this fishing pond. And this fishing pond, it's always warm sun and cool breeze. And the fish always bite and they never bleed and never get hurt. It's like this is just like the perfect day of fishing, right? And the lines they never cross. And the reels, they never tangle. It's just perfect. Doesn't matter how many fishermen are around. Everyone's just in perfect joy. This was heaven. And the Bible says we sin against God Almighty and suddenly the lines crossed and the reels tangled.

And when those lines crossed, one of the things we do as people is we yank on the line. And we yank, and eventually we start fuming and we start getting angry at it. Come on, please, please come off there so that I can continue to do what I want to do. And the Bible says that this became human nature is that we began tugging against one another. We began tugging against our own heart and the inclinations of a heart. So much so that the very first family, that first they had only two boys and those boys tugged so hard against the line that one of them murdered the other. The first family. And God, He looked and He says, instead of cutting the line and saying enough with this, He says, I'm going to do something amazing. And that is, I'm going to send a savior to the earth that is going to untangle the lines. That's going to untangle the heart. Untangle the mind. Untangle the motives of the heart. Untangle relationships with people.

And in the fullness of time, God sent His own son, the Christ. They gave Him the name Jesus on the earth because it means savior. And He came to the earth. He lived without sin and Ephesians 5:2 tells us what He did for us. He not only loved us, but He gave himself up for us. He died on a cross for our sin. He was buried in a grave. He rose from the dead on the third day. And on the third day after that, He said anyone that would believe in me, put their trust in me, not lean on your own righteousness, your own morality that is insufficient, but to lean on my righteousness, I'll do something for you. I'll forgive you of your sin. I will give you my righteousness and I will put my Spirit to live in your heart that will teach you and train you and motivate you and console you to untangle the lines.

And so the Bible after Christ, like in the book of Ephesians, it's a book that says, how do we live with the spirit? Keep in step of the spirit who's living with in our heart? And so in chapter 5:18-21, notice what He says. He says, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now he's not saying find the Holy Spirit. No, he's already living in our heart. But the Holy Spirit's like a fire. You pour water on Him and He's quenched. He doesn't go away. He just doesn't burn as bright. It's not as hot. So what He's saying is this. He's giving in Ephesians principles of how do you walk with the Lord? How do you experience peace in your life to where things get untangled, not only in your own heart, but your own home?

And He says, and how you do it is you fan the flame of the Holy Spirit. Be filled means keep being filled, keep being controlled. Let Him take over in your life. And as a result of that, the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, all things that are amazing in relationships and family, He says the Holy Spirit will bear those out of your life. So what are we supposed to do to fan the flame of the Holy Spirit? Addressing one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

This is why we encourage you to come to church. This is why if you're at home and you're watching and you can be here, we want to encourage you to be here. If you can't be here, we're glad that you can be right where you're at, where you can listen and learn and participate. But if you can be here, it's important to be here. And the reason is because when we sing these songs, hymns, and spiritual songs to the Lord, we're encouraging one another. It's fanning the flame of the Holy Spirit in our heart. When we look at someone else and says, I'm struggling right now to believe, but that person is singing like they do believe. That's going to encourage me. The second one is singing and making melody to the Lord with our heart. Third, giving thanks always and for everything. And notice the last one submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Now this is chapter five, verse 21. Then what He does is He says, now let's apply. How do we submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Submit is not about inferiority/superiority. It's taking strengths, yielding our desires to meet the needs of someone else. That's what submission is. And so what does He do? He says, let's apply this. In chapter five, verse 22 He says, okay, let's apply it. First, wives. This is how you are to submit to the needs of your husband. Then He goes, husbands. This is how you are to submit to the needs of your wife. Chapter six, verse one, children. This is how you are to submit to the needs of your parents. And then He gets to verse four and He says, fathers, this is how you are to submit to the needs of your children out of reverence for Christ.

Now in the ancient world, fathers signified parental authority. It was a word that would be used obviously for fathers, but it would also signify anyone who has direct oversight over a child. So it could be foster parents. It could be moms. It could be a single mom, a single dad. It could be... There's a lot of categories of folks who care for kids. And so this is what He's talking about. And He says, this is what you do. He goes, this is how you submit. If you have influence over a child, if you have authority over a child, if you're a legal guardian over a child, He says, do not provoke your children anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction. This is how you yield to their needs.

You see, and why He says this is so important. Nobody has ever yielded to meet needs like Jesus yielded His desires to meet our needs. And that's why He says, this is the fuel. Not only of marriage and parenting, but eventually He's going to get to the workplace. He says, this is the fuel. He says, you have to look at somebody who is not as worthy and yield to their needs. And so how you do that is you go to the gas station and the gas station is the gospel. You go back and you go, Christ help me to admire You, to revere You, to be impressed by You, to see how You yielded to meet my needs. And in doing so, I'm going to be motivated to meet the needs of my kids. The very first step in parenting is to be impressed with Jesus. It's to admire Jesus. It's to revere

Jesus. It's to see how He yielded for us.

The second thing Paul teaches us here is to resist patterns that create a settled anger. He says, fathers do not provoke your children to anger, or parents do not provoke. Now anger is part of life and we all know that. It's part of the brokenness of life. We all get angry because we get hurt. We get betrayed. We have loss. There's all kinds of things that causes anger to erupt within our heart. And sometimes then, because we don't necessarily handle it well or so many bad things can come when we do get angry, we simply assume that anger as an entire category is evil. But that's simply not the case. The Bible says that anger is not only a part of life, it's also a part of a godly mature life. Because God Almighty in Psalm chapter 7 says in His righteousness, He gets angry every day when He sees His glory, His word, and His people whom He loves being mistreated and threatened.

Now the Lord in His grace and in His kindness and self-control, He takes the anger in His heart. He doesn't use it as then fuel to sin. Instead, He transfers it into love so that it's through kindness that He leads us to repentance. He doesn't beat us over the head. He is kind to us even though He's angry that we have violated Him, that we've opposed Him. And so notice what it says in Ephesians chapter four. He says, be angry and do not sin. It says like, God, be angry. That's an imperative. You're supposed to be angry. And yet when you're angry, you're not supposed to sin. In other words, there are times when it is absolutely right to be angry and wrong not to be.

You remember when we saw the reports of the maternity hospital in Ukraine that was bombed? If you saw that or heard about that, and there was indifference in your heart, that was not a mature response. You should have been angry. Now we shouldn't take that anger and go and hurt somebody with it. No, we don't want to sin with anger. Instead, we take it just like the Lord and we use it as fuel. And hopefully what we did was we prayed for those moms and those kids and those people who lost a loved one. Fuel towards righteousness, to respond with kindness to people just like the Lord. But what I hope you can see is this, is that anger is part of life in even a godly, mature life. And so when Paul says in verse four, do not provoke your children to anger. And in a parallel passage, when he says fathers, do not provoke your children, unless they become discouraged. He's not saying if your kids ever get angry, you failed. Because that would not work. What he's saying is this. He's warning us against raising kids in a way that create a settled anger, a disposition of resentment. Where this word discourage mean their spirit is broken to the place that it has to be fused back together with hatred, bitterness, or mistrust.

We want to protect our kids from that. And so you say, well, how does that happen? Well, it happens in a lot of ways. One of them is abuse. You can imagine that. Whether it's physical, sexual, emotional, verbal. You abuse somebody, you insult somebody, you hurt someone in that way it can create a settled anger. Another way is favoritism. We find stories in the Bible where parents had two different kids or more than two. And one of them was the favorite. And the other one began to resent mom or dad because it just seems like all the breaks go to the other one. Their favoritism is a way. Pushing achievement. When our kids were like, I don't

even like basketball and we're like, but you're going to make the NBA. And it's my determination that you will. We can push people, whether it's in school or whether it's in sports. Listen, this is so important. Your kid, God made intelligent in a way. And that way is not always tested in American schools.

There is musical intelligence. There's relational intelligence. There's business intelligence. There's all kinds of different intelligence. And it's your responsibility as a parent to help identify what that intelligence is and fortify it and not push them to achieve because the world celebrates something else. Let your kid be your kid unto the Lord. This is the aptitudes that He has given him. This is the intelligence. This is the abilities. Let me fuel those areas. You push a child in an area that's beyond their ability and it can create a settled state of anger. We can also overprotect them. You cannot do anything ever. Or under protect them. I don't care what you do ever. And it creates a settled state of anger.

Now we can all make a long list of what we can imagine, but let's look at what the Bible says. And this is the third point. How do we avoid this settled anger? Third, bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This last phrase is the opposite of how you provoke a child to anger. That's why it says fathers, do not provoke a child to anger, but, or instead do this. In other words, this last phrase is how we keep our child from a settled state of anger, at least one of the ways. To bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. So how do we do this? First of all, let's look at the word bring up. Bring up. It means it can also be translated nurture, to nurture up. Nurture means this. I am so for you. And so I'm going to patiently give you the nourishment you need to grow. Bring up. Up means not to stay. It means to go. So your goal is to get that child if it's possible to recognize the authority of God, that they would want to live for God when you are not here. Up. Bring. Bring is an incremental word. It's not just get them there. It's not throw them. You're here and I'm going to throw you over there. No, it's incremental. And so we're bringing them one step at a time.

What you find is that every kid is so different and so a different pace for every child. You're bringing them up a little bit differently. Everyone needs something just a little bit different. Here's what we find though, is that if we force kids, little kids, to grow up too fast, where they're like, I'm not ready. Or if we hold grown kids into a state of childhood where they're saying, I am so ready. They can both get angry, a settled state of anger. And so bringing up is personal. And we're going to look at this child. What does this child need to move towards health? Towards maturity? It's personal. It's also directional. We're here. We need to get there. You're not ready to live outside of my house right now. I need to move you. So it's directional. It's incremental. We're going to move here. And we're not just going to get there all of a sudden. We're going to move step by step.

And so this is the process of parenting, is as they exercise and show being trustworthy, you expand the boundaries. So at first you don't trust them very much, right? So their boundaries are a crib. Like within this space, you go anywhere you want. It's like this big, right? And then all of a sudden they get a little older and they show that they're trustworthy. And so you expand the boundaries. Now this is your bedroom. You can play in your bedroom. Where? Anywhere you want. Well, there's a lot of comfort. There's a lot of security in knowing where your boundaries are at. They continue to show themselves trustworthy. Hey, anywhere in the

house. Anywhere in the yard. Anywhere in the neighborhood. And it continues to move. See, it's incremental. You're growing one step at a time. But then it's also adjustable. Meaning eventually, and every child does, they break trust. They prove themselves unfaithful that day in that space. And so it's adjustable, which what that means is you don't just keep expanding. No. Sometimes what it means is you have to go backwards in order to go forward. You have to say, you know what? For the next two hours, this bed, this space, you got to sit on your bed in your room so we can get a good running start back to where we were.

And so bring up. It's also sacrificial where we're looking to say, I'm going to sacrifice my desires for your needs. Instruction. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Instruction says, I am for you, which is why I'm going to take the time to teach you, listen to you, and show you how to live. This is why last week was so important because parenting begins not only with a reverence for Christ, but loving the Lord with all of our hearts, soul, mind, and strength and storing up God's word in our heart so that we have something to pass. You notice that it even says, it's the instruction of the Lord. It's not just any instruction. It's trying to mirror your instruction to the Lord's instruction about how to live life. It's either three specific things every single child needs to learn or be instructed on.

And it's really true of everyone in the world needs to be instructed. First, who is God? That's theology. Who is He? What is He like? What are His ways? What is His character? What does He reward? What pleases Him? How has He revealed Himself? Every single person needs to go, who is my creator? What is He like? Second, who are we? This is our identity. Who were we before Christ? Who am I after I have trusted Christ? Who am I? What is my identity in life? Third, how do I live in His world? How do they live in His world? So there's, this is who He is. This is who we are. This is how we live in His world. This is our mission. This is our purpose. This is relationships. How do we treat other people? We have that same identity. How do we treat other people in the world? This is responsibilities. And so we're looking to say, how do we live in the world?

And then what we do is we say, okay, well, that's what we're supposed to teach. When do we do it? Well, last week we looked at two different primary times, unplanned and planned. Unplanned is your kids are with you and you're walking down the road and something happens and you're connecting the dots between what we just saw and who is God, who are we and how to respond and live in His world. So you're at times, you're just responding to what you're seeing and how you responded. And sometimes it's wrong. And so you're teaching on the fly.

But we also need times when we have planned teaching. For us, it normally happened at the table or in the bed. Bedtime. Because they were still, they were there in that space. And so this is when we normally sought to teach them. Let me encourage you. If you have a planned time, be ready to change that planned time as they grow, because every new stage it's like, all right, now when do we do it? It's hard. But we want to constantly be looking to say, how can I impart a little truth into their heart today? When they were little, when they were little infants like this big, like they don't even talk, we still did it every day. We'd sing to them and we'd read something to them from God's word and we'd pray over them. Then they get into childhood. And

And during childhood, we also sang. In fact, it was a pretty sad, miserable attempt, but we did it. So my wife bought me a \$50 guitar. I learned four or five chords and we would sing. So I'd learned how to... It's amazing how many songs you can play with four or five chords. It's really, really stunning. But we would sing with them.

And then we would open up God's word. And like they're in bed or sitting next to us and so we're just reading from scripture. And it's like, well, what should we read? Well, don't start with Leviticus or something like that. Start either with the gospels where it's stories of Jesus. Or if you need resources, there's all kinds of amazing children's Bibles. And we've made a whole list of recommendations at [pray.org/kids](http://pray.org/kids). You can go there. There's some amazing resources for kids. As they grew, we moved out of those and into a Bible, like a real one. And then we ask questions when we read. What do you think this meant? What do you think that guy thought when Jesus said that to them? And you just try to engage their minds. It has got to be brief.

And then we'd pray. We'd pray. And then we would do something that was so important. We'd pray. And then I would tell a story. And it was at our house. This was big when they were little. I don't still do this. They're 19, 20, 21. But we had these two fictitious firemen. They were called Sam and Roger. And every night when we would read something, I would tell a story. I'd just make it up on the fly. And they were terrible stories. But they clapped at the end. They're like, great story dad. That was awesome. And it didn't matter what we were talking about. If it was a verse on integrity or a verse on how do you tell the truth? Well, I would just create a situation to where they either violated it or they didn't. And there was consequence or there was benefit. And we would just tell a story.

And then I did something that was so important. All of that is so important. What I just said, but I think one of the best things that I did was didn't hurry out the room. Instead, what I did was I laid on the carpet on the ground. At one time they all had their bed in one big room. And I said, okay guys, you can ask me anything you want. And it's this investment of time and relationship that became so important in this moment. I mean, some nights it was like, why is grass green? There was like not a whole lot of substance. But you can even, well, it says God is the creator of the world and made it green. That's why. You could probably get scientific with that as well. But but my point was this, is that just being present in that moment when really my heart, many nights was just like, I just want to do what I want to do now became one of the most pivotal things to where they began asking questions about all manner of life. Who is the Lord and how do we live and how do we find our life purpose? Just time.

So we want to instruct the. The third is discipline. Discipline says I'm for you and so I'm going to remind you to obey God until you choose to obey God. Now, obviously this stops when they leave the house. But discipline is training kids. This is so important to hear. This is training kids to yield to God's good plan by learning to yield to your good plan that has been shaped and that now mirrors His good plan. He tells us not to lie so my plan is we don't lie. And before they're going to understand the concept of, I want to obey the Lord, first I need to obey dad or mom. This is the importance of reading the scripture, storing them in your

heart, so that your worldview is the same and consistent as God's worldview. So that you can teach and then discipline in that way. We're told in Hebrews that all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained. And some people say, can't I just instruct them without discipline? Is it necessary to discipline them? Well, the Bible simply says this. The Bible says that there is something in each one of us that you cannot instruct out of us.

This is how the Bible says it. Proverbs 22. Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him. Folly is a commitment to live in freedom apart from the reality of truth and law. And some of you look and you see this rod of discipline and say, man, that sounds rough. So do you endorse spanking? I endorse what every child needs. And between you and the Lord you can identify what is the way that you would go about disciplining. What is the strategy for you? And the fact is for our kids, what was interesting is because each one is made a little bit different, different forms of discipline were important. We did. You said, did you? We did. We started young. And it was a little. It was just like that. Our little guy all of a sudden they'd be looking at the VCR and they'd be putting their hand in it. I know VCR. I know. 48. That's a long time ago. They'd be like, I'm going to put my hand. And it's like, Hey, no, no, no. Don't put your hand in that. And they're like. So they know. So go over and flick the hand. They got older. We moved from the hand to other parts of their backside. But we did. We did.

And the point of this principle is this is that small pain today warns of greater pain without repentance. In Genesis, we find the model of discipline. God comes to Adam and Eve. You remember? And the first thing, there's loving relationship. He's walking in the cool of the day. This is so important. You try to install discipline or rules without relationship and you're only going to get rebellion. You got to be with your kids. Like your kids. Love your kids. Spend time with your kids. They got to trust you. I trust this man. So we want loving relationship. And then there was clear instruction and consequence. Do you see this tree? Don't eat this tree. In the day that you eat of this tree you will certainly die.

In your home. These are the instructions. So first error and you don't just ground him or snap at them. It's you, hold on a second. You didn't know this. That's okay. This is the truth. This is who God is. This is why He says this. This is how we're going to live. The next time, however, there's going to be a consequence and this is what it is. And so we're in agreement is to what that is so don't be uptight when God whose told me to hold you accountable for these things, when this comes to your way. But the good thing is you don't ever have to feel that because you don't ever have to do that. But if you do well, there's a consequence.

Consistent accountability. Consistent accountability. I mean, God, didn't go now look, you take one more bite, one more bite, in the day that you eat of it, you will certainly die. He didn't go, now put that fruit down. Now put the other one down. I'm going to count to 3. 1, 2. In the day that you eat of it, you will die. Accountability. Consistent accountability. And this creates a lot of... This removes anger. There's a lot of kids. You give them discipline. You're like, man, I've been doing that for a month and you've done nothing. Why now? Consistent accountability.

And then abundant grace. God comes to them and he says, look, I love you still. You oppose me. You rebelled against me, but I love you still. And so I'm going to give you clothes. I'm going to cause a sacrifice in order to give you skins to wear to protect you, to provide for you until I send my Son to rescue you. Abundant grace. And so in our home, the discipline adapted to the child and to that child's age. We call that discipline reminders. Reminders. And this is why I would come to them. They'd violate. And I go, Hey, did you forget? Now after a while, they're like, I know what happens when I say, yeah, I forgot. I get a reminder. And so they're like, no, I didn't forget. I'm like, oh, so you rebelled. And then they backtracked more because in our house you got twice as much reminder for rebellion as forgetting. So they're like, no, I did not. I definitely forgot. That's what happened. I forgot. So then we would say, all right. Well look, it's my responsibility to remind you. You knew the instruction. You knew the consequence. I want to be a person of integrity so you'd trust me tomorrow. So let me remind you of a few things. This is what I would say. God loves you. And I love you. This was his instruction. This is what you did. And this was the agreed upon consequence.

And sometimes it was really hard. And of course I was imperfect. But what I can tell you is this, in our best moments, we were never the consequence. We gave the consequence. Our face, our hand, our volume. We weren't the consequence. In fact, there was one time that I remember that I put one of them on the bed. I said, you cannot get off this bed for two hours. Went outside and I got a board game and I went back in. And I said, now here's the deal. I said, you have to be on the bed, but I don't. So this is called grace. Now I'm going to play this game with you. And then after the game is over, I'm going to leave and you're going to finish your two hours. And they're like, well, can we just play it twice? No, we're going to play it one time and then you're going to finish your time. But I wanted them to see, I'm not the consequence. I'm your friend. I care for you.

And so we would give the consequence. We would remind them of the gospel. We would tell them that we forgave them. And then we would hug. In our best moments they became so monumental and formative. So let me encourage you as we get ready to close. To avoid settled anger a kid needs all of these things: nurture truth, example, and discipline. And it's a really difficult balance, you see, because if we over discipline, meaning we never give instruction, we just vent on our kids then they get discouraged in their spirit. But if we over instruct, which means that we all always reason. We never give any discipline whatsoever, kids get confused when they are eventually disciplined. You say, what do you mean? If I never do it? Look, if you never do it, someone else will. It may be a correction officer. It may be a boss that fires them. If they don't learn to get the folly out of their heart, it's going to expose themselves in other areas and other arenas of life to where there's consequence that are coming. So if it doesn't come from you, the most loving person in their life, it's going to come from someone else.

And so let me encourage you with a few applications here. First, let's consider what we are pouring into kids, the kids in our life, the kids in our sphere of influence. What do you pouring? And just get real practical. Just ask yourself, what did I teach this week? Did I teach anything? How did I discipline this week? How much time did I spend? How have I brought them up? Have I invested anything in their lives? What are you putting in? It's good for us to pause and go, okay, hold on. Like I feel like I'm being a good dad or a good mom, but

what am I actually pouring into their heart this week? Ask yourself. It's a good thing.

Second thing is submit to each child's specific needs. Learn that child. Learn that child's aptitudes. Learn that child's disposition. Learn which form of discipline, what kind of correction helps that child the most. And submit. Submit your energy. Submit your anger. Submit whatever it is in that moment to serve that child at their need.

And third, let me encourage you to set your eyes on the gospel of Jesus. If we fail here, if we fail to see that Jesus is absolutely amazing, we don't admire how He yielded to meet our needs, will fail to yield to meet our kids' needs. The gospel reminds us of who to worship. You see if we make an idol out of self, we tend to over discipline to protect our reputation. But if we make an idol out of our kids, we under discipline so they're going to like us. The gospel reminds us that not only are you, but your kid is not worthy of worship. Only Jesus is worthy. The gospel also reminds us of both sin and grace. Parents who over discipline tend to emphasize sin. Parents who over instruct tend to emphasize grace. But the gospel reminds us that sin, its wage, has a consequence of death. God's grace is amazing and it freed all.

And last, the gospel reminds us of hope. Hope. On one of my worst nights, I remember I didn't hurt anyone outside of I looked at them like I hated them. I still remember it. I left the room. I was just like, you guys just stop. I know in that moment they felt like to my dad, I am a burden tonight. I remember walking out of the door. We had steps going down and I stepped and I sat down on the first step. And I remember just being so defeated thinking, man, I'm just terrible at this. And I remember like literally I didn't do this a whole lot, but this day I did, I sat down. I was just like, man. I literally put my hands down over my face in my hands. I was like, God, you got to help me. And he reminded me in that moment. I'll never forget it. He reminded me.

I started thinking about Jesus dying on a cross. Now there was grace available and it was amazing. This wave of hope rushed over me. I went back in the room and I turned the lights on. I said, guys, your dad was so wrong and I'm asking you to forgive me. This is what I did. And I know that it defeated you and that's wrong. Jesus, this is what he did and he forgave me. And I'm asking you to forgive me. And we hugged and we played a little bit and then we put them back down. And there's nothing like the gospel that can take what is broken and wash over it with hope. You got to constantly point back to the gospel. And my question is, have you felt the wave of hope that comes to your heart when you trust Christ?

We're about to take the Lord's Supper, that's intentionally built by the Lord to allow us a wave of hope to wash over us. If you have not trusted Christ, we invite you to do so right now. But if you're not ready to do that, simply calling upon Him and asking Him to forgive you. Then the Bible says, don't take the Lord's Supper because to take it is to tell other people that you treasure what it means. But if you have trusted Christ, He tells us to examine our heart. Usually I just give you a minute of silence and I'll allow you to pray. But this morning I want to lead you through how you can search through and ask the Lord to search your heart. So if you would bow. And why don't you take a moment right now. Just ask God to examine your heart. Start

with your heart. If there's anything in your heart, any motive, any impurity in your heart that He reveals and confess that is sin to Him.

And now ask God to examine and search your hands. Hands represent what we've done. Is there anybody you've mistreated? Anything you've done in terms of your actions? You've acted on those motives that was sinful. Ask God to examine your hands and confess whatever He might reveal.

And last, let's ask God to examine our mouth. What we have said? Ask Him to reveal if there's any lack of truth or any way that we've sinned with the words that we've spoken. And confess that to Him.

The Father in heaven, we bow before you and thank you for your promise. Promise that says in 1 John that if we confess our sins to You, that You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We thank You, Jesus, that you've made all this available and we celebrate You now. In Christ's name, amen.

Jesus on the night that He was betrayed, He took bread. He broke it. He gave thanks to God. And He began talking about how it was symbolic of His body. The very next day His body would be broken and He wanted to give us an opportunity, a way to remember that His willingness to sacrifice His life, to give us a relationship with Him was out of His love. And so if you have that relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, then take and eat in remembrance of Him. And then Jesus took a cup. Was there at the table and in that cup was full of wine, looked just like blood. And He began talking about how His body was going to be broken to the place that it would bleed. And that blood would actually inaugurate a new covenant that would not simply take away, or it would not simply have our sins covered, but it would have our sins removed. So if you know the joy of being forgiven and you know it's because of Jesus' sacrifice, then take and drink in remembrance of Him.

So Father, with great joy that we celebrate what You have given to us and Jesus, and Jesus we thank You that You came. That You yielded Your needs, Your desires to meet our needs. And we thank You. And now we want to sing to You. We believe that it's Your name. That it's a name above all names. And it's Your name when spoken into our life it brings hope and hope into different relationships and places in our life that are in need of hope. So we sing to You now and we pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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