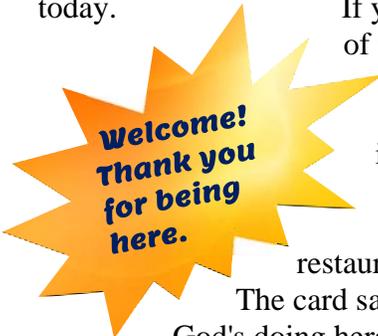


I want to welcome each of you here; those of you watching online, welcome, so glad to have you with us today.



If you have never filled out one of the cards [*he holds one up*] in the seat in front of you, I would love it if you would do that for us. Our pastors do an amazing job at just trying to be there for each of you and if we know you're here that helps us a ton to get to know you and connect with you, so right in the chair in front of you is one of these cards. If you've never filled one of those out, grab that, use the pen to fill it out. If that pen ends up in your pocket, that's not stealing here at Calvary, we want you to take that, leave it at the restaurant you're at today, we want people to know about what God's doing here.

The card says "You Belong Here" and we want you here, we want you to be part of what God's doing here, so welcome today. If you have a prayer request, a need, you want to get involved, you want to serve, just write it on here and we'll call you and we'll make it all happen. So thanks so much for being here today.

You know, we're in a series called FAMILY MATTERS and we realize that everyone in this room cares a lot about their families. Actually, God hardwired us to care a lot about families because when God wanted to do work in this world, when He wants to do work in this world, He does it through families and so it makes sense that that connects with us. You just think there very back at the beginning with Adam, and He builds a family. And then He wants to build a nation and He uses a guy by the name of Abraham and builds a great nation to represent Him and to bring His glory into the world so the world may see Him. And then when that nation ends up under a guy by the name of Pharaoh under hard labor and slavery, you can't imagine that anyone really would have any focus on the families at that time, but a guy by name of Moses is born and he grows up to be the one to lead God's children out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. And then when God chooses to redeem the world to Himself through His own Son, Jesus Christ, God Himself, He comes, and He comes through a family.



And then even this morning as we get to the text I'd love to take you to, God talks to us and He says, "Hey, listen, you're My children." And He says, "As a result of being My children, I want you to be imitators of Me." Family language is throughout the Bible; it's how God hardwired us, it's how He created us to be, and He uses families to accomplish His biggest tasks and biggest purposes here on the face of this earth. So you are part of something that God has ordained from the very beginning.

Last week at the end of our time I said hey, would you do something for me this week, would you read Ephesians 5 & 6 this week; I really hope that you did that. If you've done that, your mind is already working along these lines. I would love for you right now if you would—we're a people that bring our Bibles along to church, whether that's an electronic format or hard copy—I'd love for you to open it up to Ephesians. Probably the easiest way to get there is start at the back of your Bible and start going left and you're going to get to Ephesians. If you don't own a Bible, we always have piles of Bibles in the back. If you aren't reading your Bible, can I just say, "Do it"? This is the thing that will change your life; it will radically transform you.

So today what I'd like to do is take you through Ephesians 5 & 6 and I promise you I'm gonna try to go really fast. If I run out of time, we're just gonna stop and you'll just have to read the rest of it for yourself. Here's why I wanted to cover Ephesians 5 & 6 today, and that is because in Ephesians 5 & 6 it covers all these different pieces and parts of our families. You can see it up here [*reads off the big screen, see FIGURE 1*]—wives, husbands, fathers, and children, and it gives instructions to each that if we will follow those instructions and do it God's way we're gonna get God's



FIGURE 1

kinds of results of what God intended for the family. And so as we look through this and think through this and say, “What is God trying to say to this and how can I line up with that so that I can do family God's way?” Because we care so much about family we want to get the results in our family that God has ordained. Now before He ever gets to any of those instructions there, at the very beginning of chapter 5 the words are:

¹ Therefore be imitators of God,

— and then he says this —

as beloved children.

So again, God using that family language there before He ever gets to talking about how you're to do family—husband, wife, children, dads—He says hey, just as you're a child of God, here's how you are to live your life. If you have your Bibles open to chapter 5, just glance down through there, chapter 5, verse 2 says this:

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

~ EPHESIANS 5:1-2

² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

— be loving people, and then it says this, verse 3 —

³ But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness

— He says don't even let it be named among you —

must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.

Now think about that. When we're in that place where there is something going on in our life that is sexually immoral, He says stop, stop it. That ought to be a red light, a siren in each of our viewfinders right now. He says covetousness, where I want what someone else has and I'm striving to get what they have. Go down to verse 4, He even gets a little more specific:

⁴ Let there be no filthiness

— and He even defines it deeper with saying foolish talk or crude joking —

nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

~ EPHESIANS 5:1-4

He just says listen, these things are out of place for God's children. You know, God's speaking to each one of us saying, “You're my kid. Here's what I want for you.” Later on in this 5th chapter He says listen, you gotta discern what God's will is.

Here are some things that we know for certain are God's will. It says as we continue on in this chapter right there at the end of verse 4, He says let there be thanksgiving instead of all these other things. Let thanksgiving flow out of your tongue and out of your mouth and your life. I love what it says in the middle of verse 8. It says:

^{8b} Walk as children of light . . .

~ EPHESIANS 5:8b

So we can live in darkness or we can live in light. Darkness where we're involved in sin and sin becomes a way of living. Light where we say everything that we do in our life can be exposed by God and He would be pleased with it. So I want you to be children of the light, and then He says this verse 10:

¹⁰ and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

And that becomes pretty easy when we start reading through these things. That's why I begged you this week would you just read 5 & 6 over and over and over again because pretty soon there's certain things that start popping out to you. The first time you're just trying to get the meaning, second time you pick up another thing, but pretty soon you're starting to discern what God wants for your life. Verse 11 follows up on that, so again:

¹¹ Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

~ EPHESIANS 5:10-11

And again, most of us know what those are, I hear from people all the time, "We live in such dark days," "There's so much going around that is wrong, that is sinful, that is not right." Don't even be a part of that, don't even jump into that, say no to that.

Now I want to take you down, if you would, to chapter 5, verse 15, and we're gonna put this up on the screen.

¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.

~ EPHESIANS 5:15-16

I, early on in my schooling, recognized the era which I was born in and what was going on in the world around me and I remember saying to my parents early on, wow, this has gotta be a little bit difficult bringing a child into the uncertainties that were going on in the world at that time. And yet what we learn and continue to find out as we look at some of these issues, like we saw there with Adam and Eve and Abraham and Moses and Jesus, is that God actually uses the family to confront evil in this world. And so that's why He says listen, to be part of that family we need to get the basics of our life right first and we need to be imitators of God. We need to be children – family language – that are pleasing our Heavenly Father, then we can bring that to our family and live that out in our family; model that to our family, reproduce that in our family, and when that is reproduced our children will actually become (in the world in which we live) those who come up against evil in our world. And God will actually use this family unit in what's going on to have brought an end to certain evils, just as even Moses did to those who were in slavery under Pharaoh by leading them out of that.

A little more foundation before we jump into the individual members of the family. Look at verse 16, it says this:

¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

~ EPHESIANS 5:16-18

In the midst of evil times and all the evil that you're coming up with every day, what is the natural reflex in our time? And we're told that it's big in our world that we live in, this little orb that we hang out with. The natural reflex is to come home from work and grab a glass of wine, grab a beer, to try to numb the

day, to try to just lower the temperature, to try to settle down, to get control of yourself, so that you can have a nice evening. What He's saying here isn't don't ever drink, what He's saying here is do not use alcohol to control you, but instead be a person that's controlled by the Spirit of God.

I can tell you from each of our pastors they can tell you so often what seemed like just a nominal little drink here and there turned out to be more and more and more. And what they'll tell you is most of the people they talked to here at the church will tell you, "It's not a big deal." What ends up happening is they don't realize it's a big deal and they're using it to control themselves and they can't live without it, and that's when you real it's a big deal. Here's what the bottom line is: If we want to have families the way God created them to be, we must—we have to—have the Holy Spirit controlling us in our lives. This has to be at the very base of everything.

**If we want to have families the way God created them to be, we must
— *we have to* —
have the Holy Spirit controlling us in our lives.**

So then He says this:

¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord in your heart,

That sounds sort of angelic, sort of sounds heavenly, it sort of sounds like maybe what we'll do here tonight, but I can promise you that if it's not happening in your home it's fake here tonight. If it's not happening in your personal life, if it's not how you're responding when you're sitting in your car, if it's not what you're listening to, if it's not how you're responding in your day-to-day life, we can sing songs here but they're just noise. They're just songs. It really comes down to Top 40. You know, like it or not, it has nothing to do with an expression of my worship to God. Your kids can notice that. Your wife can notice that. You are a person who—when God is moving in your life it changes your family. And I just want to encourage us right now, every one of us, first thing is get your spiritual walk with God right.

That might mean confessing sins to Him. It might be just asking Him into your life for the first time, calling on Him for His help, confessing your sins, repenting, turning from those things that for a long time you've said, "God, I obey you in every area except for this area." It's repenting of that area and saying, "God, I want to get that right." And I'm telling you what, if you have families they're watching you and they're able to tell more than just about anyone who's real and who's not. Oftentimes hear the comment of other people in here that aren't the real deal. Well, I'll tell you what, you may not really know because of what causes you to say that, but in the family unit you definitely know. And here's how that little section wraps up and I want to take you to verse 20:

²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

— Thankfulness is a huge piece of this puzzle. People who are filled the Holy Spirit are thankful people. And then it says this in verse 21 and this is key:

²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

~ EPHESIANS 5:19-21

The word *submit*, it's the word that if I were to look at this sermon that I have to share today with you, it's the one word that will freak all of us out. It's the one word that is like, "Wow, do we have to say that? Could we just sort of leapfrog over that word?" It's a word that means "to rank under." Here's the fact of the matter, all of us rank under someone somewhere in our life. All of us are under a higher authority somewhere. By the way, if you're not you're in a danger spot. If you're constantly pulling back from that, if you're constantly resisting that wherever you're at, if every authority in your life is bad, it's very commonplace because there is so much resistance to authority, *I am the highest authority*. And that's why ultimately that even gets to God; people don't want to be under the authority of God.

I noticed this week looking through the Scriptures that there are a whole bunch of examples in Scriptures where it says be under submission, be in submission to—you'll see on this list:

- be in submission to everyone ~ I CORINTHIANS 16:16
- be in submission to the leaders of the church ~ HEBREWS 13:17
- be submissive to the laws of the land ~ I PETER 2:13
- be submissive to those who are older than you ~ I PETER 5:5
- be submissive to God ~ JAMES 4:7

Over and over we are told we need to submit to someone, we need to be under authority of someone. And here's the ultimate thing: At some point I recognize that I am #2. That I love someone else more than me, that I respect someone else more than me, and I submit to the desires and the needs of wants, and wants of someone other than mine. Can you think of someone else you can say, "I love them more than me"? I am going to desire for them something that normally I would have gone after for me; them being happy is more important than me being happy.

So hard because we are cast in a world that says it's all about my happiness, go after your happiness. The seminars that you go to after this week are gonna say it's all about your happiness.

Philippians chapter 2, verse 5, says something very important and here's what I want you to hear: When you're under someone that doesn't make you lesser than them.

**When you're under someone
that doesn't make you lesser than them**

As people we are equal and I want you to hear that, and I want to hear it in Philippians chapter 2, verse 4, these words. I'm just gonna read them to you, just a page to the right, but:

⁴ *Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,*

— now this is the key part —

⁶ *who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

~ PHILIPPIANS 2:4-7

— imagine God being born in the likeness of men —

⁸ *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

— and then it says —

⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,* ¹⁰ *so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,*

~ PHILIPPIANS 2:8-10a

So here's what we need to hear: That even God when He comes this earth does not consider equality with God something to be grasped but humbles Himself, takes on the position of a servant. When we submit, and this is talking about submitting to each other, all of us submitting to all of us, considering each other's needs more important than ours, imagine if you lived in that world. Imagine if we treated each other that way here. That the moment we walked through those doors we put down “I need to be served,” “I need this,” “I want that,” but we're just scrambling around going, “How can I serve someone else?” “How can I help someone else?” That's how it ought to be in the church, that's how God's called it to be in the church. It's also how God's called it to be in life. Can you imagine how it would change your day tomorrow at the office, at your workplace if you decided I am going to live that way? One, I'm going to be under the authority of those who are over me and I'm going to submit to that authority as unto God. Two, I'm just gonna begin serving everyone and I'm gonna humble myself. I'm gonna submit to the others around me. I would dare say that it's gonna change people's response back to you.

I'm just gonna say this: We're about ready to walk into the family stuff, the wives, husbands, children, and fathers, **all family commands are based on loving submission back and forth to each other.** Has nothing to do with equality. We're equal in personhood but God says we will submit to each other based on certain principles He lays out. When we follow those principles we get God's results. Here's what we said last week, I want to repeat it again today because I think it's something worth putting into our



vocabulary, into our thought processes, and that is living a life to benefit others. Where that becomes my mantra, that becomes my thought process, and if we get that it changes how we handle ourselves and our families.

So let's go to this next one, verse 22:

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

~ EPHESIANS 5:22

BibleGateway.com, I don't know if you've ever gone there on your computers, it basically just gives you just about every translation of the Bible. It's where I go to just look at different translations and this kind of thing. They also have some tabs where they give the top 100 verses in the Bible people like to quote and put on banners in their homes—uhm, this one isn't on it. [Laughter] [Pregnant pause] So we're just gonna skip it and move on to the next one [Laughter] because even with it and verse 23 is even lower on the list:

²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.* ²⁴ *Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

~ EPHESIANS 5:23-24

Oh, wow, that's hard. Although one thing I would tell you is this is the only instruction to the women, so guys, just hold onto your seats and because from here on out God just looks at the guys and says listen, I want to talk to you and here's what I'm gonna hold you accountable for, and it just keeps on coming back at the guys.

By the way, I want to set this straight up right here: There are many who have accepted domestic violence based on this verse. **No.** That is not what God intended this verse to mean. If you're in a domestic violence situation and you are being abused, get help. You do not deserve that, you should not have that and don't let anyone throw this verse at you. And if your husband's throwing this verse at you—so many times when I've preached on this verse first over the years, afterwards I'll hear, "Well, he keeps on now telling me what you said Sunday morning." Guys, if you have to tell this, something's very desperately wrong because the next thing it's going to say, it's gonna say you need to love your wife and we'll go into that here in just a second, so you got that? This isn't, this does not give the right, men, to abuse their wives. This does not make you sit around and accept that. Please, not for a moment.

If—go back to the verse before—submitting to each other, no one freaked out when we said that. I mean, we were a little uncomfortable because we realize, yeah, you're right, I don't like to submit to anyone. I like to call it out that I'm in charge of everything. But if all of us were to submit to each other all the time, becoming #2, if we all were to do that no instruction would be needed along this line to wives because it would be already going on back and forth. But you'll remember back in Genesis this was the first thing that took place within the curse is that the wife wanted to overcome her husband and that would be this ongoing lifelong struggle that they would have. But what God called us to hear a second ago, that we need to do to each other, needs to happen between the husband and wife that she would be one who would be loving and submitting to him because that's what's already happening from him to her. And we push back on sacrifice because we want to be #1. We want to have power. We want to have control. We want to have the upper hand. We want what feels good and we don't want to tolerate anything else.

Pastor Bob gave me a great illustration this week of submission as being an umbrella that covers you. When you're under the covering of authority, you are protected, and when that umbrella is removed you're no longer protected. And we encourage us to see that is that we're protecting each other. You don't have to, you know, why do we oftentimes throw up this wall and this protective layer is because we're having to do more or we're struggling to get into position. When that's no longer a thing for us, where we're no longer trying to overcome the other person and get the upper hand and climb that ladder; when we're trying to say no, I'm #2, I'm here to serve, I'm humble, all of a sudden that changes all of that and it changes that pushback and that resistance that you get.



Men, next verse, verse 25 says:

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives,*

— that word love, *agape*, godly kind of love —

as Christ loved the church

— hear that carefully —

Do you remember the kind of love Christ gave for the church? Unconditional love. He died while we were, the Scripture says, yet sinners, Christ died for us.¹ It isn't waiting until your wife does what you want her to do or gets into the position or the mindset or the humility that you think she needs to be in, you live in a place like Christ did. There are many people today on the face of this earth who are rejecting Christ saying, "I don't want You." "I hate You." "I don't believe in You." And yet He continues to say, "Come here. Come, all you who are weary and heavy-laden and I'll give you rest."² I love you. My grace is sufficient for you."³

That's the kind of love it's asking for men, husbands, to give to their wives. This isn't when she does her thing now I can do my thing. I live recognizing this and it's just a huge reminder for us right now. Guys, I think there's a whole lot of you leaving next week on the retreat, so you're gonna come back from the retreat having heard a lot of this same stuff for the men's retreat and your wives are gonna sort of be expecting that. This is the warm-up. Now you don't have to come back looking like, "Oh, man, I don't know what to do. It looks like I'm coming back..."—we just get rolling on it right now so that then next week we get the tune-up and we keep on rolling.

*²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,
²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or
any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands
should love their wives as their own bodies.*

~ **EPHESIANS 5:25-28**

And then He goes on to say who has ever, you know, wanted to mutilate your own body? Here's the deal: This is what overcomes all this talk about domestic violence—your desire should be to do what Jesus is doing here, to be able to present her spotless and white. Your goal is to make her life as happy as possible, to make her life as good as possible, to fill up those needs, meet her needs, bring her joy at every place possible.

See, men, when you say yes to marriage you say yes to a life of servant leadership. It's a huge responsibility. I just saw online yesterday—and everything online is right and true [Laughter]—that the average wedding cost \$26,444. I'm glad I only have one daughter. [Laughter] But that's nothing compared to the real cost of marriage. And that hit me yesterday when a friend of mine was telling me, he knows this older couple and he said, "When I look at them, they just have this picture-perfect marriage." And he was telling me stuff like, he's just like, "They're constantly dotting over each other and trying to take care of each other, trying to serve each other." He said, "It's just like a contest who can out love each other," and he said, "their kind words and when they look into each other's eyes," he just said, "I just want that for myself. I want to be at that place."

And evidently he said that to this guy one time recently, "Man, I just, I want to have what you have." And I think the guy recognizing that all of us remember this moment in our lives when fireworks were going off in our relationship, I think this guy realized he was thinking, "Oh, I wish my relationship had those kinds of fireworks today, like obviously yours has had for 48 years," or whatever it's been, and the guy looked back at him and I want to read exactly what he said. He says, "Oh, you have no idea the price I have paid for this." Because in a relationship, for it to be a loving relationship as Christ loved the

¹ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ~ **ROMANS 5:8**

² Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ~ **MATTHEW 11:28**

³ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ~ **2 CORINTHIANS 12:8**

church it's going to bring death of self. It's going to mean I have to do some things that in the flesh I would never want to do.

Now, one more word of clarity. If you have your Bibles open, this is worth looking down to chapter 5, verse 33, it sort of brings it back together and says:

³³ *However,*

— so with all that said, wives submit to your husband, husband, by the way, love, love, love, love your wives, and then He sort of, I think He clarifies this whole thing and He says —

let each one of you love his wife as himself,

— and then He says this —

and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

~ **EPHESIANS 5:33**

Here's what we know: When a wife submits to her husband, when a wife respects her husband it compels him to love her which is exactly what she wants, it's what she needs. She needs and wants love. When, men, we love our wives it compels her to respect and submit to us, which that respect is what we want and what we need, but it's a vicious cycle because so often, wives, you're saying, "I'm waiting 'til he loves me." Guys, you're waiting saying, "Until she respects me," and someone has to break this loggerhead that is waiting for the other one to do the right thing. And here's what we know, here's what we've observed: The most mature one will say, "I'm gonna do that." "I'm the man, I have been called to love her and I'm going to love her unconditionally. I'm gonna love her with all of my heart." Ladies, "I'm going to respect him."



Worldly choice—sort of this ongoing dark/light thing that we started out with, imitators of God—worldly choice: "I'm gonna withhold love." "I'm gonna withhold respect." The reason he says let's look how Jesus did it, because He didn't withhold it waiting for me to behave right because He'd still be waiting. That's the whole joy of grace and we offer that to each other because He offered it to us. Worldly thing says, "I withhold because you're not who you said you were going to be. You didn't live up. You presented differently. And here we are." God's way is to say I love you and to show that kind of grace and act even when that other person is not.

I am going to fly right now because my time is up. Chapter 6, verse 1, and all of us can breathe light right now because it says this:

¹ *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

~ **EPHESIANS 6:1**

And we all said [Audience: "Amen."] Kids, do what you're told. But here's what we need to know is they must be taught and trained from a young age. And when we're okay with them disobeying when they're one, when they're two—by the way, they're born with a sin nature. I remember when my first little child someone said, "Oh, isn't it great? They're just like Jesus right now, haven't sinned yet." I mean, I saw that sinful nature on Day 1. It was incredible. [Laughter] They're born sinners and our job is to train them and teach them, and teach them to obey because when they learn to obey their earthly parents, they learn to understand how they can obey their Heavenly Father. And we're such an

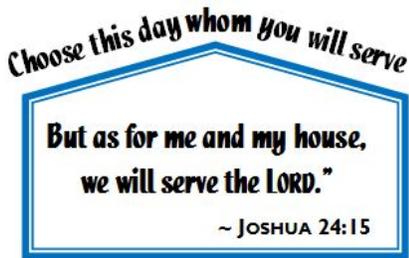
imperfect image of that, and yet, for some reason God has chosen to use that same language and causes us to teach our children. So don't give up on that. As long as they're under your roof, as long as they're in your home, I believe it's on us as parents to help them, to teach them, to train them, to do what it takes to teach them to obey.

I love Joshua 24:15:

^{15b} *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”*

~ JOSHUA 24:15

That's why, it always amazes me, “My kids won't go to Sunday school,” people tell me. What do you mean they won't go? They don't get that choice. “My kids aren't going to go to the youth group, they just think it's dumb.” You don't get that choice. “My kids won't come sit in the service with me. They went to Wawa.” What do you mean? As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. “Well [*shrugs*], they just won't do it. You don't understand. You've got good kids, Lee, you don't understand when you get kids like my kids.” No, we teach them to obey and as long as they're under our roof, “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Hey, I get it.



Second Timothy 3 says that in these last days children will be disobedient to parents.⁴ Hey, as children of God, chapter 5, verse 1 [of Ephesians]: *“be imitators of God”* – we're not going to give in to the darkness of these last days. Right, church? We're gonna call our children to obey and we're gonna say *as for me and my family we serve the Lord. We will go to church on Sunday morning. Yes, you are coming with me, and yes, I have consequences that can bring that to an end. Oh, really? Yeah, we don't have Internet at the house anymore; that's interesting. Oh, wow, your phone subscription ran out. Yep, yep. Oh, no, no, you can't have car keys. No, you can't go.* Hey, listen, we're going to give things that we're gonna say no, if you don't want to obey. Early on we say no to things and probably the reason why you're struggling now is because you didn't say no early on. But, hey, sometime you have to start.

Proverbs 22, verse 6, says:

⁶ *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

~ PROVERBS 22:6

By the way, that's not a promise. What that is is that is a principle that says when you train them right, at some point that all is going to come back. Stay on the training, don't give up parents. And kids, any kids in here? They're all in their classes, I love it, do what mom and dad say, because I love it.

² *“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),* ³ *“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”*

Hey, one more, verse 4 of chapter 6 says this:

⁴ *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger,*

~ EPHESIANS 6:2-4a

⁴ *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ~ 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5*

I was doing a little chasing down on that word *provoke* this week and I saw some that I just really liked because I think we all know what that means, to provoke, but it was this: When you make someone so angry that they will cross a moral boundary to make a point. Wow. And sometimes us dads we get so strong with our kids, it certainly goes back to that loving, that unconditional loving, and so we seem to swing either one way or another. We get to this place where we lay it down and they push back, and we lay it down and they push back so that we just sort of fire up and now all of a sudden we get to a place of provoking. And so that's the caution here as we train up. In fact, that's the next words that it says here:

but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

~ EPHESIANS 6:4b

Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 7, is one that was given very early in time. It says this:

⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

~ DEUTERONOMY 5:5-9

The bottom line—it just goes back to where we started is that when it is part of our lives—this is a foundation. When Jesus is first in our life, when we are reading His Word, when we are growing in His Word, when He is changing our lives and the Spirit is moving through our lives, then that can be transferred to our family. What's not in here [your heart] isn't going to transfer. And normally when we get to talking families we talk about, hey, you go out on another date, do something nice for them, take some time off, have some special time, a couple of methods. But here's what this passage is saying: Spirit of God needs to be active in your life.

By the way, I know you're here for a reason today. Thank you for seeing this is valuable. Thanks for putting this first in your week. Thank you for a people that says, "I want to come to this church because we're gonna open up our Book and we're gonna study it." Thank you to those of you who have this week read your Bible. Thank you to those of you who are praying and those of you who are taking this really serious because it is, God promises. It may not feel like it today, kids may not be going where it looks like today. I can tell you from personal experience if you'll just stay that path, it doesn't feel good today, it doesn't look like it's going to the right place today, that time is coming when you're gonna see that turn around.



One last thing, I'm not even gonna go there, if you look in chapter 6 following the verses I just read, you'll see it goes into a whole section on spiritual warfare. Here's why I think that is: Because Satan knows that God uses the family in a powerful way and he wants to destroy your family, so stand up against Satan. So much of what you're going up against you think, *Man, I don't know if I can handle this any longer.* It's the enemy, he's fighting back. He hates your family. So you say, "I *am* walking with the Lord. I know I'm not perfect and I know I mess up a bunch, but I really feel like I'm trying and it worked. God is moving in my life, but it doesn't look like it's there." There's a battle against your family—stay strong, church. All right? Can I pray for you?

Before I pray for you, let me just say this. At 1 o'clock today we're gonna be having a service for a family, a funeral service, who lost a daughter, 14 years old, freshman in high school across the street.

The Principal called us this week and said, “Can we do a funeral at the church at 1 o'clock today?” Church, would you pray for that family? You talk about a hard, hard, hard thing, please keep them in your prayers today as we as a church reach out to the community in this kind of way.

Lord Jesus,

We do think about that family and the pain they must be going through. We just, our heart goes out to them and I pray that we'll be able to bring hope and peace today in the midst of just an incredibly traumatic time for that family.

Lord, I know that there are families in this room right now who feel that it is just killing them what's going on in their family. Lord, I pray in the same way that You will bring peace and hope and joy to their family. Lord, give them the peace that You've got this. And Lord, for those of us who need to make some changes, I pray that this wouldn't condemn us; that nothing here today would be condemning but encouraging that I know what I need to do next.

Lord Jesus, You've given us the gift of finances in our lives. We'd love for those to make a difference in someone else's life just like this service this afternoon is gonna make a difference in a bunch of lives. And so we're thankful that we get to be a part of what You're doing and give back the first part of that so be glorified through our giving right now.

We ask in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/290152647>

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/yZrP8fSfgac>

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