

Successful Christian Parenting, Part 1

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Date: 17 March 2024

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[0:00] Let's pray. Father God, as we open your word, please open our hearts to your word. Lord, let not this time pass without it hitting our hearts, without your word instructing us in the way that we should go.

Father, we pray for our households within this body. We pray every blessing upon them, Father. We pray that they would be filled with all of the joy, all of the sweet relief and love that comes from being gospel-saturated people.

God, we pray every blessing upon the parents in this room, whether they are of young children or of older children. God, give them grace to occupy their role in gladness and in wisdom for the benefit of the next generation.

We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen. You can be seated, and if you'd like to, you can dismiss your children to children's ministry. And we are in 2 Timothy chapter 3 today.

2 Timothy chapter 3, beginning in verse 14. 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 14.

[1:16] 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 14.

So for the next two weeks, So for the next two weeks, as I mentioned, we'll be discussing Christian parenting, and many of you here are parents, and I have no doubt that if you pay attention to this passage, God will provide you much ammunition, much instruction for engaging in that so important role with diligence and wisdom.

But what about those here who are not parents? Well, let me just point out that all I'll be talking about over the next two weeks pertains to how to help someone grow in godliness.

It's really all we're doing for the next two weeks is talking about how to help someone else grow in godliness. So one way to listen to these sermons, if you don't have kids, would be to apply this to yourself.

I'm going to show you how to grow in godliness. And another way would be to apply this to those who are in your life. How do you help those folks grow in godliness? Well, there's a second way, too, that if you're here without children, that you can listen to these messages.

[3:02] I don't know if you've noticed, but our culture is in real trouble. 30% of young people leaving a Christian home also leave Christianity.

And I believe that number is actually deceptively low because it is talking about those who self-identify as Christians. I would say that even of the 70% who still identify as Christians, a great number of them are swept away from orthodoxy by the culture while still retaining the title of Christian.

And so I would suggest to you that even if you're not a parent, it is in absolutely your best interest that the Church of Jesus Christ experience a kind of revival related to what I would call the art and science of Christian parenting.

It is in your best interest, whether you have kids or not, that this nation, and the Church in particular, experience a revival related to Christian parenting.

Charles Spurgeon wrote a little pamphlet years ago called *The Kind of Revival We Need*. Listen to what he wrote. We deeply want a revival of domestic religion.

[4:27] The Christian family was the bulwark of godliness in the days of the Puritans. But in these evil times, hundreds of families of so-called Christians have no family worship, no restraint upon growing sons, and no wholesome instruction or discipline.

How can we hope to see the kingdom of our Lord advance when his own disciples do not teach his gospel to their own children? O Christian men and women, be thorough in what you do and know

and teach.

Let your families be trained in the fear of God and be yourselves holiness unto the Lord. So shall you stand like a rock amid the surging waves of error and ungodliness which rage around us. If that was true in Spurgeon's day, how much more true is it of ours? So whether you are a Christian parent sitting here this morning or you're not, it is absolutely in our best interest collectively to support an endeavor, any endeavor aimed at bringing about a revival of Christian parenting. Now, I think this passage, I mentioned this on the outset, I think this passage that we have today is remarkable. I think it belongs on my Mount Rushmore of parenting passages.

[5:58] Let me give you my Mount Rushmore just in case you're interested. The first one would be Deuteronomy 6, 4 through 7. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might.

And these words that I command to you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you rise, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise.

So that's one of the verses, I think, that goes on the parenting Mount Rushmore. I put Ephesians 6, 4 on there as well. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline instruction of the Lord.

Now, thirdly, and this is going to take a lot of the mountain, I'd put the whole book of Proverbs, which I will now read to you. And finally, on my Mount Rushmore of parenting passage would be this passage in 2 Timothy 3, 14 through 17.

Now, one of the things I love about this passage is that it very clearly shows us the aim of Christian parenting, the aim of Christian parenting. I guess if you're taking notes, that would be the first point of this message, the aim of Christian parenting.

[7:18] Look back at verse 14. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. Friends, I don't know of any other Bible verse that so clearly describes the basic goal of Christian parenting.

Friends, the basic goal of Christian parenting is to be able to say to the young men and young women that you have raised, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

A day is coming when you want to be able to look to that young man or that young woman and say with sincerity and conviction, continue in what you have learned and what you have sincerely believed.

Friends, there really isn't a better goal than that. And friends, I've had a pretty great life. I've done all sorts of amazing things. But friends, there's nothing better than to be able to look at one of your children who you saw come into this world and say to them as a young man or young woman, continue in what you have learned and have sincerely believed.

[8:42] And this is one of the reasons why I love this passage. Friends, any young man or young woman who can hear that from a parent is an exceptionally wealthy young man or young woman.

We have a sister church in Bozeman, Montana. I've never been to Bozeman, but I've heard it's just one of the most beautiful places in that part of the country and in our entire nation.

And with all of this beauty comes high interest in moving there. And the wealthy have discovered Bozeman. So we have this relatively young church, a sister church of ours in our denomination, that is really struggling to gain traction in this town.

And a lot of their struggles have to do with how a number of members in the church have seen real estate taxes rise to the point where their tax payment, their monthly tax payment into escrow is actually more than their mortgage payment.

There's an extreme increase in real estate prices there. And we've all been working together to help this church figure out how to proceed.

[10:01] They're having trouble staying in a facility because the facility prices keep increasing. So it's all, it's sort of a hub, a buzz amongst many of my pastoral friends as we seek to support this church.

By the way, pray for this church. This is Emmaus Road Church in Bozeman, Montana. One of the things we've discovered upon further investigation, according to one city official, about 50% of those

in their 20s and 30s living in Bozeman are trust fund babies.

50% of those living in Bozeman are trust fund babies with access to millions and or billions of dollars. and their incredible access to wealth is really just doing super freaky things to the local economy and in particular the local real estate market.

Friends, Timothy was the best kind of trust fund baby. He was raised in a godly home. He arrived at young adulthood with this incredible treasury deposited to him so that Paul, not his physical father but his spiritual father is able to say to him, all you need to do, Timothy, is continue in what you have learned and have sincerely believed.

Proverbs 13 22 says, a good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children. Friends, there is no greater inheritance than godliness.

[11:45] Whatever your program for parenting entails, whether it be extracurriculars or academic excellence and I hope it includes all of those things, whatever your program for parenting entails, I'm sure it's motivated by a desire to raise them up to a point where they are blessed in all sorts of ways.

Friends, you will never bless them in any way whether you help them to learn how to study, or whether you help them to learn how to play a sport or how to work a job well, whether you give them a tremendous work ethic.

Whatever you give your kids will pale in comparison to this one thing. If you can give them godliness, if you can give them an understanding of godliness, if you're able to say to these young people who now are little toddlers in your home with Kool-Aid mustaches, but will one day be 16-year-old boys with barely identifiable mustaches, if you're able to look to them and say, continue in what you have heard, in what you have learned, and have sincerely believed, you have created a trust fund baby.

You have accomplished the most fundamental goal of parenting. Three bricklayers were asked, what are you doing? The first says, I'm laying bricks.

The second says, I'm building a church. And the third says, I am building the house of God. The first bricklayer has a job.

[13:18] The second bricklayer has a career. But the third bricklayer has a calling. Parents, what you're doing is building up, fundamentally, building up the household of God.

This is an enormously significant calling. As Spurgeon also wrote, children are not a distraction from a more important work.

Children are the most important work. So that's the aim of Christian parenting, to be able to say to that young man or young woman, continue in what you have learned and have sincerely believed.

But now I want to show you that this text, in addition to showing us the aim, also gives us some strategies for accomplishing this aim. Tolstoy opens his novel Anna Karenina by observing this.

All families are alike. All happy families are alike. Each unhappy family is unhappy in its own ways. Friends, let me tell you something.

[14:27] all happy Christian homes have the same basic ingredients. There may be a million ways to make an unhappy home, but there really are only a few ways to make a happy holy home.

And our text gives us two of them, I would say, two of the most important. Today we'll look at the first and next week the second. Let me point those out to you. Look back at verse 14.

But as for you, continue in what you've learned and have firmly believed, there's our aim, knowing from whom you've learned it. That's our sermon for next week.

And that I would summarize as the role that godly influences play in the development of a child.

Okay? So next week, godly influences. But the main thrust, and the reason why I'm putting it second, is that it's the secondary tactic, I suppose you might say, in this passage.

The main one is not just godly influences, but above that, the word of God itself. Continue what you've learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you've learned it, godly influence, and how, verse 15, from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[15:53] Look at verse 16. All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, or for correction in training and righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every

good work.

Let's just make a brief comment on verse 16 and 17. It's interesting to note that the proof text we most often use to prove the doctrine of the inerrancy of God's word is actually connected to the home and actually connected to child rearing.

Now, of course, we are free to apply this passage in a number of areas, including establishment of good doctrine, but friends, this power passage about the word of God is given to us as a tool for raising up children, that we're able to say, continue, and what you've learned and have sincerely believed.

Scriptures are provided to you, mom and dad, to teach and reprove and correct and train your young men and women that they may grow and be complete and equipped for every good work. I was thinking about how every home has a number of questions that get asked routinely.

Questions like, what's for dinner? How was your day?

[17:20] And when they're five, they will tell you too much, and then when they're 15, they won't tell you enough. How was your day? Five-year-old. That's the beginning of an hour-long conversation. How was your day? Same child at 15.

Fine. So, questions in the home. What are, what's for dinner? How was your day? What are we doing tonight? right? And this one seems dominant in my home, mostly because of me.

Has anyone seen my keys? These are kinds of questions that get asked in homes all the time. time. But I want to tell you that there is one question that great Christian homes ask that other homes don't ask, and they ask it all the time.

And that question is, what does the Bible say? This is, if you want to understand the fundamental of Christian parenting, it is a home full of people who are reflexively asking that one question over and over and over again.

What does the Bible say about this? What does the Bible say about that? Dad's asking that question because the Bible is his rule of life. Mom's asking that question because the Bible's her rule of life.

[18:40] And that question begins to be a cultural norm in a home. What does the Bible say? In addition to telling us, and we're going to get a little bit more specific, in addition to just commending the Scriptures to us as a tool for raising up our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, I think we have something even more specific, and that is a specific way of teaching the Scriptures.

A specific way of communicating the Scriptures in our home. Look back at verse 14. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

Now look into that phrase, lock into that phrase, have firmly believed, and if you have a physical Bible with you, you might want to underline that and put a question mark next to it, or maybe write the word prayer next to it.

Why do I say that? Well, because that's the real trick, isn't it? we aren't content as parents with merely communicating our faith. We want to transmit our faith.

We don't want to simply communicate our faith, we want to transmit our faith. And that's what this verse is talking about. It's not just that Timothy had learned these things, but that he himself had moved from simply knowing the truth of God's word into trusting God.

[20:08] God, he had himself sincerely believed these things. Admittedly, that's only something God can do.

We can teach our children the scriptures, but we cannot will them into conversion. And yet, and yet, lest we wash our hands of any responsibility or any role in that part, and they're believing, I want to point something out to you that I think is extraordinarily overlooked and contributes mightily to this problem of the 30% or more who depart the faith.

What we see at the beginning of the end of 15 is this, how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings, look at this phrase, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Jesus. The scriptures that are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. I would definitely underline that phrase.

Because now we're not only being told just broadly, here's the aim of Christian parenting. You want to be able to say to your young man, your young woman, continue in what you've learned and sincerely believed.

[21:29] faith in Christ. And we've seen that the scriptures are God's tool for doing that. But now we have something even more specific. We have a particular strategy given to us on how to teach the scriptures.

On how to teach the scriptures. So we're thinking about this issue of 30% of young people leaving Christianity, a number of them retaining the title, a number more retaining the title, yet abandoning orthodoxy.

And great men of faith from church history knew exactly where that problem came from. John Newton. There is no point upon which men make greater mistakes than upon the relationship which exists between the law and the gospel.

Ignorance of the nature and design of the law is at the bottom of most religious mistakes. What are we getting at here?

In short, we're saying that there's something that's beyond merely saturating your home with Bible. And that something is to teach your children the law of God in addition to the gospel of God.

[22:52] God. This is essential and where most of our 30%, in my opinion, our 30% problem originates from people giving their children gospel without law.

When Jesus says, he who loves much, he who has been forgiven much, loves much, he is talking about the role of the law and the gospel.

He's not saying that some of you have more or less to be forgiven. He's actually talking about someone who is aware, fully aware, of their need for salvation and thus loves God for providing what they so desperately needed.

Listen to how Martin Luther describes the importance of the law in leading people to conversion. Because that's what we're talking about. We're asking, okay, have firmly believe.

This kid, Timothy, he believed. He didn't just hear the word, he moved into salvation. And we're acknowledging that that's a sovereign work of God, but we're also acknowledging that there are means to lead people in that direction, a way of approaching the scriptures that can make them wise for salvation.

[24:08] So I'm telling you parents, I want to be crystal clear about this, the goal, continue what you've learned and firmly believed. The main strategy, scripture.

Something very important that many modern parents neglect, law. You've got to understand how to use the law, which are the scriptures, to make your children wise unto salvation.

Luther says it this way, therefore, learn who can learn and learn well, so that we may know first the ten commandments, what we owe to God. First, if we do not know this, then we know nothing, and we will not inquire about Christ in the least.

I believe that one of the reasons that we're seeing this mass defection from the Christian faith amongst young people is first and foremost, most obviously, they were not legitimately converted, and secondly, they were fed, Jesus loves you, Jesus died for you, without any appropriate priming of their hearts to see how glorious a truth that is.

They've not been taught the law sufficiently. And Luther says that if someone doesn't understand what they owe God, they will not inquire about Christ in the least.

[25:36] Just like we monks, he continues, did who either held Christ to be an angry judge, or despised him entirely in the face of our imaginary holiness.

We fancied we were not in sin, which the Ten Commandments show and punish. But we had the natural light of reason and free will, and if we lived according to that, as much as we were able, then God would have to bestow upon us his grace.

But now, if we are to know Christ as our helper and Savior, then we must first know out of what he can help us. Not out of fire or water or bodily need or danger, but out of sin and the hatred of God. But whence do I know that I lie drowned in misery from no other source than the law? That must show me what my loss and disease are.

otherwise I will never inquire for the physician and his help. Matthew Henry says it much more simply. The commandments of the Lord are pure, holy, and just, and good.

[26:54] By them we discover our need for a Savior, and then learn how to adorn his gospel. They are the means which the Holy Spirit uses in enlightening the eyes.

They bring us to a sight and sense of our sin and misery and direct us in the way of duty. So what we're saying, and I want to make sure we're seeing the flow of the text appropriately, we have the aim in verse 14, we have the main broad strategy in verse 15, how from childhood you are acquainted with the sacred writings, and then at the end of verse 15, we have the very specific tactic that I want to commend to you today, knowing many of you Christian parents are faithful in effusing the home with the word.

I know that in many of your homes, the question that is dominant is what does the Bible say, but I want to make sure that you understand there is a particular tactic commended not only by this passage, but by the whole of God's word that can help you to help your children be made wise unto salvation, and that is a proper teaching of God's law which primes their hearts for an eager reception of God's gospel.

Now let me tell you specifically, I want to be very clear here how to teach the law. well, we may need to do a meeting about this, a Zoom call or something, I'm happy to flesh this out much further. This is a subject I think you can probably tell I'm passionate about, I'm passionate about Christian parenting, and I'm passionate to help Christian parents who mean well, do well, because meaning well is not sufficient.

[28:48] I don't want you to have a zeal that is adjoined to ignorance. I want you to have a zeal that's adjoined to knowledge, okay, so I want to be as clear as I can within this context of a sermon, but also this is, friends, you would not be hassling me, you would not be bothering me, you would not be wasting my time by just saying, I need to talk to you about this in more detail.

I can help you think through self-righteous children, I can help you think through, you know, we can apply this stuff in a lot of directions, but let me just give you some general idea of how to help your children be made wise for salvation.

salvation. Just so there's no confusion, what I mean by God's law is this, God's saving work happens in two phases that are most broadly theologically labeled as law and gospel.

The law highlights our need for salvation, and the gospel provides the means of God's salvation.

Now, one thing I want you to understand is it would be wrong to say that the law is located only in the Old Testament and that the gospel is located only in the New Testament.

There is plenty of gospel in the Old Testament, and there is plenty of law in the New Testament.

The law is simply the righteous requirements of God designed to bring conviction to the conscience.

[30:15] And the gospel is the righteous fulfillment of that law by Christ, by Christ, meant to produce relief and joy to the convicted conscience.

You could say it this way, every child's got a conscience, that conscience can be imagined as a piece of iron stoked into the furnace of God's righteous, holy requirements, and then cooled and calmed in the relief, the water bucket of gospel.

That's one way to think about it. There's probably a better way. That just was on the fly, as they say. Now, that's what I mean by law and gospel, and I will give you some specifics.

At minimum, the Ten Commandments need to be known and seen as the law of the home.

Everybody needs to be asking not only what does the Bible say, but are we, am I, as a dad, as a mom, as a kid, are you obeying the Ten Commandments?

Our kids need to know the Ten Commandments forward and backwards. They need to have some understanding of what those commandments mean. Next, in addition to the Ten Commandments, let me tell you a second thing you should do.

[31:35] You need to teach regularly Matthew 5 through 7. Matthew 5 through 7 is the Sermon on the Mount, and one of the things that Jesus is doing with the Sermon on the Mount is he is correcting the way that the human heart finds loopholes in reaction to the divine law.

And so, Matthew 5 through 7 is law in the sense that Jesus says, you have heard it said, but I tell you. this is where self-righteousness goes to die.

Matthew 5 through 7 is where self-righteousness goes to die. I told you earlier, even if you're not a parent, we're talking to some degree about how to grow in godliness.

If you have a problem with self-righteousness, if you're not thrilled that Jesus died for you, if you've lost the joy of your salvation, well, here's where I would go.

You go to Matthew 5 through 7, and you see what God really expects of you. And you will find abundantly clear that you need a Savior. Desperately need a Savior.

[32:51] I think this passage, Matthew 5 through 7, is essentially, ought to be, in essential way, probably saying something heretical here, bear with me, the third table of the law.

We've got the first 5, 10 commandments, we've got the second 5, 10 commandments, and then we've got this section of scripture, and this should be the rules of our home.

The rules of our home. This is what God wants from us as human beings. I remember, like yesterday, a night when the kids were very, very young.

Wesley had just emerged onto the scene. Sarah and Brooke were very young. Sarah had gotten chicken pox, and Brooke contracted the pox from Sarah.

Problem is, is that Sarah's pox were really bad. She was living the life of Job. Scratching her wounds with clay pots.

[33:52] And Brooke was, like, maybe running a light temperature and had, like, three sketchy bumps on her whole tiny body. Brooke had said something to Sarah, probably slightly antagonistically, that the chicken pox were fun.

And so one late night, at least by midnight, Angela and I were asleep in our bed, and we awoke to a sobbing Sarah standing at the side of the bed.

And we said, what's going on? What's wrong? And she said, I sinned, and I feel really bad about it. And I said, well, what did you do?

Because I'm thinking, you couldn't have done much. Like, you've literally been in bed for four days watching Barney. Like, you couldn't have. I'm like, what? How could you? What could you have done? And this is what she said.

Remember, oldest child, some of you know, sibling dynamics, you know where self-righteousness would tend to rest, where outward compliance, the pleaser child, and so on and so forth.

[35:08] This is what she said to me. I hated Brookie in my heart. I hated Brookie in my heart. And she just kept repeating that to me.

I hated Brookie in my heart. And, you know, you're stuck in these moments as parents where your kids are confessing real sin, but they're also unbelievably cute. And it's like, okay, you know, game face.

Because I just want to be like, you're so cute. And I said, well, how did you hate Brookie in your heart? And she said, I hated Brookie in my heart because she said the chicken pox were fun and not a big deal.

And I remember feeling hatred in my heart toward her. Now, just think about all that God had been doing in our life, our little family, to lead to that conversation.

Just think of all of the layers of God's faithfulness throughout many generations that led to that little conversation. See, one of the things that was happening that night is we were asleep, but the law was at work.

[36:20] I don't know. I honestly don't know. I've thought about it. I can't answer it. Who taught Sarah the following? Was it us? Was it someone in Sunday school?

I don't know. And that's related to next week's conversation about godly influences. But somewhere along the way, little Sarah had heard Jesus say in Matthew 5, 21, Someone had taught my five-year-old that law.

And because of that, she was there at my bedside, more wise for salvation.

So that I was able to say, sweetie, you're right. That is a sin. And we're so glad that when we sin, we have a Savior who died for us so that we could be forgiven and so that we could learn how to do better in the future.

So I can tell you, honey, let's just pray and ask for forgiveness and then leave me alone. Friends, since the 1960s, I'm going to be a little hard here.

[38:02] Please just understand that I'm just angry at the situation. Since the 1960s, at least, Christian parents have been conditioned to believe that the primary reason young adults abandon their faith is that they were brought up in overly rigid, law-based environments.

In contradiction to that, I would point out the following. When young people leave the faith, they almost always become some other kind of Pharisee.

They do not run from law into freedom. They become Sharia Pharisees.

Careful to use the proper pronouns. Eager to levy the law on the population. Happy to say that carbon taxes and mask mandates and vaccine mandates are right.

They often follow strict diets. Careful not to step on whatever the latest letter is added to the alphabet mafia.

[39:17] They become eager participants of cancel culture, including canceling their own parents. Friends, these people, when they depart from the faith, don't depart from law.

They run into law. Friends, can I just be super clear about something with the risk of stepping on toes because it may be entirely well-meaning on your part.

Gentle parenting, as it's presented, is narcissism. It is actually completely law-based.

You, if you're embracing, let's say, gentle parenting, are actually picking up rules and applying those rules in your parenting.

Friends, what's different about both people embracing, say, gentle parenting and children who run away from Christ? It's not that we hate rules.

[40:18] It's that we hate God's rules. that's it. And friends, I want to tell you that if you've fallen even partially for some convoluted deception that suggests to you that the way to prevent your child from running away from the faith when they're older is to keep the law from them and give them only gospel, what you have done is you have walked in the ways of your own wisdom.

you have abandoned the clear teaching of God's word. God's word does not leave you to do this most crucial calling without clear information on how to perform your duty.

In this case, the Bible is exceedingly clear. The law inflames the conscience. The gospel cools the conscience.

We do both of these things as Christian parents. Otherwise, our children will not be made wise unto salvation. This verse, wise unto salvation, where does the Bible say wisdom comes from?

Proverbs 9, 10. The fear of the Lord is wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

[41:49] Charles Spurgeon is not known to be a mean, abusive man. He loved the lost and was careful to counsel them consistently to Christ.

But listen to how he speaks to his own congregation, full as it was every week with people who did not know Christ. He says it very simply, there is a war between you and God's law.

Now, the Ten Commandments are against you. The first one comes forward and says, let him be cursed for he denies me. He has another God beside me.

His God is his belly. He yields homage to his lust. All the Ten Commandments like ten great pieces of a canon are pointed at you today for you have broken all of God's statutes and lived in the daily neglect of his commands.

So, you will find it a hard thing to go to war with the law. When the law came in peace, Sinai was altogether on a smoke. And even Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake.

[42:53] What will you do when the law comes in terror? When the trumpet of the archangel shall tear you from your grave? When the eyes of God shall burn their way into your guilty soul?

When the great books shall be opened and all your sin and shame shall be punished? Published. Can you stand against an angry law that day? Now, what I'm commending to you is that you not miss the law in your parenting instruction.

I'm not commending law alone. I want to be clear on that. I'm commending what I think is a consistent error in modern parents.

The idea that rules provoke rebellion. False. False. Here's the truth. God has given you an entire program for raising your kids in godliness.

forgiveness. And it begins with the law and ends with the gospel. And on any given day, you might go back and forth between the law and the gospel dozens of times. You will not, friends, you will not be able to raise up a Timothy if your home is only law.

[44:15] Friends, you will not be able to raise up a Timothy if your home is only gospel. Let me add another wrinkle. people, you better be sure that you, in your heart, are delighting in both.

Because what you're delighting in will be communicated, even if you say the right words, you must delight in both. And friends, some of you are more naturally grouchy and corrective.

And while you would be able to articulate a very orthodox gospel position, you actually really love rules. And some of you, friends, would be able to articulate much of what I've said about the law, but you really love gospel as get-out-of-jail-free pass.

And so, as we will speak about next week, where your heart is as parents matters a great deal. You must learn to love both for what both offer.

One, the revelation of God's righteous requirements, and this is going to push against some of you who don't like being told what to do, and the revelation of God's righteous requirements met in Christ.

[45:34] And this is going to push against some of you who like rules. So we all have room to grow there. Let me wrap this up by saying that throughout my study, I was reminded of this particular story of David who desired to build a temple for the Lord, but he was kept from doing so.

The Lord said, that's not for you to do. I think this mirrors exactly where we stand as Christian parents. We cannot build our child into a dwelling place for the Lord.

We can't lead them all the way through conversion. But what did David do when he was told, you can't go that far, David? You can't build the house. What did he do?

He spared no expense in laying up all the materials that would be necessary for the assembly of that house of God. He diligently ensured that by the time Solomon was of age to accomplish this task, Solomon could look into his backyard and see all of the cedars of Lebanon he needed, all of the gold from Egypt he needed, and so on and so forth.

And friends, this is as best we can do as parents. Don't let that be the same in your mind as you can do nothing. You can do a great deal, you just can't do everything.

[47:04] But you can consistently as an expression of love for your children, lay up the materials necessary so that when the Holy Spirit is ready to bring them out of darkness and into life, the materials are all there.

And the Holy Spirit can build what you could not build. Now, if you're a Christian parent, I just want you to bow your heads for a moment and I want to speak a blessing over you, I want to say a prayer over you, and I'm not concerned about whether your kids are 3, 13, or 33.

If you're a parent here today, bow your heads for a second and just receive what I consider to be probably the greatest privilege that exists as a human being for a human being, and that's simply this.

Oh, Lord God, I pray over these parents now that each one of them in due time, according to your perfect will, would be able to look each one of their children in the eye and say, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed.

Father God, I pray for those who are here who have prodigals out prodigal. Lord, the passage describes a particular kind of conversion in which the prodigal son returns to his senses, returns to what he knew to be true, understands what he had been taught.

[48:42] Lord, I pray through your Holy Spirit that you would perform a miracle in the work of those who are out prodigal and that you would bring them to their senses and show them, Lord, the glory of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the law.

Father, if that requires repentant conversations on the behalf of parents apologizing for failures, fine, do it, Lord. Give those parents faith.

But if that requires hard conversations in which the law is pressed further into the conscience, Lord, let's not let an age, a number, 18, 22, be an arbitrary barrier between us and our children whom you've given us.

Let us tell them the word as we would our own neighbors or coworkers. God, I pray, most of all, just that you would do a work in our church in which this terrible number, 30%, Lord, in our flesh we might be tempted to say, well, two out of three ain't bad.

Nonsense. Nonsense. These are sheep in our pasture. So, Father, we pray that you would do a work in us that would allow us, Lord, to carefully, diligently, prayerfully, as the primary focus in our lives, the primary outworking of our own salvation, that we would lean into the discipleship of our children, that God, you would give us all the wisdom and skill and insight and care and help from others that we need to do this.

[50:15] And, Lord, we pray for our children, especially the little ones, and we ask, God, that you would protect them from the enemy, protect them from their own flesh, and protect them from the world, and deliver them safely into your fold as your true saved people.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Well, to introduce communion, I simply say this. He who has been forgiven much loves much. The joy of your salvation in coming to this table will be directly tied to your understanding of God's righteous requirements.

So, if we're going to do the law and gospel well in our homes, we must do the law and gospel well in our hearts. So, when you come to the table today, understand this. You, in yourself, have nothing to offer God for your own acceptance and salvation.

It is only because Jesus Christ has offered his blood for you, pictured in this wine, and offered his body for you, pictured in this broken bread. It is only because of these things that you have any hope of entering eternity.

would you come today as people who know, through the Spirit teaching you, that you have been forgiven much, and that therefore you have the joy of loving much.

[51:39] Come and partake of the table today. skill skill