

## GODLY PARENTING PART 2

### Lesson 1

### What If You Only Get 13 Years?

In early Roman law, the age of majority was set at the age by which an individual would have attained the intellectual abilities to:

- Exercise full citizenship
- Manage their affairs in life
- Become parents and heads of home

For ancient Rome, this was decided to be the age 15 for males. Medieval Europe decided age of majority based upon the ability to participate in warfare (also 15 years). When warfare techniques changed, so did the age of majority. When the metal armor necessary for knights and heavy cavalry were developed, the age of majority increased to 21—the age at which a male could be both strong enough and skilled enough in this form of warfare.

Because of the fame and durability of the knighthood, its influence on the age of majority endured for centuries throughout much of the Western world. Twenty-one remained the age of majority in America from its inception until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The need for more soldiers during World War II prompted Congress to lower the age of military conscription from 21 to 18 in 1942 (**Numbers 1:3** lists the age of conscription as 20). For nearly 30 years, the age of majority (21) and the age of conscription (18) stood in disparity (the age of taxation should also be 20 according to **Exodus 30:14**). Since the obligation of military service has always been linked to the right of political participation (i.e., voting), a change was imminent. That change took place in 1971 when the Twenty-Sixth Amendment was ratified, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18. Now, 18 has nearly universally been accepted as the age of majority throughout the world. This is also why most American Christians have traditionally believed they had 18 years to raise their kids.

### JEWISH TRADITION

The Jews, however, view things differently. Based on the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud (200 AD and 550 AD), the Jews hold that 13 is the age at which boys pass from spiritual dependency on father and mother and become a “son of the Law” or “son of obligation.” The religious celebration associated with this coming-of-age is called a **bar-mitzvah** (meaning, son of the Law). For girls, the age of majority is 12 years. Their coming-of-age celebration is called a **bat-mitzvah** (meaning, daughter of the Law). This age marks a very critical stage in a child’s life that the modern Church would do well to observe and consider.

For the Jews, 12-13 years old represents:

- The age at which young people can control their desires.
- The age at which young people are responsible for their own walk with God.
  - Prior to this age they would not suffer for their own sins.
  - Prior to this age they could suffer for the sins of their parents.
- The father recites a benediction, “Blessed is He who has now freed me from the responsibility of this one.”

- That the young person's vows before God now stand independently of their parent's approval.
- The age of sexual maturity and reproduction, and, therefore, marriage is now an option.

This standard is beyond foreign to Western civilization, including the Western Church.

### **JESUS' COMING OF AGE**

We see an allusion to this Jewish tradition in the life of Christ:

- **Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup>And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup>And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. . . <sup>46</sup>And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.** Luke 2:41-43, 46

In the Lord's day, the Jews held boys to a 12-year *bar-mitzvah*. We see here, that by age 12, Jesus Christ had been trained up in the Law, both asking the lawyers questions and also hungry to hear them. This hunger was there because Joseph and Mary had raised Jesus according to the requirements of the Law of Moses.

### **OLD TESTAMENT PARENTING**

While preparing Israel to enter the Promised Land, Moses exhorts God's people to teach their children the Bible because, "**Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.**" (Proverbs 20:11)

- **Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons;** Deuteronomy 4:9

### **THE DEUTERONOMY 6 COMMISSION**

Part of the Law of Moses contained the wisdom of God for parenting and producing disciples out of children. Don't forget that the first commandment concerning morality, the fifth commandment, concerns family and parenting: children are to honor their father and mother. But who is expected to teach them that honor? The child's father and mother. Therefore, the fifth commandment is a law regarding proper parenting.

- **And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: <sup>7</sup>And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.** Deuteronomy 6:6-7

Parents are to teach their children the Word of God at home, while they are traveling around town, as they are laying them down for bed, and first thing in the morning. **Deuteronomy 6** is the Torah's golden rule for parenting. (See also **Deuteronomy 11:18-21**.)

### THE 78<sup>TH</sup> PSALM—A PARENTING MANIFESTO

- **Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup>I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: <sup>3</sup>Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. <sup>4</sup>We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. <sup>5</sup>For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: <sup>6</sup>That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: <sup>7</sup>That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: <sup>8</sup>And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit (*attitude*) was not stedfast with God.**

**Psalm 78:1-8**

These opening 8 verses provide a beautiful outline for the plan and purpose of godly parenting:

1. Talk about the Law/Word of God with your children. Your children should hear and know the Word of God because of you.
2. Do not hide the Word of God from your children.
3. Show the generations to come (your children and grandchildren) the praises, strength, and wonderful works of God.
4. Remember that fathers are commanded to share the testimonies and laws of God with their children.
5. And they (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) are to share them with their children (3<sup>rd</sup> generation).
6. And they (3<sup>rd</sup> generation) are to share them with their children (4<sup>th</sup> generation).
7. By doing so, the children will have their hope set in God, not elsewhere, remembering the works of God and keeping His commandments.
8. By doing so, the children will be better than their fathers: lacking stubbornness, rebellion, an evil heart, and an unstable attitude.

### THE PROVERBS PROMISE

One final verse from the Old Testament will help us to understand how Joseph and Mary would have raised Jesus Christ in preparation for his *bar-mitzvah*:

- **Train up (*inaugurate, discipline*) a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**

**Proverbs 22:6**

This verse is often erroneously invoked by Christians after their grown child backslides. The logic goes something like this: "Well, I raised him/her in the house of God. I know they'll come back to God. They have to. I trained them up in the way they should go." Proverbs promises

that if we train our children up properly, they will never depart; not, they will return if they leave. We get 13 years to instill that training and discipline. Thirteen brief years to inaugurate our children into the Kingdom of God.

### **WHY ONLY 13 YEARS?**

Why only 13 years? Well, other than the biblical pattern already set forth, neuroscience and childhood psychology tell us many fascinating facts:

- We learn 90% of everything we will ever learn by the age of 10.
- A child's personality is pretty well set by 13.
- Our brains reach their largest size between 11 and 14 years old.
- During this stage, the brain is very plastic, meaning it can change, adapt, and learn readily.

The teenage years are often greatly feared by parents, but this need not be the case. Teenagers are nothing more than children with higher mechanical skill levels than 5-year-olds. Rebellious and disrespectful teenagers were rebellious and disrespectful 5-year-olds. Don't wait until your child is a mechanically inclined, socially capable, hormone-driven teenager before you begin disciplining and parenting them. It will be too late by then and **"a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."** (Proverbs 29:15b) And the shame won't stop once they move out.

- Lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled parents will only half-parent their children.
- Half-parented children grow up to be lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled adults (aka duds).
- A lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled adult (a dud) cannot be expected to attract and marry a disciplined, successful Christian visionary. They will have to settle for someone of their caliber—another lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled adult (another dud).
- A marriage comprised of lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled adults will not succeed at much of anything in life. But they will probably have children, and those children will be parented by lazy, carnal, aimless, excuse-filled parents.
- And the cycle continues, but like an old satellite's decaying orbit, each revolution brings catastrophe ever closer.

You have 13 years to invest in your children and set them on their proper path.

## GODLY PARENTING PART 2

### Lesson 2

### Goliaths Make For A Horrible Inheritance

- **A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children. . .**

**Proverbs 13:22a**

The big picture, long-term vision of parenting should be focused on setting our children up for success after they leave home. This can be called a spiritual inheritance. Not all inheritances are natural (e.g., money, possessions, or property), nor are they all disbursed upon our death. A spiritual legacy, victory, and faith-filled attitudes are also an inheritance, but they are ones disbursed while we are yet raising our children. In the end, bequeathing a massive estate to our child is pointless if it also includes our sins and insecurities. **“Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife.” (Proverbs 17:1 NIV)**

Our job as parents is to pioneer as much of the Kingdom of God in our homes and marriages as possible, to the end our children would be raised and saturated in the presence of God. Perhaps the greatest legacy and inheritance we can leave our kids is that of victory and faith. Obtaining victory in our private lives not only benefits us, but it also benefits our children and grandchildren.

#### **THE ENEMIES OF YOUR FAMILY**

Every human brings to their marriage some enemy, be it lust, insecurity, greed, laziness, perpetual infirmity, addiction, etc. These are the mountains in our lives providentially given that we might have something at which to aim our faith. They are given to us to “prove us.” Consider the parallel in the Time of the Judges.

- **Now these are the nations which the LORD left [in Israel], to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan [Joshua's generation of battles]; <sup>2</sup>Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof; <sup>3</sup>Namely, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath. <sup>4</sup>And they were [left] to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.**

**Judges 3:1-4**

Some familiarity with Israelite geography is necessary to appreciate this list of remaining enemies. These nations: the Philistines, Canaanites, Sidonians, and Hivites were all on the southwestern or northwestern sides of Israel. Their kingdoms were in the territories God's people had not yet pressed into to conquer. To us, they represent the enemies that Joshua's generation was not able to overcome because they ran out of time. It was the will of God that they were left for the next generation to conquer. It gave the following generation a test.

### **PARENTING QUESTIONS:**

1. What enemies have plagued your family or lineage?
2. What are you doing to defeat them?
3. With which enemy have you made an illegal peace treaty?
4. Which, if any, enemy can you see yourself running out of time to defeat? Realize that enemy may quite possibly be part of your inheritance to your children.

### **DOES YOUR LEGACY INCLUDE UNDEFEATED PHILISTINES?**

During the Time of the Judges each judge, from Othniel to Samson, had a different enemy to fight and subdue for the benefit of Israel. The first judge to contend with the Philistines was Shamgar. He slew 600 of them with an ox goad and suppressed them for a season. The most anointed to contend with the Philistines was Samson. From all appearances he was anointed and called to totally put down the Philistines once and for all.

**Samson** failed to destroy the Philistines. Samson lived life. He did some great things but mostly served himself. He died prematurely and failed to finish his race. He left the Philistines as an inheritance for Eli.

**Eli** attempted to battle the Philistines but the lack of holiness under his leadership ensured defeat (**1 Samuel 4**). He failed to totally crush the Philistines. Eli did some great things but failed to discipline his sons and purify Israel. He never finished his race. He and his sons all died prematurely. He left the Philistines as an inheritance for Samuel.

**Samuel** only temporarily suppressed them, leaving them as an issue for Saul, the first king of Israel (**1 Samuel 7**). He did some great things, but he was a poor father. His sons grew up to become sons of Belial. His failure in parenting provoked Israel to desire a king. He left the Philistines as an inheritance for Saul.

**King Saul** was terrified of the Philistines, not knowing what to do about their oppression and legislation (**1 Samuel 13:19-23**). He was even more vexed by their giant champion Goliath until a young shepherd named David arrived (**1 Samuel 17**). Saul did some great things but never finished his race. He left the Philistines as an inheritance for David.

**David** made short work of Goliath as a young teenager and began to complete what no one else had.

But there was only a Goliath to kill because Samson, Eli, Samuel, and Saul all failed to conquer the enemy at their gates. Their laziness left the oppressive Philistines as an inheritance for their children, their children's children, down to the fourth and fifth generation. Unbeknownst to David, his first military encounter with a Gittite warrior named Goliath would only be the beginning of one of his greatest callings—to put down the Philistines!

After David had been king for about 15 years, he desired to build God a house, a magnificent temple. God forbid him to do so but reminded him (via the Prophet Nathan) of his real responsibility:

- **“Now go and say to my servant David, “This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! <sup>10</sup>And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won’t oppress them as they’ve done in the past, <sup>11</sup>starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. “Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! <sup>12</sup>For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. <sup>13</sup>He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.”**

**2 Samuel 7:8-11 NLT  
(cf. 1 Chronicles 17:10)**

David had plans. He wanted to build God a great house, but the Lord had other plans for him. Nathan’s prophecy revealed that the plan of God was for David to finally put down all of the surrounding oppressors and create the peace necessary for the Temple project. Upon receiving the prophetic exhortation, **“I will give you rest from all your enemies,”** David immediately set about to fulfill his part of this promise—warfare.

- **And after this [Nathan’s prophecy], David defeated and subdued the Philistines by conquering Gath, their largest town. <sup>2</sup>David also conquered the land of Moab. . . <sup>3</sup>David also destroyed the forces of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah . . .**

**2 Samuel 8:1-2a, 3a NLT  
(cf. 1 Chronicles 18:1-3)**

Solomon never had to deal with the Philistines. The peace David secured allowed his son Solomon to proceed with building the grand Temple. But what if David never bothered to do anything more with his training, power, and authority but have parties, build chateaus, and talk about his calling? He would have left the Philistines undefeated and postponed the construction of the Temple another generation. While David did subdue the Philistines, however, he left another “goliath” to his son Solomon: sexual lust. Unfortunately, the failure to conquer this sinful enemy would condemn his lineage within just three generations.

### **PARENTING QUESTIONS**

1. What is the main Goliath God has mandated you to kill? Is it porn? Debt? Gluttony? Insecurity? Anger? Sickness?
2. Do you have a vision for your child’s future? Can you see further than the next school year, sports team, or holiday?
3. Are you preparing your child to enter the calling you have fought hard to clear for them? Marriage? Higher education? Ministry?

## **THE ERRANCY OF GENERATIONAL CURSES**

The doctrine of generational curses became very popular in the late 1990s as Christian TV found new ways to raise money. This doctrine states that any obstacle or hindrance a believer may be facing might be due to a “generational curse.” In other words, a Christian’s battle with sickness, lust, anger, or infertility could be the result of sin from previous generations. This doctrine is not biblically founded. The teaching uses **Exodus 20:5** as a prooftext.

- **Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them [idols], nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;**  
**Exodus 20:5**

This verse provides for a curse upon idol worshipers but only to the third or fourth generation. Not in perpetuity. And only to those that hate God. This concept is quoted again in **Exodus 34:7** but then, strangely enough, rescinded in both **Jeremiah 31:29-30** and **Ezekiel 18:4**:

- **“The people will no longer quote this proverb: ‘The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children’s mouths pucker at the taste.’<sup>30</sup> All people will die for their own sins—those who eat the sour grapes will be the ones whose mouths will pucker.**  
**Jeremiah 31:29-30 NLT**
- **For all people are mine to judge—both parents and children alike. And this is my rule: The person who sins is the one who will die.**  
**Ezekiel 18:4 NLT**

Furthermore, the **Exodus 20** passage continues:

- **And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.**  
**Exodus 20:6**

The subject of leaving Goliath as an inheritance is not a generational curse. It is a matter of failing to obtain victory for our families and setting our children up to advance the Kingdom of God as they prepare to leave our homes. Go find your family’s Goliath and take his head off!



## GODLY PARENTING PART 2

### Lesson 3

### A Father's Responsibility

God instituted marriage and family. It should not surprise us then that His Bible includes many examples, both good and bad, of parenting. All Bible stories seem to indicate that parenting begins with the father. The Old Testament begins with fathering, as is alluded to by Cain and Abel knowing how to worship God in Genesis, and ends with fathering again in Malachi:

- **And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.**  
**Malachi 4:6**

Successful parenting demands a father's heart and a vision that looks ten years down the road. Very few mothers have difficulty taking interest in their children. It is the fathers who typically struggle to stay focused on the welfare and discipleship of their children. When fathers fail to lead in parenting, mothers are crippled in their role. Fathers must arise and disciple their children.

#### PARENTING PROBLEMS IN THE BIBLE

The Bible contains very few examples of decent parenting. The failure of most parenting is tied directly to the fathers.

- Job enabled his kids' profligacy. (**Job 1:4-6**)
- Israel failed to circumcise for 40 years. This was a major parenting fail. Moses even failed to force the issue of circumcision with his two sons. (**Exodus 4:24-26**)
- Moses' grandson Jonathan became a Levite-for-hire and helped create a cult in the Tribe of Dan. (**Judges 18:30-31**)
- Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, mocked worship and died. (**Leviticus 10:1-2**)
- Eli's sons, Phinehas and Hophni, were perverts, stealing the tithe and fornicating with the worshipers. (**1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22**)
- Samuel's sons were greedy and corrupt. (**1 Samuel 8:3-5**)
- David had two sons who grew up to be sexual perverts (Amnon—**2 Samuel 13**; Solomon—**1 Kings 11:1**) and one son who was an insurrectionist. (Absalom—**2 Samuel 15:6**)

#### GOOD PARENTING IN THE BIBLE

- Oddly enough King Saul was not biased. He was hard on his favored son Jonathan. (**1 Samuel 14:36-46**)
- Manoah was one of the greatest dads in the Old Testament. (**Judges 13**)
- Asaph, one of David's least likely worship leaders, raised up his sons to maintain the vision of Temple ministry for generations. His lineage was still serving God in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. (**Ezra 2:41; Nehemiah 7:44**)
- Joseph was the reason Mary was chosen. He raised Jesus in the Law of Moses.

Successful parenting doesn't require a drill instructor's hard nose nor an OCD control issue. It requires a diligent, watchful, tender eye and the willingness to put in the time necessary to train and nurture the child into God-honoring early-adulthood.

### **GOD AS A REASONABLE (PARENT) FATHER**

We need not look any further than to God as a role model in parenting. How does He teach us, correct us, admonish us, or punish us? Consider how the Heavenly Father parents us:

#### **The Father demonstrates perfect parental emotions.**

- **The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.**  
**Psalm 103:8**
  
- **The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.**  
**Psalm 145:8**
  - When Adam and Eve rebelled, the all-knowing God of Creation began to help them by asking a series of questions. Man's honest answers brought him back into some form of fellowship.
  - God responds to our mistakes and rebellion with mercy and grace.
  - He has compassion upon us in our foibles.
  - He is slow to anger. Though His wrath can be kindled to the point of region-destroying anger, He is not short-tempered.
  - How do you respond when your children sin or fail?

#### **The Father praises, publicly endorses, and brags about His kids.**

- **And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**  
**Matthew 3:17**
  - The Father publicly bragged about His child.
  - The Father told His Son He loved Him, publicly.
  - The Father told everyone His Son was doing a good job.
  - Our kids should hear our praise regularly and feel our pride for them.
  - To my shame, my Lydia knew what *disappointed* meant before she understood what *proud* meant.
  - Do your children feel the joy of your pride or only the shame of your disappointment?

#### **God's commandments are not grievous or complicated. (1 John 5:3)**

- **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup>And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.**  
**2 Corinthians 6:17-18**

- The Father makes His expectations very clear. So should we.
  - Come out
  - Be separate
  - Touch not
  - No fuss, no muss, no shifting standard
- We should be clear and unchanging in our expectations. Your children are designed to want to please you. Don't crush that or you'll lose your kids!
- Are your parental expectations like shifting sands—impossible to nail—or are they easy to grasp and accomplish?

**It is not impossible to please God, like some parents. He simply requires faith.**

- **But without faith it is impossible to please him [not flawless works]: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.** **Hebrews 11:6**
  - The Father requires us to come to Him.
  - The Father is not looking for flawless works but heart effort.
  - The Father rewards those that seek to please Him.
  - We should not look for outward flawlessness but inward tenderness.
  - We should eagerly reward our kids when they conform to our family's protocol and expectations.
  - This requires balance. Do you overly reward, or do you withhold even the tiniest reward of praise?

Parents often fail **Ephesians 6:4 (AMPC): “Fathers [parents], do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment] . . .”** One person shared with me their personal story of pain and discouragement in their upbringing.

- *My parent would tear me down, then never mend the relationship or address what I had done wrong. After they had calmed down, they never repented or explained what they were mad about or comfort the pain they had caused by their angry put-downs. I learned to comply in order to avoid the hurt of rejection, but I was never able to figure out what was wrong in the first place. Even after my “repentance,” my parent would still be angry with me and would not restore a loving relationship. I therefore grew up assuming God was the same way—He would always be holding something over me.*

The previous testimony is the exact opposite of how God relates to us as His children. It is not impossible to please God, and He has a much higher standard than mom and dad ever could. Parenting is designed to introduce our children to the nature of the love of God. If we fail to know it ourselves, we will present a false and potentially blasphemous image of God to our kids. Repent if this is you, and may the rest of us pray we never fall into this destructive behavior.

## **GODLY PARENTING PART 2**

### **Lesson 4**

### **Wisdom And Regrets From Spirit-Filled Parents And Their Children**

We are often victims of our own upbringing. That means we are victims of our parent's ability or inability. We cannot afford to pass on any of the failings we may have experienced. In order to learn from great successes and failures, I regularly interview preachers and leaders whom I respect. I ask them about both their failures and successes as parents. These are their nuggets of wisdom, regrets, and mistakes. Most responses have been edited for clarity.

#### **PERSONAL CHARACTER AND TESTIMONY**

- When you make a mistake as a dad, repent to your family. They should always know that you value them more than your own ego.
- Sadly, I was a better father than husband for many years.
- One of my own father's actions that meant the most to me was that despite all his failures and shortcomings or blind spots, he was always first up in the morning long before anyone else praying. No matter what weight he carried on his shoulders, no matter how sick or fatigued, no matter what was going on in the light of day, in the early hours of the morning I always knew my dad was praying for his family.
- My children saw I was no different at home than at church.
- My children saw my walk with God, my Bible study, and my prayer life.
- I didn't have wild emotional swings when we were under attack or when wild reports came in. My wife and I took it all in stride.
- My father's spiritual leadership and personal relationship with God carried more weight with me than a thousand of his failures. Whatever he neglected in his role as a father he made up for in his role as a spiritual father. The consequence to his ministry-first ethic was we did not grow up very close, but I grew up learning to put God first and to sacrifice for the church.
- Watching my daddy's dedication to God at home, not just in the pulpit, set an example for me.
- Arguing and discrediting your spouse in front of your children will teach them you are not united and tempt them to play you against your spouse. And they will.
- My dad loved people no matter what they did to him. This made an impression on me.
- As parents, let your kids see you pray, worship, read your Bible, and love each other.
- Social media families aren't real. A godly family should be your goal.
- If you look like the world, then don't get upset with your kids when they do, too.

#### **FELLOWSHIP**

##### **Successes**

- When you're with your children, be with them. Don't be concerned about what you have to do.
- Ask your children their favorite things.
- Take your children on dates.
- Make your office open to them. Let them sit in your lap [while still appropriate].

- Ask yourself, “What can my kids learn through school? What can they learn from church? What won’t they get from either? What can they only get from me?”
- Kids need at least 20 minutes of parental face time a day.
- I link some of our family’s strength to the fact that we sat down and ate as a family at least 4 nights a week.
- I have taken all my daughters on special daughter-daddy trips, just the two of us.
- Be actively engaged in your children’s lives and your example will carry more weight than your words.
- Be involved with your children when they are young and stay involved when they get older, whether they like it or not.

### **Regrets**

- Children of ministers, particularly in churches that are growing quickly, can be the victims of neglect while miracles are occurring all around.
- The pagan dad is at every ball game, every school function, etc... Our kids recognized that and wondered if it would have been better to have a pagan for a dad.
- I wish I had taken more vacations with my family.
- I wish I had regulated my kids’ friendships more closely.
- Neglected kids will hate the thing their parents love the most out of spite. They’ll associate that thing of love with their personal loss, hurt, and pain—even if it’s God they end up hating.
- Your kids will abandon God if they think He’s the reason you’re never around.
- Too busy can never be acceptable when it concerns your babies.

### **WORSHIP**

- I wish we had more moments of praying in the Holy Ghost and emphasis of it as an important part of daily life.
- Fire doesn’t fall on empty altars. Teach your children to bring stuff and lay it down for God. It isn’t just what we can get but what can we give Him.
- We never invoked the Lord’s name in vain, claiming God said something when He hadn’t.

### **EDUCATION**

- Know when to harness your children and when to let go.
- I believe our kids still serve God [in part] because we homeschooled until 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- We grew up to serve God [in part] because my parents kept us out of public school (in the 1980s and ‘90s). That kept us clean.
- Public school cost us our son. Until then (homeschooled until middle school), he was such a good kid. However, his goodness was untested. Middle school exposed him to less-governed friendships.

### **DISCIPLINE**

- Seagull parenting doesn’t work. It only irritates.
- I wish I had chilled more on the spanking.
- Parenting is not a one-size-fits-all model. Every child is different and requires different things.

- Boundaries for your children aren't limitations for them. They are security to them. Kids might not know that they like boundaries, but they do. Without boundaries, kids don't know what is or is not acceptable. Boundaries keep kids from feeling and being out of control.
- Be consistent in your discipline. If it is unacceptable behavior today, then it will be unacceptable tomorrow.
- You cannot discipline a child for breaking unknown rules.
- Don't dispute your parenting discrepancies in front of your children.
- Don't "hide" or "protect" your children from their daddy's discipline. Children need the loving correction and discipline from their father. You are not helping them by hiding things from dad.

### **DISCIPLESHIP**

- My dad was not good at discipleship. My sister ended up marrying a non-believer because we didn't know what true a disciple looked like.
- Children want to please mom and dad; this should not be impossible. It's not impossible to please God, and He has a much higher standard than mom and dad ever will.
- My parents answered any and every question (about God) we ever had.
- If all you ever do is discipline your children and never encourage them, you are pushing your child to the point of exasperation.
- Discipline with consistency, not simply when you are boiling over with anger.
- Children need affirmation just as much as they need discipline.
- I wish I would have made my kids work harder around the house.
- Don't let your children ask for permission in public.
- Hold your children's feet to the fire when they're little, not when they're teenagers.
- My children saw that condemnation wouldn't follow any crazy news.
- My parents raised us so that church (anything child or youth-related) was never an option.
- I wish we had been more honest with our kids about families in the church and what problems may have been going on behind the scenes.

### **TRUST**

- I didn't trust my children with their friends or siblings at home, and I never let my son babysit his younger sisters.
- Children are children and are prone to getting in trouble. Don't trust your children with other children, even the children of church leadership.
- You don't get in trouble living in a glass house as much as you get in trouble being in a dark room with the door shut.

May God help us as we raise up another generation of children for His glory!!