

Topics from Proverbs: The Family - Tom Grass

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Preacher: Tom Grass

- [0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Father, thank you for this day. Thank you for your word.
- We build our lives on your truth. Amen.
- I'm sorry, I'm a little emotional. I didn't know a... I didn't know Joel and Amy were coming. It's all good, it's just overwhelming.
- When you raise a family, and now he's 29, hearing him sitting next to me, it kind of broke my heart. So... Yeah.
- Psalms 127.1 Unless the Lord builds a house, they labor in vain who build it. Proverbs 3, 5, and 6 says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
- [1 : 18] Lean not on understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. These three verses are a good starting point for any family. They are.
- Unless the Lord builds a house, you'll labor in vain. The best shot we have at a godly home and a good family life is for all involved to follow these verses in their personal walk with God.
- We must submit to God and commit our families to God. Doesn't mean it's going to be easy. Doesn't mean it's always going to look nice.
- Doesn't mean it's always going to work out. But you must continue to trust Him and follow Him. That's the goal of our Christian walk. That's the goal of our family life, right?
- Trust Him in all your ways. Don't lean on your own understanding. You lie on this, right? The Holy Bible. Marriage is God's design beginning in Genesis, confirmed by Jesus and the Apostle Paul and the other writers of the Bible, right?
- [2 : 23] God started it from the beginning. In Genesis 2, 20-25, the man gave names to all the animals, birds to the sky, every beast to the field, but for Adam there was not a helper suitable for him.
- So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man. And he slept. That's the last time he got to sleep. He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. It's been sleepless nights ever since.
- The Lord God fashioned into woman the rib which He had taken from the man and brought her to the man. The man said, This is now bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman. Whoa, man, right?
- Whoa, man. Right? This is a great thing. He brought him a wife, a helpmeet, a suitable companion. You know? Isn't that great? He's so nice to us to do that.
- And if you wait for the right woman or man, it can really be a great thing and God can really bless it. For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh.
- [3 : 31] The man and the woman were both naked. They weren't ashamed. You know, in the beginning, God made it right. He did it right. Jesus repeats what was written in Genesis.

In Matthew 19, He made them male and female for this reason shall man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. And they'll become one flesh and no longer two but one.

Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate. These are principles that we build marriage upon. These are things that God designed and confirmed in His Word. And He affirms it in lives of those who hang on in our marriage relationships.

Ephesians 5. Paul uses the analogy marriage is like Christ in the church. Ephesians 5 verses, that whole section, 21 to 33. But a few of these verses, you should flip there if you have your Bible or your phone.

Ephesians 5. These are familiar if you've been reading your Bible or studying it. Verse 21. Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. What a great opening line when you talk about marriage.

[4 : 36] Be subject to one another. Who has the most rights in a marriage? Don't answer, Kurt. No, but you're supposed to be subject to one another.

Not me more important than her, her more important than I, right? You're subject to one another. That takes humility, patience, love, compassion. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church.

Men, can you do that? That's the standard. That's so convicting. Isn't it? It is so convicting. Verse 28.

So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. You want to have a good marriage. In verse 31, here it is again. For this reason, a man to leave his father and mother should be joined to his wife and become one flesh.

Do you get it? In the beginning, this is God's design. Genesis. Jesus confirms it. Paul affirms it.

[5 : 39] It's God's design. Revelation. We're the bride of Christ. Marriage, supper of the Lamb. The church is his bride. This is really important to God. Get it right. Now we move into Proverbs, chapter 5.

If you want to flip to that section. I would title this The Exclusivity of Marriage. I can't spell the word or say it, but the exclusivity of marriage. Here it is.

Listen to this. This means in your marriage bond and relationships and as a single man or woman, you are made for one individual, not many.

You are made to honor that relationship before you're married. And you're made to honor the marriage to someone that you're going to be married to. By this, we're talking about sexuality.

This is meant to be done in the confines of marriage. Proverbs says it this way in chapter 5. Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets, let them be yours alone and not for strangers with you.

[6 : 50] Let your fountain be blessed. Rejoice in the wife of your youth as a loving hind and a graceful doe. Let her breast satisfy at all times. Be exhilarated always with her love.

God made it right. Do it right and it'll be better. It'll be the best. We don't know what the best could be if we don't do it right. Marriage is precious to God.

We are to revere it, cherish it. Marriage is based on a commitment, a covenant. It's not just convenience or feelings, but it's a bond.

It's not convenient to remain married sometimes. I don't mean that wrongly. It's not based on how things are going, how you feel today.

It's based on I made a pledge to be married to this woman for the rest of my life. And I'm going to trust God that His word is true and that this is the best thing that I can do in my life because I am married to this woman.

[7 : 50] regardless of anything that happens, that is my bond. That's my commitment. That's what marriage is. There's a room full and the room's not very full, but there's great examples of people that have remained married in this chapel, in this assembly of people, in this church.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. Wives, respective husbands, both of you, be committed to your marriage and learn to enjoy each other. That last phrase, learn to enjoy each other, it takes years.

And it's never really fulfilled in some ways. You're always learning. You're always figuring out how to enjoy each other. You're always figuring out what can we do that we would enjoy each other?

And you realize you don't have time for it. And then, right? Isn't that how it goes? And then you go, well, that was really fun. We should do that again. And then a year and a half goes by. Right? Isn't that true?

Yeah. Proverbs 18. Let's move on. Listen to this one. Proverbs 18.22. He who finds a wife finds a good thing. Yeah. And obtains favor from the Lord.

[8 : 59] Proverbs 19.14. House and wealth and inheritance is from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. If you're married and you have a wife, it's from the Lord.

Proverbs 31. 10 to 12. 10 to 12. An excellent wife who can find for her worth is far above rubies or jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in hers and he'll have no lack of gain.

She does him good and not evil all the days of her lives. That's quite a charge to a woman. Do your husband good. Not when it's convenient. All the days of your life.

All the days of that covenant. All the days of that relationship that you're committed to. That's quite a challenge. Every day. No matter how he treats you, do good to him.

Is the reverse true for the husband? Of course it is. It's a mutual bond of one. Treat each other the same. The wise woman builds her house but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.

[10 : 04] That's a lot of responsibility to put on the wife. That's a lot. That's a load, right? But if you're wise, you will build your house. That'll be your focus. That'll be where you spend your emotional energy.

That'll be where you spend your time. You know, I am just speaking right from the word. I'm not taking on the challenges of society when I'm speaking today. But I'm just telling you, build your homes.

And the charge, according to scripture, is the wife. Take it for what it says. Take it to heart. A wife is to be highly valued and treasured by her husband.

Husbands, love your wives. I have a quote from Charles Spurgeon. Listen, I'll just read the latter part of it.

A true husband loves his wife with a hearty love. Fervent and intense. That's pretty tough. It is not mere lip service.

[11 : 04] Ah, beloved, what more could Christ have done in proof of his love for us than he has done? Jesus has a delighted love toward his spouse. He prizes her affection.

And delights in her with sweet complacency. Believer, you wonder at Jesus' love. You admire it. Are you imitating it? And your domestic relationships is a rule and measure of your love, even as Christ loved the church.

See how this all comes together? You're both responsible for your love to each other just as Christ loved the church. quite a challenge, quite a charge.

But it's biblical. It's right. It'll work out best if you do it. Are we going to have shortcomings? Sure. Of course. But if that's your standard, go back to it.

Right? Isn't that what you have to do? In any training, what do you do when you get off track? You go back to it. You know? And training in practice produces the results you want. It's constantly being tested.

[12 : 16] Quotes about marriage if you want a few. I'm not doing the silly stuff. Sorry. It's the wrong guy up here today for silly and funny things. Max Lucado, God created marriage.

No government subcommittee envisioned it. No social organization developed it. Marriage was conceived and born in the mind of God. Isn't that a cool thought? It was born in the mind of God.

And you, if you're married, are partaking in something that God designed that came out of His head for you to enjoy and participate in. What an awesome thing. How special. How intimate. Martin Luther, there is no more lovely, friendly, or charming relationship, communion, or company than that of a good marriage.

Wow. The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. I'll read that one again.

The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother. It's really challenging, isn't it, men? Yeah? Because you don't feel like it. You're tired. So is she. great marriages, don't happen by luck or accident.

[13 : 33] They're the result of consistent investment of time, thoughtfulness, forgiveness, affection, prayer, mutual respect, and a rock-solid commitment between a husband and a wife. That's true. I like this one, Ruth Graham Bell.

I think I'll stop with this one. A happy marriage is a union of two good forgivers. Amen. Right. Forgive me because, man, I'm going to blow it. I got some, before you show those pictures, I just want to say a few things about my wife and I.

Nikki and I have been married for 35 years next month. Yeah, all right. I'm supposed to clap when somebody says that. If you knew both of us in 1979 and around 1982, you would not believe that this would have been possible.

We would not have been candidates that you would say, there's two people that are going to have a great relationship and a good family life and a solid marriage. I met Nikki about 1980.

Her family moved into our neighborhood. Her dad was superintendent of Lindbergh Schools. And Sean Collins and I witnessed to her that summer. I had gotten saved like the year before or something like that.

[14 : 44] That spring. And so I was walking with the Lord that summer in 1980. She went off to school in Wisconsin. The next summer, neither of us were walking with the Lord and I was on my bike strapping young Tom Grass and cute 19-year-old Nikki.

And we were talking in the street. I said, you know, do you ever want to get married? No, I don't want to get married. Do you ever want to have kids? No, I don't want to have kids. And that was the beginning of our relationship. The next year, a lot of kids went away.

We were left together. We went through a bunch of hard times together. We started dating. We got married in 1984. I was 23. She was 22. They were not good years.

Our marriage, our relationship, and our dating was not started out on good terms. It was not, we were not in a healthy spot, either one of us. A lot of bad, tumultuous things going on in our lives during that time, which I won't share right now.

We got married. Nikki continued her college education. She got a degree from UMSL, a teaching degree. I went back to college when Nikki was pregnant with Joel. And I graduated in December 1991.

[15 : 54] I was on the 12-year plan of college. So not all you guys in college, you guys are doing good. We had five children from February 1990 to 1999.

Don't ever invite us to trivia things. I have to do with the 90s or 2000s. We know nothing about those decades unless it's elephant, what was the guy's name, dinosaur man and donut man. We might do okay.

And after that, we were so removed from culture, we just quit caring. I don't know who Kevin Bacon is. I know what Bacon is. I don't know where that came from.

Huh? Yeah. We had kids in diapers for 12 years straight. I remember countless times carrying kids in from the car.

We had a, the youngest is Jacob. He's here. He's 19 now. So I did it for, I figured it out. I did it for about 17 years. Picking kids up out of the car and bringing them into the house.

[16 : 56] Last time I did, I picked Jacob up and we were coming back from somewhere. We had that big old van. We called it the swagger wagon and I get Jacob out and I lift him up on my shoulder and I go, man, this feels like an 80 pound bag of concrete.

And I said, I'm done. I put him back down and I said, get up and go inside and that was it. I was done. You don't even realize it, right?

You do it so long, you don't even realize what you're doing. You don't realize you're carrying it around an 80 pound child. What's wrong? He wasn't wearing a diaper though, so these are good things. The law has changed with car seats.

You know, you have kids that long and one of them was, we were supposed to get a car seat for him because he was under 80 pounds, under five feet tall and all that kind of stuff. and it's like, are you kidding me? When I was a kid, my mom was my car seat.

You know? I stood in the back of the Chrysler and if she had to break real fast, she'd go like that. You know? I mean, I wasn't worried about it. I figured, God took care of the rest of them, take care of him.

[18 : 00] I look at Jeffrey and Teresa, they're not here today, but they're living my life. Five kids, ten years, nine years. We homeschooled our kids. We started with Joel.

He was our, I was going to say prodigy, I was going to say he was our guinea pig. Jacob is in junior college. Nikki still helps him with that. You know, the science, the writing, quizzing.

We sat in church by each other. We were taught this. Sit next to each other because you don't want children to be dividing your marriage. Well, that worked for four kids.

Two on each side. I could grab that one. The fifth kid, I couldn't reach him. So we end up splitting up at that point, just on the chairs. We had our kids in every meeting with us when they were little.

They sat still. They were quiet. They sat on our laps. They sat next to us. We didn't have child care until we came to Bethlehem when Jacob was young. We didn't have day care. You know, all that was, we did it.

[18 : 56] We had them in the meeting. They were quiet. We'd, a lot of times, in and out. We made them sit down on our lap outside. We'd come back in. We trained our kids to sit still and be quiet. It can be done.

It should be done. I left a child in the car. Our van is 100 degrees. We were in Dallas, Texas. We left Jacob in the car. He was seven or eight years old. We all went inside Target.

We were in there about ten minutes. We realized, where's Jacob? I thought you had him. I thought you had him. He kept himself cool with, grabbed ice out of the cooler, thankfully. Nobody called Division of Family Services and he didn't die.

But I did it. That's not good. I had a kid total, our first car, our first driver totaled a car. He hit a telephone pole and fested. I didn't know you were going to be here.

I'm not going to embarrass you, but I am now. I was so mad. I went there. It was like a Monday. You know, Monday is our work, right? At a retail shop. I go down there and he had been working at 5 a.m.

[19 : 53] and he hit a telephone pole driving home from work at 8 in the morning. I'm like, I was mad, you know, and I get there and this telephone pole is literally 6 to 8 inches out in the street. And it's just a weird thing.

They had to put a handicapped sidewalk in so they put the telephone pole in the street. It makes no sense. Anyway, he just bent down for a second like that and hit the pole. The car wasn't that worth a lot, but he put it out.

It was just like one of those things I was so mad. And it was like, when I got there, it all went away when I saw it. You know, I was like, there's nothing he could have done. It was just an accident. You know, but you don't think that way.

I'll stop there. I have some slideshow, slides. I do want to talk about children. I have some, I'll go through some quick slides. That's Nikki's family, 1937. What is family? It's aunts, uncles, kids, children, parents, grandparents.

The guy on the right, the very far right, is Nikki's daddy. He's like one year old. So these are just some pictures I came across. Keep going. That's Nikki in her driveway on the sled with her sister and brother, I guess, and somebody else.

[20 : 57] Go on. There's Nikki and her brother and sister. That's me with my aunt, my great aunt. Go ahead. That's my family as a child.

I'm the little guy on the bottom. I was youngest of five. That's, that's me. That's the Sears catalog. Keep going. Keep going. That's high school graduation.

Had some, there's my brothers and sisters with a brother-in-law and a sister. Keep going. Ah, that's my bride and I. That was the prospects to be married.

Not very promising. That's Jeff and Laura. Family. That's us getting married. Married. Doesn't she look like an angel? Keep going. Aw.

Aw. Keep going. I'm not sure who that is. That's Nikki. Keep going. That's me and I don't know who. That's me, Joel, and Lydia.

[22 : 00] Still had the bike. Keep going. That's Bro Sleigh, a good friend. That's kids playing in our house with balls. Probably shouldn't have been doing it, but keep going. It's my grandma and Lydia.

That's us. We had a tie-dye phase. Keep going. That's, of course, we started coming to Bethel and guess what we got? A picture there with the Royal Orleans.

That's feeding a large family. That's the Lamberts. One of our last trips was just our family to Branson, I think. One of our last trips was without additional people.

That's us in a chair. I couldn't find the original chair when we first took a picture of us in that chair, but keep going. That's my brothers and sisters still alive and my mom.

I'm the youngest. That's me at Anna's wedding praying for the food. That's Anna's. That's your wedding? Sorry. I won't.

[23 : 03] Is that when I said bless these sinners? Oh, that was your wedding I said that. I said bless these sinners as they eat their dinners. Father, daughter, you know, the tradition, keep going.

We experienced a flood, not that one. And that's us with grandkids last year and that's our family now. Last fall, last August.

Keep going, huh? And then there we are again, keep going. That's the swagger wagon named by somebody. I got rid of it with 260,000 miles on it, headed for 12 years with 200,000 miles on it.

That's the car I never owned. It's my favorite car. I never had one. Ann Landers quote, it is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves and make them successful human beings.

So let's talk about children briefly and move on with the message. You can get, that can go, whatever you want to do, I don't care.

[24 : 05] over there. Three R's, this is just some, oh. There is, well, there's a picture of Jacob which I couldn't find of him falling asleep on a chair at Bethel when he was little.

That was cute. Being quiet. It's one way to make them be quiet. All right. I forgot what I was going to say.

This is not in my notes, but three R's that we kind of talk about at Sunday School. Teach your children responsibility, resourcefulness, and respect. You know, that's just an aside, but children, you go back to Genesis, you know, again, we find children.

Children in Psalm 127. Behold, children are the gift of the Lord. Genesis, be fruitful and multiply. It means have children. Psalm 127.5, how blessed is man whose quiver is full of them.

Full of children, that is. Psalm 113.9, he gives a barren woman a home, making her joyous mother of children. The parents are instructed to raise their children.

[25 : 18] It's your responsibility to instruct them in the word, in the Lord, and how to live. Genesis 18.19, the Lord says about Abraham, I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him and keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.

And then, of course, in Deuteronomy, you know, teach your children as you walk by the way and all that. And 2 Timothy. This is really one of my favorite verses of mine about children and the importance of scripture in a child's life.

2 Timothy 3.14-15. You, however, continue the things that you have learned to be convinced of. This is Paul writing to Timothy. Knowing from whom you have learned them and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Yep. 2 Timothy 1.5. For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, Timothy, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I am sure are convinced of that is in you as well.

That is fantastic. Three generations of the scriptures being poured into the lives of children. And that would have been the Old Testament scriptures that Timothy would have been taught. But that all led him to salvation.

[26 : 39] It led to Paul being able to take that young man and build upon him and use him for great things. So the importance of scripture in our kids' lives.

Proverbs 3.1. My son, do not forget my teaching but let your heart keep my commandments. It's one thing to have obedience in a child. It's another thing to get their hearts to obey.

Whole nother conversation. How do you get the heart to respond? How do you get them to be responsible for their actions from their heart? Not just blind obedience if you will.

Not just, okay, I'm going to do it because you say you do it. You know. Nikki reminded me of this verse. Proverbs 4.3. When I was a son to my father, tender and the only son in the sight of my mother.

Then he taught me and said to me, let your heart hold fast my words. Keep my commandments and live. When the child is young, young, young, teach them.

[27 : 39] They are tender then. And that is the pliable time to teach a child. Don't wait. I read recently someone said wait to teach this and that until the child don't wait.

Don't wait. Start the minute they're born. Even before. They may hear your voice in the womb even. Tender, soft, young, pliable, impressionable. It means their character can be shaped and formed at this time.

Part of the parents' role in instructing their children is discipline. Discipline comes in many forms. It's implemented in many ways. Proverbs 22.6 says train up a child in the way he should go and he's old and he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 3.11-12 My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe his reproof. For whom the Lord loves, he reproves even as a father corrects a son in whom he delights.

He who withholds his rod hates his son. Proverbs 13.24 But he who loves him disciplines him diligently or early. It has that concept of taking responsibility for raising your children and doing it well and doing it often, properly, when they're young.

[28 : 51] All that. Intentional. Consistent. It's tough. It's hard. Tiring. It's tiring, right? Not, this is not reactive.

It's not abusive but it's thoughtful. Right? You know, you need to know how you're feeling when you're disciplining your children too. If you're out of sorts, frustrated, be careful.

Discipline your child. Proverbs 19.18 For in that there is hope. Do not be party to his death.

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Do not withhold discipline from a child. Although you strike him with a rod, he will not die. A rod of correction imparts wisdom but a child left to himself disgraces who?

His mother. Fathers? You leave a child alone, let him raise themselves, let him decide what's good and right, who's it going to disgrace? Your wife. She'll be broken hearted.

[29 : 54] My wife and I believed in the practical use of the rod of correction. We did. J. Vernon McGee, an old preacher, used to say it this way, apply the Board of Education to the seat of knowledge.

I like that. I've known that one for a long time. You can edit this out but I'm going to say it publicly if it goes online. I don't care. We used a quarter inch dial rod, 18 inches long.

It became the best rod I could find. It fit on the door threshold in the rooms. Simple to use. You couldn't hit him too hard with it. You know, it got the point across.

I didn't like to use my hand, belt, anything like that. Those things were associations of, you don't want to reach for your child and fear your hand. You don't want to use a belt, that's a bad connotation altogether.

Kitchen utensils don't work well. and that's not what they're for. We used to, yeah, it's a hard thing to do, guys.

[30 : 52] It's hard, men and women. The Bible says do it. It works. Times are a lot different today too, you know.

Just how much culture has changed in the 50s. I wasn't born in the 50s. I grew up in the 60s and 70s. You got in trouble at school in the 50s, they'd spank you or whatever. You got home, they found out about it, you'd get it again.

You know. Enough of that. In public, you know, I would bend down when they're in the grocery cart, squeeze on the top of their thigh a little bit.

Some of them probably didn't remember that and I would just kind of talk to them and smile and nod my head and act like I'm encouraging them as I squeeze and they start to almost cry and I would back off. Sometimes Nikki left the store because a child wouldn't behave.

How many times? You know, she'd leave. You'd have all the kids with her and don't look around for names. Hey. When you have a young child sitting on your lap and you want them to be still and you're holding them and they're doing this, they're arching their back, guess what that is?

[32 : 01] It's rebellion. Call it what it is. Make them not do that. Start when they're little. One year old will do that. Nine months, they'll whine, fuss, twist, twirl, grab them around their arm, grab your arms around them and make them sit still.

If you're in a public place and you don't make a scene, go outside the public place and make the scene out there. But sit down and make that child sit. Then go back to where you were and make them sit. And if they don't, go out again, come back in.

We did this for 12 years. I'm telling you that it works. I'd be in and out of the door wherever meeting we were at. It works. We took our kids everywhere. We went out to eat with them.

We did Kids for Christ at a church up the street from us when they were little. We did Sunday school. We sat through meetings on Wednesday, Tuesday nights. It can be done.

We weren't perfect in any way. Anyway, here it is about a couple more things here about discipline in just the big picture of discipline.

[33 : 09] When children are old enough and they can talk and form sentences, then you communicate about what's right and wrong. You can tell them that and you won't get a verbal response when they're little.

Then you say, you were wrong because of these standards. Right? Not based on my opinion. Not based on their opinion. It's based on a standard which is whatever that might be.

You have maybe rules or guidelines in your home. The child does not have to agree with you with the standards but you have to state to them that they were wrong. A child may agree that they were wrong but you affirm that they did break some standard.

I think I repeated that like five times in that little section when I typed my words. They don't have to be sorry. I learned this much later. Don't ask your kids to tell you they're sorry.

Let it sink in. Do you think that's right? I know if I intentionally, willfully do something and I know it's wrong am I sorry for it? I might not be.

[34 : 13] Is it wrong? Yeah. Do I need to agree with God that what I did was wrong? Yeah. Well, am I sorry for it? No, I wanted to do it. Do your kids ever act that way?

Yeah. I know this is wrong. I'm going to grab that anyway. Hey, you know, well, they might not be sorry. I learned that through one of my children.

They may not tell me I'm sorry. Well, it's fine. You're wrong. Remorse might come later. It might not come. I can't wait for that. That's something in their heart, right?

Does that make sense? Intentional decisions may not produce remorse, but it can be wrong. Isn't that interesting to think of it that way?

When you're training your kids, you see this in people. I know if you have a corrected employee and you say that was wrong, they're not remorseful and they're not sorry because they wanted to do it, right?

[35 : 08] So anyway, in my opinion, this is Tom Grass's opinion, I believe the heart is pretty well set at about age 14. At about this age, they've decided to follow the Lord themselves.

They have to decide to follow the Lord themselves. Does that make sense? Right about that time, their character and things are pretty formed. So they need room at that age.

This is me, my opinion, I'm not a psychologist. They need room to make this commitment to follow the Lord. At that point, you've instructed them, you've trained them, you've been raising them as a child.

Now the heart has to become conformed to God on their own. How does that happen? I'm not sure. They need to wrestle through their beliefs with guidance at that point.

So now you've moved from clear instruction, clear instruction, clear instruction to, gee, Mom and Dad, I don't know about this, this, or that. Well, this is what the Bible says and this is what we've taught you to be true.

[36 : 06] Yeah, but this, this, and that. This is what the Bible says. And then you want them to be in a Bible-believing youth group. Turkey Hill worked out really well for us. We sent our kids to Turkey Hill over the summer, full-time staff.

Let them work it out there. No. Jimmy Allen, take care of Lydia for me, because, whew, no. Ashley, help her, you know.

But you know what? It really worked, you know. Whatever happens down there, maybe it's the Kool-Aid, maybe it's the bad food, I don't know. But you know, maybe that gives them faith. Or give me some real food.

That was not in my notes. It's not even funny. I think we let our kids go there for three or four years, almost all of them. What I can figure, about 14, is that about right?

To 17 and 18, and then some still go now. Children, Ephesians 6, children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is, there you go, there's a principle.

[37 : 06] Why do you obey? It's right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth. I think musicians want to come back up.

We'll wrap this up. Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up. And the fear and admonition are discipline and instruction of the Lord.

You know, don't provoke your kids. You can exasperate your child. You can beat them down. Brown beat them. You can irritate them.

You can frustrate them. Drive them away from the Lord. Drive them away from you. You need to love them, train them, encourage them, but don't belittle them. My wife and I, and I think we were, I have to tell you guys, we were very fortunate.

God was gracious to us. We've been blessed. Extra measure of grace. I don't know what happened. It wasn't based on our abilities, but I think part of it was we committed to that word years ago.

[38 : 18] Somewhere 88, around there, 1988 or so, we just said, that's what we're doing. Part of it for me, I'm sorry, I'm a little over maybe, but part of it for me was breaking away from the religion of my family, you know.

Standing in my parents' kitchens, I'm no longer going to that. I don't believe that. It's not for us. We're raising our family this way. I didn't have to do that, but I don't want it.

For me, I had to make some kind of break. One time, Joel was, he was in college and we were riding together in a car and he asked me, he said, is it strange that I'm not around much anymore?

I told him, I didn't raise you to stay home. I didn't raise you to stay home, but to leave and be independent. somehow, it worked out, you know.

I can just say, it's the grace of God. 1 Timothy 1, 5 and Proverbs 29, 17. 29, 17. Discipline your son, he'll give you rest, he'll bring delight to your soul.

[39 : 21] 1 Timothy 1, 5, the goal of our instruction of love is from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere, let me read that again. 1 Timothy 1, 5. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith.

You know, families don't all look the same, do they? Nor should they. I mean, look at all the variety in the world. They're all going to come in different shapes and sizes. But it's up to each of us to be one who helps keep a family together and not tear it down.

Whatever that family is that you're a part of, don't tear it down. The wise woman builds her house, the foolish tears it down. Let us be a people who build our families up.

They're so brutal. Never gonna happen. Go to the■■■ and stay■■■!

See that, or do I prepare you to come.