

Move With

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[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweep from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. As always, if you'd like to learn a little more about us, you can go to FCCgreensburg.com or you can check out the FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, our hearts are always about preaching the Word of God in context, letting that Word get into our hearts so that it can truly change us from the inside out.

And I'm excited that you've joined us today. Today, we are in our series called Move. It is our three-year strategic plan we are sharing with our church family. And this is week number four called Move With. You know, the Lord never ceases to amaze me.

When we planned this series called Move about our biblical three-year plan that we've been praying through for probably eight months now, the original blueprint was four weeks long until our team looked at me and said, Ray, are you sure you shouldn't expand this another week to cover all this information?

And you know what? They were right. So we did. And then I had that nasty sickness a few weeks back where it all got pushed out another week. So this message all about the next generation is two weeks later than planned.

[1 : 19] And what a perfect Sunday on Mother's Day to talk about this key ministry. This day where we not only celebrate mothers here at FCC, but we applaud all XX chromosomes, no matter age.

All females, all girls, however you want to say it, as they impact this church family and the kingdom of God in so many ways. And I know I say this every year and I'm a broken record on purpose here, but our churches would literally fall to pieces without the faithful ladies and girls who serve so joyfully. Amen?

But can I just deal with sort of the elephant in the room for a second? Some of you haven't had the greatest situation with your mom. And I'm sorry, that's your reality.

And I'm so sorry for that. But there are others here who can tell of a nurturing and godly mama who loved and believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself.

Who prayed for you when you were running with the devil. Who kept speaking truth when you weren't even listening. And I also know this day can be hard because many have lost their mother on this earth and you miss her.

[2 : 30] And one thing we do at the church on Mother's Day and Father's Day is we put a white rose up on our platform so that, you know, it's just a memory of those moms that we dearly miss who hopefully we'll see someday.

But listen, today I want to share about a lady named Susanna who had 19 children. Yes, I said 19 children. And in the late 16 into early 1700s, she had those 19 children in 19 years.

Can you imagine that? She was pregnant over 14 years of her life. But sadly, she also knew heartache more than most. Because only 10 of those 19 survived to adulthood.

And one was crippled from an accident. On top of that, history records that her husband Samuel, who was a priest in the Church of England, but he didn't always live out that spiritual maturity, often making bad choices that kept their family in poverty.

He was also known to abandon the family for long periods of time over frustrations. So Susanna was often on her own with all those kids.

[3 : 42] And yet, as you'll hear throughout this message, she deeply impacted the next generation in ways she could have never imagined. So welcome back to this three-year plan all about moving forward for the glory of God as a church, swarming the enemy with the goal to put Jesus first by helping each other belong to, believe in, become like him.

We are storming the gates of hell. We are unified in love as a church with one agenda, only one. Lord, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Less of me, more of you, Jesus. And so far, we've refreshed on our biblical vision mission values that guide everything we do. We've seen how this next stage of our growth is a continuation of our 194-year history as a church family moving forward for God.

We've looked at how vital it is that we each are growing in discipleship, becoming more like Jesus every day. And today, we sort of take that spotlight and we put it on the next generation.

Because as we grow, our focus should always be less about me and more about how I can impact the next generation of Christ followers.

[5 : 02] And in the words of Compassion Christian Church out of Savannah, Georgia, the next generation isn't just the future of the church. They are the church. When we invest in them, we're investing in a legacy of faith that will outlast us all.

So let's pour, they say, into them, disciple them, and remind them that they are called, chosen, and loved by Jesus. Amen on that. So if you got your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Deuteronomy 6, verse 1.

That's the fifth book of your Bible of the Old Testament. If you know them, won't you say these with me as we get to the book of Deuteronomy? Very first book of the Bible.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and then we come to Deuteronomy 6. And as you turn in there, let me share some context with you.

The children of Israel have wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their grumbling, their disobedience, their lack of trust in an awesome God who has proved himself over and over.

[6 : 07] From the 10 plagues that devastated a prideful Egypt and got them out of there, to the parting of the Red Sea for the good guys and sending it crashing back down on the bad, manna from heaven, water from a rock, the list goes on.

And now, as a new generation starts to peer into the promised land, Moses has some God-given wisdom to share. We're talking probably less than a month from the time he's going to pass away and Joshua is going to take the reins.

And Deuteronomy 6 is a really big deal, but we're going to specifically dive into the part that talks about discipling the next generation. And if you got your outline, and by the way, you can always go to our Church Center app, First Christian Church, Church Center app, and you can go to sermons and today's message and hit take notes.

But let's start today by talking about how important it is to be shaped at home. It starts there, shaped at home. The research has been done by all the big boys, and it comes out the same every single time.

And the best way to make disciples of children who grow into adulthood, who follow Jesus with all their hearts, is to live it out in your home, not just expect your church to do all the work, not to pull up on Sunday morning, kick the kids out of the car, and go back home to sleep, okay?

[7 : 28] Parents were designed to be more important in the process than pastors. Can I say that again? Parents were designed to be more important in that process than pastors.

So let me show you what I mean. After Moses just went through the Ten Commandments in the previous chapter, here's what he says, starting in Deuteronomy 6, verse 1.

He says, These are the commands, decrees, and the laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children, and their children after them, so we see this generational discipleship happening, so that they may fear the Lord your God as long as you live, by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

So there's a promise attached to this. And then he says, Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you, and that you may increase greatly in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

And then verses 4 and 5 is what's called the Shema, that a good Jew would say and recite every day. It says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

[8 : 46] Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. And then verse 6 says, These commands that I give you today are to be on your heart. So it's got to start with us before it goes to anybody else.

But look at verse 7. Here's where I want to focus. Impress them, those commands. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.

Now, remember that Susanna lady? She truly lived out that verse. Homeschooling 10 kids who would become known for their intellect. Teaching them God's word.

Often reading at least three chapters every day as a part of their schooling. Discipling them individually. She would spend one-on-one time with them every week for at least an hour.

She sacrificed. She exhausted herself in showing them the truth that would set them free. And yet probably the greatest quality was her example. She loved the word of God.

[9 : 47] She believed in prayer with all her heart. Has even been quoted in her youth promising God that she'd spend more time praying than she would playing. And the famous story many of you ladies may already know comes down to space.

I told you earlier they were poor. They lived in a small home. So she didn't really have a prayer closet. So when she wanted to pray, she'd sit down in the kitchen between meals.

She'd pull her apron over her head and she would pray. And those kids knew when mama's aprons over her head, she's to be left alone because she's communing with God.

And it's been recorded that she prayed. Imagine raising between 10 and 19 kids, okay? And she prayed and read God's word for two hours every day while raising all those kids, often as a single mother.

And you know what? She was a regular person in need of grace just like the rest of us. But she was intentional no matter how rough her circumstances were. And I don't tell her story to make us all feel less than or even to feel guilt.

[10 : 53] I share it as an encouragement that God has placed you right where you are for a reason as a parent, as a grandparent, aunt or uncle, a mentor, fellow church member, so that you can make an impact on the next generation.

When you sit at home, when you talk about what the Lord has done, what he is doing, go ahead and just spend that time talking about God with them. When you're in the car, let that worship music blare as you praise the King of Kings.

At night, when our kids often let down their guard, talk with them, read with them, pray over them.

When they get up in the morning, remind them that this is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

And I'm so blessed with our three kids. I have an amazing wife who does a fantastic job at this. And maybe like me, you can see some steps that need to be taken so that we can be even more intentional.

And listen, you don't have to be a theology expert. So many parents just think they can't do it because they don't know the Word of God like they would like. Well, number one, you can learn it even better every single day.

[12 : 00] But you don't have to be a theology expert. There's all kinds of great resources that are out there. You just have to care. You just have to prioritize your time for the kingdom. In fact, this message is going to look a little different than normal, kind of like this whole series has.

But I want to share a quick video with you where one of our youths named Chloe talks about how important it is that she has been shaped at home.

So I want to go ahead and turn this over and you can listen to Chloe. So I have the privilege of sitting here next to both Chloe and Aiden, two of our members of 220 Youth.

And I'm really excited about getting a chance to just do a little interview with them and just hear a little bit about their heart for the Lord and just what they're doing for kingdom work. So I'm going to let them talk to you for just a moment and give you some information about who they are and where they go to school.

Hi, I'm Chloe and I'm a junior at Greensburg High School. Hi, I'm Aiden and I'm a junior at North Dakota High School. Fantastic. Thank you guys so much for being a part of this little interview that we're doing.

[13 : 00] And I'm really excited to get a chance to kind of hear your hearts for the Lord and for kingdom work in general. So Chloe, I'm going to start with you. And I'm going to talk to you just a little bit about just the way that a godly home has really shaped the young lady that you are.

So my first question for you, Chloe, is this. Help me understand just a little bit about what it's been like being raised in a home that has been a home that is in love with Jesus, that has really shown you what it looks like to be a godly woman.

Being raised in a godly home has helped me to know that whatever happens in life or in school or just in the world in general, that I always have a place to turn to. And it's helped me to just build my foundation with Jesus and to just have a true and personal relationship with him.

That's awesome. So is there a certain situation maybe that you can think of that has really helped shape that situation that you're looking at as trying to be a godly young lady? One situation that comes to mind is I was in seventh or eighth grade and I was trying to invite more people to Wednesday night church because I love it so much and I want everyone to just be able to experience it.

And I just got a lot of backlash of people not really wanting to come or just saying I made them uncomfortable for asking them. And so I went home and I talked about it with my parents and they just encouraged me to keep telling people about church and Jesus and to not be ashamed of our Lord and Savior.

[14:24] That's awesome. So is there a specific thing that you have learned from your family at home that you really feel like that someday you want to implement as being a part of your family when you move forward into being a wife and a mother someday?

Yeah. One thing I've seen my parents do is just being so involved with the church and the community and I can't wait to just wherever church I land up, I would like to just be involved with the kids and the youth as much as my parents are.

That's awesome. Thank you so much for sharing. Man, I love it. I love that. And one thing we've put together is a next-gen team led by our kids director, Lynn, and our youth pastor, Mitch.

And along with the team, they will work on several different initiatives over the next three years. And one of those is that we want to provide family mentoring and training through classes and other means to help you as a parent or a grandparent mold your kids and your grandkids' faith in Christ. It starts by being shaped at home. And while some listening may not have gotten that, listen, the Lord can change our family tree starting with you and me. And so even if you didn't grow up in a Christian home, you can still serve God and love Him with all your heart.

[15:39] So shaped at home, second, strengthened by the church. And while this passage in Deuteronomy doesn't directly say this, it was kind of expected in their culture that they did life together as God's people.

And as we come into the New Testament, the early church wouldn't have dared to walk a dangerous path of raising their kids apart from being a part of a church family. That is such an American, Western culture, Lone Ranger way of doing things that just doesn't match up with Scripture.

And in Acts 2.42, we see the early church thriving, making disciples for Jesus by the thousands. And then it tells us what they were devoted to. And my ears perked up because the Holy Spirit was blessing this way of life.

See, Acts 2.42 says this. They devoted themselves. So this is the early church. And they were seeing amazing fruit from it. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching.

So that's the Word of God. To fellowship. That's doing life together in community, in the church. To the breaking of bread. So communion. And to prayer. See, Hebrews 10 even tells us to not get our priorities out of whack, where we forget how vital it is to be a part of a life-giving body of believers, where we have that support system that we need to do life together, where we also hear the Word of God taught, and where we serve and we seek to make an impact for the kingdom.

[17:06] And guys, this is important for our next generation as well. While God designed it to start at home, that in no way lessens how important it is for the next generation to be strengthened by the church.

And here Susanna was with a marriage to a man of the cloth who just wasn't quite the man of God at home that he should have been. And instead of turning her back on the church because of a poor example that wasn't mimicking Jesus like so many do, she realized that her God was perfect.

And she continued to raise her kids up in a community with the body of Christ. They were at church every Sunday hearing the truth and being challenged to grow in their walk.

This was a priority. And I can tell you, we as a church take every generation seriously. We care about the family of God. As we have been blessed with so many babies at church, and there's

nothing better than celebrating new life.

We have every generation and we are so thankful. We have from newborns to 90-somethings. And you matter to this body of believers, no matter where you fall on that age scale.

[18 : 11] And like last week, we want to disciple you until the day that you go to meet Jesus. You don't get it all figured out at some certain point. You don't retire from growing or serving Jesus.

It's one day at a time. All your days, it's a commitment to growing in Christ. But we also expect our generations that are not kids or youth to realize that God has given us the command to pour into our youngest generations, what we call next gen.

And I want you to listen to this wonderful impact that our church family has made on one of our youths, and his name is Aidan. Go ahead and listen to this.

So Aidan, I want to move to you for just a moment. I just want to talk to you about how the church has strengthened your walk with the Lord. So my first question for you is this, is just how has your church family been such an influential part of strengthening your walk with Jesus?

Yeah, just a little back story about me. This has been probably a five-year journey in my faith walk. And about five years ago, I wasn't even really going to church.

[19 : 20] No on Sunday morning. And every once in a while on Wednesday night. And like the church, I had people in the church encouraging me to go. And I ended up going.

I ended up loving it. And I really don't miss unless I absolutely have to. That's amazing. And for sure, you don't miss hardly at all. So let's just think about for just a specific instance in your life that maybe you can think of what's really helped shape who you are, that the church has come alongside you and to help you make you the young man of God that you are today.

One instance that I would definitely say would be Sunday night Bible study that, of course, you and Caitlin lead. But one personal one that I have would be one at church camp freshman year, I had a friend ask me or tell me that I would really like you to get baptized.

And for the record, I was baptized in fifth grade, but I didn't live it. And something clicked in my head to where I was like, I need to make a change.

Like something has to happen because I can't keep going on like this, saying that I love Jesus, but my actions don't show. That's awesome. So how has your church family really helped shape your future?

[20 : 38] I would definitely say that just seeing everyone serve on a Sunday morning and just the love and kindness that they show and their willingness to share the gospel with everyone that they come in contact with has definitely shaped who I want to be and who I'm trying to be.

That's awesome. What a cool story. And I want you to know some of our initiatives are to make sure we're constantly covering our kids and youth in prayer. We want to have a powerful prayer ministry in our kids and youth ministries.

We even want to get more intense in training and equipping volunteers to serve our students with excellence. And one area we have to focus teaching on is purity, not just to our kids, but to all of us, okay, but especially to the next generation because they're being bombarded with perverted ideas because even those in the church are growing up with false teachings about how to do relationships.

And sadly, too often, their Christian parents aren't modeling this very well either. And we can come alongside our students and we can teach them, here's what it looks like to walk in God's parameters for relationships because he does it to protect your heart, to give you a great marriage someday. Because when you do things God's way, that means you have God's blessings. But when you do relationships like the world and you want God's blessings, it just doesn't work that way. It leads to chaos and heartbreak.

[22 : 01] And we don't want that for our next gen. So shaped at home, strengthened by the church, and let me share one last thing with you, sent to impact the world. We believe in the next generation that are among us because the Lord has called them to serve him in ways greater than we can imagine.

And we can help strengthen them for their calling as we send them out for his glory, wherever God wants them to go. And I want to go back to Susanna one more time. And by the way, I'm talking about Susanna Wesley.

Of her 10 children, Susanna, let me say it again. Of her 10 children, Samuel Jr. became a well-respected scholar and poet. He became a teacher.

He was also an Anglican clergyman. Emily was a highly intelligent teacher. Susanna, aka Suki, had a sweet spirit serving the Lord faithfully her whole life. Molly had a disability but still got married and was always sensitive to others' needs.

Hedy was a talented poet. John was the primary founder of the Methodist movement. Okay, so he's the big name that you've heard about.

[23 : 14] He was such a biblically solid man. In fact, he was often teased for following the Bible so faithfully as one of the greatest evangelists in history preaching over 42,000 sermons all over the world breaking the mold that you could only preach in a church building.

Patty married a minister and lived a faithful life to Jesus. Charles, the other well-known son, may be the greatest hymn writer of all time with over 6,000 hymns as he served with his brother.

And then Kezi worked out of school and supported her brother's ministry. And listen, it was the most famous Wesley kid, so John, who said this about his mother. He said she was a preacher of righteousness as her prayers and training shaped his life and ministry.

Now, over the next three years, we want to be very intentional to send our students out even more to serve and evangelize their peers. We also want to help students take their call from Jesus seriously, whether that's in their home, that's in the local church, in vocational ministry, on the mission field, far from home, or some or several of the above.

And to finish our passage here from Deuteronomy 6, verses 8 and 9, it talks about what we should do with God's commands. It says, tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

[24 : 33] Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. Now, here's the point of that. I know that sounds kind of crazy, but here's the point. Our love of Jesus and his truth isn't meant to be hid.

Let it shine. Put it out there. Live your life where God's word is literally all over you. And let's raise up the next generation to do the same faithfully.

And you know what? I am so proud here at FCC of our kids and our youth. And I'm so proud of our leaders for the impact that they are making. So let's close out today with one more clip as we see 220 youths serving Jesus in our community and we hear from both Chloe and from Aiden.

Go ahead and take a listen to this. So one of the things that I've had a chance to watch with both of you as well as many other students in our youth ministry is that you guys are true kingdom workers and I love watching you guys do kingdom work and I love watching you guys just really pour into others here at our church and just be a part of that church family and that body of believers that we have here at FCC.

So I just want to ask this question to both of you and then we're going to wrap up for today is what is a way that you have truly impacted the kingdom in something specific that you have done because of your love of Jesus?

[25 : 51] One way I hope I've impacted is through the junior leadership I did for CIY Mix I was a junior counselor for the girls and seeing them grow beyond just that one week in the summer to almost a year later has really been one of the highlights of my entire 220 youth experience and I've liked seeing them and just how they've their walk with the Lord has grown.

That's amazing. That is for sure. You did an amazing job when we were at camp last year. Aiden, how about you? One way that I hope I've been an impact to people around me is at my school I've started a Bible study through my FCA and I've had help with another leader and I hope that we have just impacted them but I know for me it has impacted me in just really realizing the time and effort it takes to intentionally study the scriptures and just prepare all that.

As well as Chloe I have been a leader at Superstart and VBS for the little kids and it's just amazing to see the kids take time out of their schedule to come and worship Jesus and learn more about Him.

That's awesome. Well I just want to say thank you guys for just being here and getting a chance to sit down together and have a chance to just have this conversation because it is a true honor for me to get a chance to watch you guys just be kingdom workers and to be able to pour into not only our church family but also the kids and our kids men as well and we're just really really excited about what you guys are doing right now in 220 Youth amongst all of our other students but also what you guys are going to be doing in the future and what you're going to be doing for the future kingdom as well.

