

Proverbs: Skillful Living - Family

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning, 4th. Good morning, 4th. It's good to be here, amen. Begin our week seeking the Lord.

And thankful for that. This morning, our subject is going to be the family. I think we drew straws.

Who had the most children? And the topic was given to me. My prayer is that there will be something here for everyone, even though it's a little specialized this morning.

And it's always really a humbling thing to have to speak on something that you're in the midst of doing. And I'm in it with you.

So let's learn together on this matter. So let me pray, and then we'll dive into our text this morning. So join me. Lord Jesus, it is good to be here this morning, to seek your face, to seek your voice, to experience something of your presence through your word, your spirit, and the fellowship of the body.

[1 : 09] Lord, thank you that we as a church are a family, a family of families. Lord, family is in your heart. In fact, Jesus, you taught us to pray our Father in heaven.

How would be your name? Thank you that you, God, reveal yourself as Father. Would you speak to us this morning? Thank you for the guidance that you give us through just the clarity of your word.

And so might you have our hearts and our minds. And Lord, I pray that we would be reminded of your goodness, your grace this morning. And Lord, we would be exhorted to be more about your people in the context of family.

It's in your name we pray, Jesus. And all God's people said. Amen. Well, this morning we will continue our study on skillful living from Proverbs.

This morning we're going to consider what the Proverbs has to say about the family. And I don't think it's going to be a shock to anyone here this morning when I say that the institution of the family has fallen into hard times in this present age.

[2 : 21] Back in 1960, the statistics show that over 75% of children that were born into homes were born into homes with a mother and a father married.

Today it's less than half that come from a home where there are two parents, where there's a mom and a dad and they're actually married oftentimes two parents is defined as something other than God's design.

Marriage, family, it's become nothing more than a social convenience in our age. And I am reminded of the novelty of family and marriage, I think, as an Uber driver.

I was reminded in the many years that I drove in Seattle that marriage was an odd thing for our society.

My passengers would be so shocked that I was married for at the time 27 years. And the question would always follow to the same woman. It was unheard of.

[3 : 30] The fact that I had a wife, I had as many children as I did. And it was interesting even as we kind of approached these holidays of Thanksgiving that in Seattle it was all about friendsgiving.

Thanksgiving was really seen as this obligatory holiday that you tried to avoid because you really didn't want to spend time with your family. And I would say that family in many places in this nation is seen as a liability, not as a joy.

A social construct that has sort of outlived its usefulness. And I can say in the conversations that I have in my car, marriage is just sort of it's seen as this hoop.

Maybe we jump through, maybe we don't, but it's really not necessary. And it's interesting, the statistic in Seattle was there was actually more dogs in homes of those living in Seattle than children.

And that actually I found out this week is a national statistic. There are more pets in the homes of families in America than children. So the family has fallen under hard times.

[4 : 35] Satan loves that church. Satan loves that. He delights in that. Why? Because if you destroy the family, you destroy the nation.

And we know that the enemy's agenda is to what? It's to steal, to kill, and to destroy. You kill the family, you kill the nation.

Because the well-being of a nation, it begins in the home. What is established in the home? What is right? What is wrong? What is moral?

What is love? What does it mean to respect authority in your fellow man? And so yes, Satan hates that we're talking about this subject this morning, the family.

And so what I'd like to do to begin us is just give us a very foundational truth related to family. And it's this, the family is not a social invention.

[5 : 32] The family is God's very design. It's his idea. It is his genius. Listen to the words of the writer of Proverbs and Proverbs 1, verses 7 and 9.

It says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching, for they are a garland, a graceful garland for your head, and pendants for your neck.

And so we see right here that Solomon assumes something here. He assumes that people understand this institution because he speaks in language of talking about fathers and mothers and sons.

And so the family is not some evolutionary system. It was ordained of God from creation. In Genesis 1, we're reminded, it says in verse 27, so God created man in his own image.

In the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

[7 : 02] So the question then becomes, how do we be fruitful and multiply? Do we just function like free range animals that do what animals do?

No, in fact, as we read in the next chapter of Genesis, Genesis chapter 2, it tells us, Genesis 2, 24, therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This is God's design. This is his genius. It's one man. It's one woman in the marriage covenant relationship until death.

And that's at the very heart of a family. And it doesn't mean that children can't be raised in a single parent home if they perhaps experience the trauma of divorce or death or pregnancy out of wedlock.

But this is God's design. Thankful that God is faithful. He's a present help. I love the fact that we are a family of families.

[8 : 14] This is where the church has opportunity to shine when we support one another, when we come around one another in contexts where there are not two parents in the home.

But God's original design is for one man and one woman. And it's sort of like striking to me just the hypocrisy in culture that wants to celebrate diversity, wants to shame the family, and yet there's no more diverse relationship on planet Earth than the marriage relationship, where the two halves of humanity are brought together in one.

Well, the grand purpose of the family, as with all of creation, is what?

It's to bring glory to God. And actually, Solomon recognizes this in these instructions that are given here in Proverbs 1 in verse 7.

It says, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the fear of the Lord, a reverence for God. That's the content of instruction that should occur in the home.

[9 : 31] That the home should bring glory to God. And it's the parents' vocation to raise an instruct to this end.

And I think there's something critical for us here as we think about family, that as families, we're not just called to fill the earth with people, although I feel like Julia and myself are doing our part.

We're called to fill the earth with people that live unto the glory of God. There's a task here to raise children that love God, that have an affection for the Lord, the desire to live, to be a blessing to people, to see God's joy, the gospel, to move out and to touch the lives of real people.

But I would say a bedrock to a good theology of family is recognizing that the family is a place of instruction.

The family is God's school. Nothing different than the church that is a family of families.

[10 : 46] We're a disciple-making organism, and so is the family. And so I want us to think in terms this morning of the family being God's school.

I like to have words for different roles within the school, and so I think to begin, we'll talk to the faculty, to the parents.

And it's interesting when you think about being a parent because there's no degree that you have to get. There's no certification. There's no license like parent endorsement. I mean, it was really shocking to me as a 25-year-old leaving a hospital with a little person in my hand.

It's like a bag of groceries, like, all of a sudden, I've got this child. And they're trusting me? It was shocking.

And in fact, I left before I had permission, and I set out the alarms, so they called me back, and then they released me. But it's interesting because in the absence of training, what we find out is that we begin to sound a lot like those that raised us.

[11 : 57] And we begin to say things vaguely familiar that we purpose that we would never say. And even in this, we are called as parents to engage in the training of our children in righteousness.

And it's really a two-fold activity of both discipleship and discipline. And I'd like to talk a little bit about both. The first is in this area of discipleship.

Proverbs has something to say on this matter. It says in Proverbs 22.6, Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Train. The Hebrew word, hanak, can be translated to dedicate, to set apart, to set aside, to narrow one conduct, and in this case, away from evil, in the way of godliness.

And this verse in Proverbs 22.6 is really talking about discipleship, even above discipline.

[13 : 07] And maybe you're thinking this morning, well, Jay, as a father, I teach my kids a certain set of skills, teach them how to dribble a ball, hit a little ball, catch a pointy ball.

And my wife, she teaches them how to pray. And yet what Proverbs says, God's word, Proverbs 1.8, says, hear my son, your father's instructions, and forsake not your mother's teaching.

It's interesting here that it doesn't say, Dads, go and make money and moms, teach your kids about the Lord. It actually says, fathers, you are called a what?

An instructor. Moms, you're called here a teacher. And so the thing that we have to recognize, mom and dad, assuming there's a mom and dad in the home, and if not, then this carries to the parent that's there.

But we're called to engage in the hearts of our children, and we're teaching them what it means to walk in the fear of the Lord. And so, Dads, we do more than provide and protect, or maybe even better said, part of our protecting is the training we do in righteousness.

[14 : 34] And I would say even the very structure of Proverbs tells us this, because this book is a collection of exhortations of words of a father speaking into the life of his son.

And it's a father who's trying to delineate between the life of wisdom and a life of folly, and you see the heart of a father here. He's pointed out on behalf of his son, hey, son, I don't want you to live a life of regret.

And I'm going to speak into your life. And so I would just say men, men are going to get picked on a little bit this morning, and I'm listening to myself, okay?

We are training in righteousness whether we know it or not. How we engage, or even whether we engage, if we opt out, we are training in righteousness.

My own dad, I still don't know how to connect these dots. He was a ministry leader, but he never opened the scriptures at home. There was one day a year, Christmas Eve, he would open the Bible and read it to us.

[15 : 51] Never saw that. And there was something that was being taught in terms of faith being that which you experience and do when you're gathered as a church, but when you're at home, it's a whole different sort of life.

And we are training in righteousness whether we know it or not. I appreciate the book that many of the men here, I think I bought 50 copies I've given out, 49.

But we're reading this book by Richard Phillips, The Masculine Mandate. And in it he gives a very simple agenda for dads in terms of how to be involved in the lives of your kids.

And it's just a way to measure how am I doing on this front? And he gives four words, read, pray, work, play. Read, play, pray, work, play.

Are we doing these things with our kids? Are we reading the scriptures? Are we talking about the scriptures? Are we praying with them? Are we modeling prayer? Do we ever stop at home and say, you know what, this thing is going on or we've got this thing that we've encountered.

[16 : 54] Guys, let's gather up and let's just pray about this. Is that a weird thing in your home? And yet you have this very simple agenda, men, of things where we can look and say, okay, are we doing these things?

Are we teaching our kids how to work hard? Are we working with them? And it's not to be a stodgy school as we think about that metaphor. There's time for recess, but life is not just recess.

And I would encourage you men, because I don't have time to get into the details of all of these this morning, but it's worth you doing. We have men gatherings all throughout the week, little, we call them disciples of huddles.

And men are talking about this, reading this book. And if you don't have one, you want to get involved in one, come see me, talk to me, and I'd love to direct you. Because we need one another. That's the beauty of the church.

Amen? Well, something rather significant in terms of our role, men, of training in righteousness. It says here in Proverbs 20, verse seven.

[17 : 58] It says the righteous who walks in his integrity, blessed are his children after him. And what we learn here is that discipleship.

Yes, it is through the words that we share, that we speak of the things of the Lord, that we celebrate the gospel in our home. But it's also about how we live and maybe even more so simply the testimony of our lives.

It is the righteous who walks in his integrity and blessed are his children after him. That's sobering parents. Amen?

I was convicted this week and misery enjoys company. Life is caught and our kids know what we love.

They see us when we are fully who we are at home. It's sobering. I had a conversation with a dear friend of mine who still today kind of grieves over the fact that his dad never taught him anything, the things of the Lord.

[19 : 13] The thing that his father taught him was to love a particular sports team. Man, that happened. And yet there was this void and he still grieves over that today.

Our kids, they know what we love. I spent about 15 years working with youth. Probably the most challenging thing I experienced in working with youth was youth was just nominal faith at home.

And I recall a conversation I had with a father who wasn't walking with the Lord. When we gathered as a church he would think, he just sang the songs and seemed to be engaged but just really just sort of dialed it in at home.

His kid kind of went into a pretty significant season of rebellion and the conversation with him was like, you know what Jay, I never spoke into my kid's life because I wasn't living it.

That's hard. Faith is caught. I love the example of Corey Ten Boom and yes we will be reading The Hiding Place and DTS come January for those that are curious.

[20 : 27] But there was this inheritance that was given to her from her father. So they used their home. It was a legacy of hospitality, of loving people for the sake of the Gospel and that's what then carried on to her.

It was caught. It was seen. This is just how we use the resources that the Lord has entrusted to us. It's a beautiful picture.

One of the things that we do at home and by the way as I share examples, we have many foibles and things I would never say do this.

We're not the model family but we seek to honor the Lord. And one of the things that we've, Julie and myself have strived to do is to just have a spirit of gratitude in our home.

And so one of the things that we do just practically, we do thankfulness pies. If there's something that we have to celebrate, we bake a pie, we buy a pie, we eat pie.

[21 : 27] And we celebrate and we thank the Lord and even in the difficult things when the Lord has shut a door, we bake a pie because we want that to be the spirit and the lesson and how our children live the rest of their lives.

That they live in a way that they are living in gratitude to their maker.

Let's do this, men. Let's not just pick on us. Let's pick on the women. Proverbs 14, 1, character is not just for the guys. It's for both. It says, Proverbs 14, 1, the wisest of women builds her house but folly with her own hands tears it down.

So men just take a, just relax for a moment. Moms, it's for you too. I love the example in Scripture of Timothy, right?

Learned faith. Not from his father. And we don't know. Scripture is silent. Is it the dad would not or could not? We don't know. But he didn't teach Timothy the things of the Lord but his grandmother, Lois and his mom, Eunice, they did and they are the testimony, the faith and dwelt in Timothy as a result.

[22 : 51] And man, what an encouraging picture, especially for those of you that are here and your single parents. Here's a testimony. God honors that.

There should be encouragement there. It's also a chance for the church, the family of families to step in and support and to be a resource and an encouragement because we are in this together, church.

We truly are. The key here is that as parents we are teaching all the time. What we say, how we live.

Is the grace of the gospel, is it in our homes? What is the spirit in our homes? And I am convicted of this often. One of the things the Lord provided in my life is a long driveway before I get home.

And that's where I pray. Because I need to pray before I arrive at the front door because there is an issue awaiting me every day.

[23 : 53] And so if I don't pray and ask the Lord to like, Lord, I don't want to go in and be angry about nothing or everything. So forgive me.

Clean my heart. Give me a posture that I'm ready to serve because I'm ready not to serve and I need your help. And I know there's something awaiting me behind those doors. And so we are a dependent people on the Lord, on prayer, on talking to Him that we would do this thing well.

Well moving on to this area of discipline. As we train our kids in righteousness, Proverbs, it gets very practical on the subject and this is primarily for our younger parents.

Scripture does use the language of corporal punishment. Proverbs 13, 24 says it this way, whoever spares the rod hates his son.

But he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. You know, culture promotes that if you love your children, you will not spank.

[24 : 58] Scripture says the opposite. You know, even back in my undergrad studies, I took a course on child psychology and I can tell you, this is back in the early 90s that spanking was seen as the great evil.

Just reason with your kid. And I would say if that is your approach to discipline, that will digress into basically bartering with your child, negotiating with your child and then eventually buying off your child.

And I think we've perhaps seen all of us examples of this, parents that won't discipline their kids in the supermarket. And it's just, it's chaos.

And then you see a parent who begins to count. Like put the cereal box down and I mean it and I'm going to count to 15. You're just telling the child my word is not my word.

Or if the parents are like, okay, if you want that and we'll get this and just chill, stop, stop, stop. I say parents, be a scene.

[26 : 12] Don't become that. You know? No, this is not what we're doing. And if your kid freaks out, they freak out. You just have to embrace it at some point. You know? I think what got me over the hump was one of my adult children who was maybe five, four, who announced they needed to use the bathroom as we were finally in line.

And they're just like, dad, I got to go. And I was like, how long can, I couldn't even ask how long you can, and all of a sudden we had just created an entire lake in like checkout aisle number three.

And at that point, there's nothing you can do because there's a person behind me, a person in front of me. I'm just like looking back on, you might want to go into the other check line, right?

Parenting is humbling. Amen? It's humbling. If we teach our kids to barter, what sort of adults will they become?

They will have a mindset that, you know what, if I just apply enough pressure, then I will get what I want. And that's not a spirit of an individual that's trusting in the Lord, asking Him to fight their battles and to work on their behalf.

[27 : 23] They're thinking, man, I'm just a functional deist. I just, I do what I do. That's not really involved. And I make the things happen that need to happen. And it's just a bad way to raise a child.

You know, Proverbs, it reminds us in terms of discipline, the motive behind it, right? It says, he who loves Him is diligent to discipline Him.

And so there's a reminder here for parents as we discipline, and it might revolve around spanking Him and it might be something else, but as we discipline, what's our heart? What's our motive? Are we fueled by anger?

Are we fueled by revenge? By hatred? Scripture says no. Discipline is to be fueled by love.

And if you're not able to discipline in love, then mom or dad, take a time out. Take a prayer time out and talk with the Lord so that you're disciplined in the right frame of mind and the right heart posture.

[28 : 26] Verse 29, 20 says, do you see a man who's hasty in his words? There's more hope for a fool than for him. We can all be hasty in our words and anger. I've done it before more than once.

So practically, because love is the heart behind discipline, and if we think in terms of corporal punishment here of spanking, man, make sure you do it in love.

And because love's the issue and just on this issue, and I really did not design a sermon about spanking, but we're talking about it.

Just practically, parents, don't use your hands. These are to love. These are to embrace. Right? It says in the proverb, the rod. It's actually the word of staff.

It's a shepherding instrument. It's not an instrument of pain and suffering. It's an instrument of shepherding. So use a spoon, use a ping-pong paddle, whatever it is.

[29 : 37] But because love is a motive, then spanking is not about inflicting pain on your child. It should sting, but it should not hurt.

There's restraint here, and honestly, the worst part of that event ought to be the anticipation of. So you do it in private, and our children, they know every line and detail and angle of our laundry room.

They know it, because that's where that occurs. It's not to shame them in public. And the worst part should be the anticipation. I actually had a conversation this week with one of my adult daughters.

It was really interesting, because I was like, yeah, tell me about that, because I don't remember everything, and they're like, oh, the anticipation was the worst, Dad.

It was horrible. And to show my rebellion, I would go in the laundry room, and I would turn off the washing machine before you came in. Like, what?

[30 : 42] I don't even know what to do with that.

In those occasions where a spanking is necessary, there needs to be then a time of affection, a time of prayer, a time of hugs, a time of celebrating the gospel, that they are forgiven of much.

God says we are forgiven of much. God is our model. He disciplines, but He does so in a spirit of kindness to forgive.

And I think it's just an opportunity to celebrate grace. And then it's done. You don't bring it up. It's done.

And maybe you're like, Jay, I'm not convinced. I think I can just reason with my children, and they'll just get it. Proverbs 22, 15 says it this way.

[31 : 44] Why is discipline necessary? Because folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it from Him. It is clear in Scripture that children are very cute, but they are born with an inherited sin nature, and discipline drives folly from them.

Parents that avoid discipline are then complicit in the moral ruin of their children. It's heavy. I'd say the worst college student, spent a number of years as a college pastor that I worked with, was from a family, didn't believe in corporal punishment.

Everything was a negotiation, just reason with your kid, and probably the most difficult young adult I'd ever worked with. He spent his entire college days trying to manipulate and negotiate young women to spend inappropriate time with him.

And it was heartbreaking. If we would be about the task, parents, of disciplining, disciplining and disciplining, Proverbs gives us a promise.

Proverbs 29, 17, discipline your son, and he will give you rest. He will give delight to your heart. Isn't that good?

[33 : 18] It's from the Lord. Now yes, Proverbs teaches corporal punishment, but the more typical approach of instruction from Proverbs, it's not spanking, it's reproof.

It's reproof. Not harsh words, not 10 billion words, but constructive correction.

Just good discipline, it really aims to educate. And I would say a practical question that you can ask in your home, and this is one we have asked in our home many a time over the years is, you know what, what could you have done differently?

How could you have honored the Lord in this situation? How could you have instead been a blessing to your sibling? Because we want to capture those teachable moments, and for them to reflect it's not just you were wrong, your discipline, it's like what could you have done differently?

One of the things we had our kids do, and again, this is just, isn't necessarily the right way or the only way, but we had our kids write out oftentimes what they could have done differently.

[34 : 39] Another conversation I had this week, this was really an interesting week doing this, because I was asking one of my adult daughters, and she's like, yeah, dad, I have pages of me writing out, I will not be sneaky.

Like pages, I'm like, really? I don't even remember that. She's like, oh yeah, oh yeah, did it work? She's like, you know, after about the 10th time, I thought maybe it's not worth it.

And then I got just curiosity, got the better of me, I'm like, sneaky, what do you mean? How are you sneaky? Okay, let me tell you that, if I was ever like pot eating candy, I would make sure I would have like a handful of crackers in the other hand, so that if you asked me what I was eating, I'd just show you the crackers.

It's true, and you can press the Turner adult children for who that is. It's one of them, it's real, it's real.

Yeah. Final word on discipline, I would say good discipline, it's there to cast a vision of a God, word life, of a life lived in the fear of the Lord.

[35 : 55] Proverbs 29, 18 says, where there is no prophetic vision, the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law. It's not just no for no, it's like God has a good way.

God has a good life, a good pathway for us to walk. Build a vision for obedience in your home.

Remind your kids, and it should be like common vernacular that life is ministry, that we're gospel people, that people need to know the Lord, and we get to be the ones to dispense that.

We need the common language in our homes, and it's joyful to be useful to the Lord. Build a vision for obedience in your home.

How can you be a blessing? How can you be a blessing today? How can you be a blessing to your siblings? Build a vision for a future of one whose affections is for the Lord in all areas.

[37 : 04] I am responsible for giving out the most awkward birthday gift to my, I don't even know, 13, 15 year old daughter. I don't know, I don't recall, but I just decided, you know what, they need Elizabeth Elliott's Passion and Purity book for their birthday.

You know, they're opening like a sweater, and then all of a sudden they open like, can I open this in front?

Passion and, Dad, did you, it was just, it was priceless. It was so good. It was so good.

That book was read, and then it was smuggled to the next child, and then it was smuggled to the next child, and then it was smuggled to the next child, but the point is, man, I wanted our kids to have a vision for living in the fear of the Lord in all areas.

So what we do, we are disciples, Mom and Dad, and I would say it reads us really to kind of a heavy question, and I get it, because there's parents here that have kids that are adults that don't walk in the fear of the Lord, but the question is, are parents, are they solely responsible for the spiritual outcome of their child?

[38 : 19] Because Proverbs 226, train up a child and the way he'll go, when he's old, he'll not depart from it. I know many a parent who have done the job, and they don't see their kid walking with the Lord, and it's hard.

It's very hard. Proverb teaches a principle that we invest by faith, we do the work, we shepherd the heart of our children, and then we trust in the harvest.

It's the Lord's. And ultimately, sometimes the harvest, it doesn't show up. And I would say as encouragement, sometimes the harvest doesn't show up in our own timing, what's in our mind.

But Scripture teaches culpability, it actually may be a combination. We have Eli, this priest in the Old Testament, had sons that did not walk with the Lord.

They in fact, they were awful. I think the Scripture says they're worthless men. They blasphemed God, they slept around, they were not young men that walked in the fear of the Lord.

[39 : 25] And in 1 Samuel 13, God, to Eli says, you know what, there's a consequence. And I'm going to punish your house because you did not restrain them.

And there's ownership that was given to Eli, but if you look in the prior chapter in 1 Samuel 2, you actually hear that this is like a shared thing because it says, but they would not listen to the voice of their Father.

I don't know the percentage here. But I will give a word to our children on this front, thinking of the home, God's school.

Children, you have responsibility. Proverbs 1-8, hear my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.

So children are called to listen here while in the home. Hey, listen to your father. And the context is, you're in the home still. Don't turn a deaf ear.

[40 : 31] La la la la la la la la la la la la la. Not listening, la la la. Like, no, listen to your father. And then the context of this proverb is, as you grow up, as you go live your life as a young adult, don't forsake your mother's teaching.

So for children, it covers both while you're in the home and then as you move away. Don't forsake once you are away. As you have been taught, the things of the Lord continue to live for His glory.

Now I would say an important question here is, in this proverb, who is responsible to walk in the fear of the Lord? Ultimately, we all are responsible.

And here it's the child responsible for their own actions. I have had so many conversations with young adults who have left the church, they have left the faith.

And the thing that I hear over and over again is, yeah, I've left the faith because I saw hypocrisy at home and in the church. Almost as if I'm not responsible.

[41 : 45] No, you are responsible. We're each responsible.

And Satan's lie is that somehow we're not responsible for our sin, that we should somehow carry like a victim ID in our wallet.

Even though Scripture says, wait a second, in Romans 8 it says, you're more than conquerors. You're not a victim. Well, I have an excuse for why I sin because my parents, they didn't fear the Lord.

They didn't teach me the things of the Lord. And I'm not responsible. And you can carry that sort of heart posture your entire life. As a husband, well, I'm not responsible because my wife, she does this or my wife doesn't do this.

I'm not responsible for my anger, my unkindness, whatever it is. And I would say until we own our sin, repentance, it can't occur.

[42 : 54] And without repentance, we're joyless. We're not experiencing the joy of the Lord. And so I would say an exhortation for all of us this morning. I know the context here is children, but man, if the Lord is presently correcting, convicting, repent so that joy can return.

And even in the Proverbs 1, 7-9, it says that the fruit of a life lived in the fear of the Lord.

And guess what? It's like a garland on your head. It's like a pendant on your neck. It's beautiful. It's beautiful. And I think there's an image there of joy.

Who have I not included this morning? Singles. Okay. Let's do this. Young men seeking a wife? Proverbs speaks.

Our school analogy, you want to start your own school, essentially, right? Women exist. You got to hire some faculty. So just one. What do you do?

[44 : 02] Proverbs 31 says it this way. Proverbs 31-10, an excellent wife who can find. She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts her and he will have no lack of gain. An excellent wife.

It's such a cool phrase there because translated, it's a woman of strength. Culture wants to tell you what a strong woman is. The Bible tells you. Here it is.

Proverbs 31, woman of strength. An excellent wife who can find. Well men, young men, not married men, there's your list.

You go home and you read it, right? You're not going to find that list on some dating app. It's not going to be on Tickety Talk or whatever it is that you're into.

It's in God's word. And it's a good list. How is she strong? You have some examples here. Verse 26, she opens her mouth with wisdom.

[44 : 58] The teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well into the ways of her household. Does not eat the bread of idleness. Hey guys, there's your list. Man, I want a woman like that. Well then be a guy like that.

Be a guy that is into ministry, that speaks words of kindness and isn't a man of idleness. Oh. Man.

Yeah. Each D and Mario, it's not going to get you far, man. I'm just saying on a very personal like note, what is like the resume for me to even have a conversation with a young man?

I have a testimony here of one. Mr. Conrad, are you listening? Yes.

Do you love the Lord for real? And do you work hard? It's a small list. That's where it begins, man.

[45 : 58] Do not call me this week, young man. Not accepting conversations this week on that. All right. Singles you want to work on marriage today?

Man, pursue friendships and serve the Lord. Serve the Lord. He knows your heart. Trust Him. He knows your salvation.

Oh, yeah, that's right. Yeah, everything else pales in comparison. I love the example. The midwives in Exodus one, they were into ministry.

We're going to serve the Lord. We're going to fear the Lord. And what did God do? Provided households for them. And I love where it says in Scripture in Exodus 120, God dealt well with the midwives.

Serve the Lord. Use your time well. Be useful to the Lord in the lives of others.

[46 : 59] To conclude, I know there's a lot here. I hope the thing that you take away, especially our parents is just, man, just be intentional. Be more intentional and live in that spirit of reformation.

There was a time as a young father where like just the brevity of life kind of hit me. And I freaked out a little bit like, man, do I even know my kids?

Do they know me? I don't feel like I even really knew my dad. And that was hard. I'm going to do something that maybe I'll regret, but I actually wrote a poem, I am not a poet.

And this is maybe 20 years ago. And I was just so overwhelmed that just I don't want to waste.

I don't want time to go by. It's called In This Lifetime. It's very short and it's not very good, but it's just my heart.

[48 : 04] I only get to know you once in this lifetime. Will I know you when all is done? Or will I long to retrace the steps with a heart and mind engaged?

I only get to know you once in this lifetime. Will we laugh enough to fill our bellies full? Or will I ache to laugh just once more before you're grown?

It's not even very good, but it gets me. I only get to know you once in this lifetime. Will we dance while the evening is still young? Or will I mourn when mourning finally dawns?

I will know you in this lifetime. We will laugh our bellies full. We will dance till the stars take their rest. Parents, I would just encourage us to walk in a spirit of reformation.

If there is something where we have gone off the rails and we need to reengage, and I love that very practical list that I gave you, work, pray, play, there's another one in there.

[49 : 13] Where do we need to reform? Father, thank You that You are revealed as Father. Lord, thank You that You know our heart, that You long for our heart.

Lord, I pray that we would be a people that would talk about You in our homes. Lord, that we would model faith.

Lord, thank You for the gospel that I look at my own life and I see failings as a Father, as a husband.

And I am so needy of Your gospel of grace, Jesus. And I pray that we would, above all things, demonstrate that in our homes, that our homes would be a place where grace is present and that our people would know for real that You are a God who delights the rescue centers.

And Lord, that we would be a people that would have a real affection for You because You have been so incredibly kind and good to us. Lord, thank You for the gift of this church.

[50 : 21] Lord, thank You that we are in this battle together as families. Lord, I pray that we would be a people able to encourage one another, come alongside one another.

Lord, thank You for the gift of discipleship for the whole family here. Lord, might it just be an addition, a buttress to what is occurring at home?

Lord, thank You that we are all in school and we're all continuing to grow in terms of being Your people to one another. It's in Your name we pray, Lord Jesus. And all God's people said, Amen.