

Family Conference: Changing Gears | Session 5 - Q&A;

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Preacher: Todd Murray

[0 : 00] All right, we've kind of got to turn the chairs this way a little bit more, seeing as how this is where the seating is.! So tonight, since I got so many questions from all of you, which was zero.

I've kind of had to come up with some questions myself, but also, if you guys have some, we can pass the mic around as well. So even if there's something from tonight, we can go with the crowd. So tonight, we'll just kind of be going over some of the truths that we interacted with this weekend. And then Todd's going to share some personal testimony as well. So, Todd, what would 40-year-old Todd tell 20-year-old Todd as you look back into parenting life?

And then we'll go to what would 60-year-old Todd tell 40-year-old Todd about the next phase of life. And we have multiple demographics here, so we're going to try and hit them all. And then what would 80-year-old Todd do? I don't know yet.

Yeah, what do you think 80-year-old Todd would tell you now? Well, let's see. You know, the unique family structure that the Lord has given us, we had two children within two years of each other.

[1 : 16] We'd been married six years, and then the Lord gave us two children. And then because of some complications during our second child's delivery that left me with a lot of fears that multiplied over the years, we then, six years later, had three more children.

So we have a, not six years later, nine years later. We have a nine-year gap between our first two kids and then the next three kids. And so in some ways, I actually had that opportunity to sort of feel like I was starting over.

And so I would say 40-year-old Todd would tell 20-year-old Todd to trust the Lord sooner with, you know, any medical challenges that were represented in that second delivery.

But more important, the changes I saw is we, you know, sort of felt like nine years later, we had another chance to reboot and kind of go at this again.

The changes I noticed were a greater urgency. So 40-year-old Todd would tell 20-year-old Todd, be more consistent in your understanding of what the scripture says about the human heart in a way that would have made me more prayerful for our kids' salvation.

[2 : 34] 20-year-old Todd, 26-year-old Todd, when he had his first child, 28 with the second, was, I just look back at my practice, I really presumed on the grace of God.

I presumed that the Lord would save our children because I tried to open the Bible and teach my children and we were in a great church. And I just sort of formulaically thought, I knew God didn't owe it to me, but I did presume on the grace of God.

And the way I know that's true is just the lack of prayerful urgency. Lord, save my children. And so one of the things that 40-year-old Todd would say, looking to a younger version of myself, was, you know, be consistent in realizing what the scripture says about the deadness of the human heart.

And, you know, that's the amazing thing about God's intervention in our life. The scripture teaches us I was not only unable, but I was unwilling. So even if I had been willing to humble myself and want God in my life, the scripture says I was unable.

That's doubly damned. To be unable and unwilling, as the scripture talks about us before the spirit of God opens our eyes and gives us life. So I just somehow didn't apply it to my own kids.

[3 : 51] So a lack of urgency in prayer for their conversion. I think 40-year-old Todd would tell 20-year-old Todd as well that the greatest threat to my children's well-being spiritually was not the big bad world out there.

But the greatest threat to them, I began to realize, was their heart. So if you could raise a child and put it in a perfect, put he or she in a perfect environment, still the greatest threat to them spiritually

is that autonomous, rebellious heart that, you know, ever since Adam and Eve sinned that just said, I'll decide what's good for me.

I'll decide what's right and wrong. I'll decide what's good and bad. And so those would be the, those were the changes I noticed, you know, from 20 to 40 was, don't presume on the grace of God, I would tell young Todd.

But urgently pray that God would be merciful and save your kids. And he has been merciful to our children. And then, you know, just be consistent in your understanding of the human heart and realize that, of course, the world is threatening and children have to be protected.

And we all draw those lines in different places. As you know, sometimes those, those decisions split churches, you know, they can split friendships and relationships because all of us are agreed upon this.

[5 : 16] None of us want 35-year-olds playing computer games in our basement. We want them to launch from our home. But how much you expose a child to and when, when do you start letting them make choices?

When do you start letting them make mistakes? Well, we all kind of draw that line in, in different places. And I'd say too, that a really narrow, kind of a narrow view of, of, I think I wanted a more monolithic, I would have been more comfortable if all of us decided together, we're going to draw that line in the same place.

And do you know what a cold frame is when you're, when you're hardening little seedlings? A cold frame is this, it's like a miniature greenhouse you put on the ground. And if you're trying to sprout young plants in the early spring where it could still freeze at night, has a lid, a glass lid that you close.

And, and it's almost like, you know, that perspective, because we all draw those lines in different places where you're thinking, I can't believe you're exposing your kid to that when they're, hurricane force winds when they're just a little sapling.

And then others are looking at others and going, I can't believe you're not, you know, you're going to baby that child and he'll never become an adult. And so strong opinions about opinions and mistaking opinions for convictions.

[6 : 34] I think, I think that was another change we saw in, in, in ourselves, just more patient with families who drew the line in a different place than we did. Didn't mean they were wrong, just meant they were different.

So those are, those are things I noticed. Yeah. I think every, every family struggles with that just internally. So maybe speak with that internally. Where do we draw some lines with what, like help us understand a conviction that I'm, I'm moving in, but also the application of that and where, why families might draw certain lines differently.

And, and, and, yeah, it's, yeah, the things that contribute to that are incredibly complex. Most of us are over-correcting from our own childhood. So if you had, you know, a childhood where, you know, like my childhood, the worst thing I could say about my, my parents with no attempt to dishonor them is, uh, extremely trusting.

Um, if I flashed my grin, they believe anything I'd say, which didn't help me or them. And, and maybe guilty of a kind of benign neglect. So what happens to me?

I become a believer. Now I'm a dad. Oh, you could be sure that, you know, as our kids said, growing up often as teenagers, like, well, dad, no one will ever accuse you of neglecting us.

[7 : 49] You may smother us to death, but you're not neglecting us. So I'm good. I tended to overcompensate. My parents didn't oversee much. So I oversaw a lot. Uh, so one of the contributing factors is what happened in your childhood that you're either mindlessly repeating or you're determined won't happen under your watch.

And so, and those things are, God intends for them to inform us and flavor us. But, and if they're not filtered through this, then you just end up like your parents, maybe mindlessly with another set of opinions that were the opposite extreme perhaps, but no more biblical than theirs were.

So I think, let me, let me give you an example, uh, and, and what your fears are too. What are you really trying to avoid? What are you really trying to accomplish? Those are powerful drivers in every area of life, particularly parenting.

But I remember, uh, our daughter coming home, it's been our first two kids. So my first, my second child, my first daughter coming home and, you know, modesty was something we were trying to teach from the very beginning.

And that'd be a great example of people draw the modesty line in different places. What's the timeless principle? Women should be modest. Did this define it for every culture what modesty would look like?

[9 : 03] No. And so each family is deciding what modesty looks like. So we decided that while, uh, now you understand this, I am giving you an example.

I am not giving you a rule to follow. As a matter of fact, I'm about to confess to you how stupidly I handled this. So please listen carefully. Uh, we just decided, you know what? Two piece bathing suits are cute on little girls, but sooner or later, she's not going to be a little girl.

And rather than deciding later to go to a one piece, we decided it was just laziness. We're just going to go one piece right from the beginning and then we never have to make a transition. So our daughter comes from, from some middle school event to say that, uh, that another church member's daughter had on a two piece at a, you know, at a, at a, at a swimming gathering and I just like hit the panic button.

So it, and like, oh no, what are we going to do? And how's it going to influence? I'm just like, well, more or less what I said, well, that is the dumbest thing I've ever heard Mr. Jones do, you know? And I'm just like, so let's just think this through a minute.

I'm a pastor. I'm talking to my daughter who could easily have gone to another daughter and said, my dad said, your dad's dumb. This could have gone terribly. Fortunately, she was discreet and didn't say anything, but so, so fear just, whatever you're afraid of and wanting to avoid and protect from will make you really, really imbalanced.

[10 : 22] What, what happened in later years, instead of that reaction, if they came home and somebody else's family in our church drew a line on a gray issue in a different place, I would hear myself saying things like, say things like this.

You know what, sweetie? The hardest thing any man will ever do is be a dad. It is the hardest thing. And we love the Joneses. We love the Browns.

And each dad is just trying to figure out his way. And that is the Joneses way of applying this biblical principle. And let me just tell you one more time.

Here's the, here's the timeless principle. And here's why as your dad, I've decided we would apply that principle in this way. Now that was, that was the 40 year old version.

That was a much wiser way to go about it. You affirm your brothers and sisters as thinking vital Christians with biblical knowledge and a real conscience and a real desire to please the Lord.

[11 : 18] And you just say, but you know, so what you're distinguishing over and over again is here's the timeless principle. And here's how our family has decided to apply it.

This is a way, not the way. This isn't the principle. This is our application of the principle. But the principle is here. And we all agree on that. And then we just end up applying it.

So media choices, educational choices, entertainment choices, modesty, clothing, activities, money. All of those things are just these grayer areas where we're going to see people within the body of Christ applying the principle differently than us.

And you mustn't think that your application is the principle. And you mustn't think that your application is better than someone else's. I'll say this. It doesn't mean we couldn't talk as brothers and just say, hey, how you guys, I know you guys are thinking people and you've given this a lot of thought.

And it's interesting. I'm faced with situation here. And I think A and you clearly think Z. Just tell me how you guys thought that through because I want to be shaped and informed. And, you know, maybe I'm too tight or maybe I'm too loose.

[12 : 28] So it doesn't mean we can't dialogue with each other. But if you've voided the self-righteousness out of it and the pride and the panic, then you can have an edifying conversation about it together.

But, man, if you're not careful, I just look back and cringe at 30-year-old Todd and just think, man, that could have gone really bad. So how do you decipher then drawing lines where the Bible draws lines of, no, this is sin?

And how do you communicate to your kids the seriousness of sin before the Lord, but also creating an atmosphere where they're not going to fear talking about sin or even confessing their sin because they know that you're a haven of mercy or hope.

How do you distinguish lines of no kids like, God does say this about sin, but we want you to come and talk to us about your sin. And you're battling that fear.

Like, you're battling the fear of the effects of sin in their life because you're trying to protect them from that, all the while knowing you can't actually protect them from all of the effects of sin.

[13 : 39] But you do need to communicate the seriousness of sin and the ability to reconcile that with the hope that God does provide. How have you worked that through in your home? Well, I think number one is just modeling confession to them is going to, is the way to create the safety of them confessing sin to you is that they've seen you regularly own, owning your stuff.

And if it's kind of the one thing we knew our kids would end up leaving our house with, they would understand the principle of please forgive me for X. What I should have done was why.

And, you know, teaching them that and then modeling that for them. I think of one funny story where I didn't model it very well. So we'd gone through some material called The Peacemakers, an excellent book by Ken Sandy.

And there's a set of comic book style books that go with it called Young Peacemakers. And we had taken our kids through that. All our kids would say, by the way, if you ask them what was the favorite curriculum of family devotions we ever did, they all really loved that.

It was sibling rivalry. It was playground conflict. It was really, really, it's really well done. And they loved it. And we went through it over the course of many, many weeks.

[14 : 58] And there's like 12 comic books and none of them can be gone through in a night. So we loved it. So we really kind of schooled the kids on, you know, how to ask forgiveness. You don't just say you're sorry.

You say, please forgive me and what I should have done. That gives the person hope that you do have a plan. I'm not asking for perfection. But that gives me some hope that you actually get it. And that you have a plan what you should do differently next time.

And so one time we were working in the yard. And Tandy was planting pansies and I was washing the car. And I was squatted down scrubbing tires. And my probably six-year-old son is working with me.

And my four-year-old daughter is helping her mom. And Tandy said something. And I didn't respond very nicely to it. Across the yard in the hearing of all of our neighbors.

So I thought my words were needed. And they weren't. And so I'm continuing to work. And my daughter comes over to me.

[15 : 58] And she goes, Dad, I don't mean to be disrespectful. But if you had just spoke to me the way you spoke to mommy, I would be crying. And I was just like, ugh. So now I'm in that weird position where I'm not actually convicted.

But I do want to look good in front of my daughter. So I don't even get up and walk over to Tandy. I just holler across the line. Heather has pointed out that I spoke to you in a less than kind tone of voice.

So if you'll, if you'll, I'm sorry about that. But I'd really appreciate it next time if you did it. Well, I had taught them you can't add a but. To, you know, please forgive me but is, again, you know.

So I hear my six-year-old say to me, good grief, Dad. You can't even ask forgiveness right. You cannot say but after you did. I was just like it. I just looked at him and I went, you have been too well taught.

So be careful, it'll come back at you. So modeling and teaching this is, teaching it's easier than modeling it. And so, oh, you do get, you know, little Holy Spirits, fourth members of the Trinity, running around, offering you extra conviction.

[17 : 06] And it's needed and it's helpful. And he was totally right. I did the opposite of everything I've been teaching them to do. So I think if you want your kids to lead a confessional life with you, then you model for them a confessional life.

And that included times when, let's say, we'd had a conflict that the kids were exposed to. It wasn't even about them, maybe. Or maybe we even went into our room to finish settling a conflict.

But we knew the kids could hear the tone of, they're aware, there was tension. And we would come back out. But I want you to know that, you know, dad, I did not set a good example for you.

Dad sinned against mom. Or mom might say, I sinned against your dad as well. And we just want you to know, we have sought each other's forgiveness. And we've sought the Lord's forgiveness.

And everything's okay.

And, you know, because of the world we live in, they look at us and go, so you're not going to get a divorce? It's like, no, we're just having a, what we call it, GIBC, a TIFF, a time of intense fellowship. [18:08] No, we were just having a TIFF. So even when the conflict didn't avoid them, I want them to know, your mom and I sinned, and your mom and I have reconciled.

So I think that's a huge part of drawing them out. It doesn't guarantee they're going to want to come expose shameful sin or difficulty. But I'll tell you what, you have no chance of them coming.

If you've never done that with them, that would be the primary thing that comes to my mind. Was there another part of your question I didn't answer? Just the fear in your own heart when you know sin is there and you know the effects of sin and you want to protect against it.

How do you just work that in your own heart? And emphasize the foolishness of an action and the consequences, the potential consequences.

But you yourself are not necessarily like feeling the immediate like part of mercy and grace. You're going, well, this is going to lead to this. This is going to lead to this.

[19:08] And by the time they're 25, they're going to be out of the house and doing this. And you start role-playing in your mind how this sinned, but they're like seven years old. And just trusting the Lord with that.

And when you talk about their sin, you're not making them feel discouraged. Because you're talking about the seriousness of sin, the foolishness of sin, but you're just shepherding them through it.

Does that make sense? Yes, yes. Well, particularly with our first child, you know, we have no context. I don't know what anything means as a first-time dad.

And I don't know how much weight to give to action. So if I saw my child take a Tonka truck from another kid in the church nursery, I'm tempted to hit the pen. Okay, does this mean grand auto theft is in their future?

Is that what this means? Well, I don't have any context. No, it just means they're a sinner. And they're doing what kids do. And it needs to be addressed and talked to, but don't over freight it. So it's the less experienced you are in each new season.

[20:09] Now I'm seeing this attitude as a teenager. Does that mean automatically that they're going to be a juvenile delinquent? They're going to run away. You don't know. Anytime you're in that fresh territory.

And so we just have to admit together, that's why talking to others in the body of Christ is helpful. Somebody please either normalize this or tell me I should be panicked. And, you know, we have the joy now as older parents of doing that with couples all the time, saying, yeah, yeah, that sounds very typical.

And they were like grieved beyond appropriateness by what had happened. Said, no, this is basically your child is suffering from an acute case of normalness. Not saying that it's right, but that can be a relief to us to hear.

Okay, that gives me some context for it. I think, however, long term what you're looking for is finding the common denominator between you and your child's sin.

In other words, find your version of where you do that in your relationship with God. Find your version of fear of man. This came home to me and just really became a paradigm.

[21:15] In Paul David Tripp's book, Age of Opportunity, he tells a story in there about he took his son out to get new sneakers for the first day of school. He said these shoes were more expensive than anything he'd ever bought for himself.

And the next day, getting ready for school, he notices that his son is putting on his sneakers and looks very sad. And so he said to his son, what's wrong?

And he said, nothing. You wouldn't understand. And he said, no, try me. He said, no, you'll just get mad. And he said, I promise I won't get mad.

What's going on? And so he said, I looked at my son and my son looked at me and he said, Dad, I appreciate you taking me out. And you said these were the most expensive shoes that you'd ever bought.

And this was the max of our budget. I said, I know it's dumb. But I'm going to be made fun of for these shoes all day today. And I'm just dreading it. And he said, and I immediately wanted, those shoes cost more than my first car.

[22:21] You know, he said, but he remembered, I promised the kid I won't get mad. So I'm like, I'm biting my cheek. And I said instead to him, you know, instead of being outraged with him, just

said, if you think that caring what people think ends when you graduate from high school, I got sad news for you.

This temptation, I can relate to this. Dad, no, you can't. You don't care about shoes. How do you know I don't care about shoes? Well, look at them. Right? He says, you know what?

You're right. It's not my shoes anymore. But as an adult, sometimes it's my, it could be your zip code or your bank account or your, your car or your trophy wife or your career. In other words, this temptation of worrying about what the world thinks of you is, is real and I can relate to it.

That's what you're looking for. And that becomes the glue, even in a time of discipline where, because here's what we accidentally end up saying to our kids. When you're outraged or provoked by their behavior, and their behavior is sometimes outrageous and provoking, no doubt about it. But when you absorb that in Christian maturity, under the strength of the Spirit of God, and see it as a ministry moment, then you can, you can say things like, like I can relate.

[23 : 36] When, when we don't do that, here's what we end up saying. Accidentally, we're saying, why are you guys sinning? Sinning is a foreign concept to me. I mean, your mother and I never sinned, so why is it that you guys sin?

Now, we don't say it that way, but when you're just like, what is going on? Like, foreign concept. It just, you divide between you and your kids. And now, if they really have some burden on their heart of sin, they want to confess, I'm not coming to you, because you get outraged about the small things.

And now, I need to talk to you about a big thing. So, instead, when you're finding that, I can relate. I'm not that different from you. When you're outraged by sin, what you're accidentally communicating is, I am totally different from you.

And the reason that's not helpful is because they already think that. Now, in the high school years, it reverses. But in the early elementary schools, they already have you on a pedestal, and then you reinforce the pedestal, and the gap just gets.

So, instead, finding, you'll be less prone to irritability if you'll find that. Where's my version of the same thing? In the teenage years, I remember struggling with, at times, with just an attitude of ingratitude, and not returning the love I'd poured out for them.

[24 : 51] And sometimes, in the teenage years, feeling in my heart, like, after all I've done for you, how could you treat me this way? Which is not what you want to say, but you will feel it. Instead, what you got to do is go into your own mind, and think, all right, where in my relationship with the Lord do I do the same thing?

I'll bet God, as my father looks at me and says, you are one ungrateful guy. After all I've done for you, Todd, how could you treat me this way? And all of a sudden, mercy's welling up in your heart, because you just got humbled by, I'm not that different from you.

So, the glue that glues your heart, even in a conflict, even in a time where you're having to remove a privilege, or deal with some serious sin in a young adult's life in those teen years, is the glue to the justice, is when you don't come unglued, and you just say, I can really, and not just in the distant past.

I remember when I was 16, it was hard for me too. That could be helpful. But even here and now, I'm still tempted by the same things. Let me show you the passages that have helped me.

Now we're out of the realm of opinion. I've humbled my heart. I've made it clear, I'm not better than you. I'm not different from you. And that can be so meaningful. And so, again, in Paul David Tripp's book, where he just says, I said to the kid, instead of lambasting him about how he should be grateful for these ridiculously overpriced sneakers, to just say, oh, I can relate.

[26 : 18] I'm still tempted by it at times to worry about this, that, or the other. Let me share some passages that have helped me. I think that's the way to make it happen. And so, you're humbling your own heart.

You're getting rid of that self-righteousness, which makes you a little less provoked. And that's a very indirect way to deal with those fears. But, that actually seems to be what quells it more than anything, is like, and this has the power to help you.

So, now you're opening up and just saying, I'm just like you. Here's a verse that meant the world to me. So, when I was teaching my kids specifically on this issue, you know, just being able to share passages, fear of man is a snare, from Proverbs.

But, he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted. Jesus said in John 5, how can you believe when you still seek glory from one another, but don't seek glory from the one and only God?

That makes it a serious sin, caring too much of what people think. In some people's lives, it rises to the point of being a barrier between saving faith. How can you believe? There is a condition in your heart that makes it impossible for you to believe.

[27 : 26] because you're still seeking the approval of men and not the approval of God. John 12. Nevertheless, many of the leaders were, you know, some were coming to believe in him, but they were not confessing him for fear that they'd be put out of the synagogue for, quote, they loved the approval of men more than the approval of God.

This is a common sin that does not go away when you graduate from high school. This loving men's approval. So, just, so, so what happens is you get pushed back into the scripture.

So, instead of hitting the panic button, you go, if I hit the panic button, they're just going to get a lot of opinion. They're not going to get wisdom. And I may have to say, you know what, I'm going to have to get back to you.

I don't know that I have five passages to help you with that, but I'm going to go find them, you know, and then, and then come back and then, you know, that process now you're, you're just approaching parenting like it's ministry and not separate from ministry.

So, does that answer the question? Yeah, I would say so. You mentioned this morning, holiness in the home is a gospel issue and your parenting advice so far tonight has more, almost been about our own hearts first.

[28 : 38] So, how have you and Tandy in your home as a married couple just cultivated these things, the holiness in the home and our own hearts first, knowing that ultimately true change has to happen in our, our, our hearts first and that's where we've got to ultimately start individually and as a married couple being on the same page with these principles in the home.

Well, first, let me just ground that little epithet in a, in a passage when I say, you know, the, your home is a gospel issue. It's a, it's a testimony. It comes from passages like Titus 2.

I alluded to it, but let me just read it to you. When older women are encouraging younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, literally, it's to be lovers of children, to be lovers of husbands, which by the way, ladies, I think, ought to encourage you to hear that within the scriptures, that which you thought maybe before you were married or before you were a mother, that which you thought would come naturally to you, if there's anything I'll be good at, it'll be being a wife and it'll be being a mom and then you find the challenges are greater than you anticipated. You, you marry us and then find out, wow, you were really on your good behavior and now you're not. So it turns out we're not as easy to love as it appeared and, and maybe the instincts of, you know, the, the, the nature of motherhood is just a, a perpetual self-sacrifice and you're finding your flesh doesn't really love it.

You should take courage in this that the scriptures are saying this, you'll need older women to come alongside you and encourage you in this because maybe it's not going to come as naturally to you as you thought it would.

[30 : 29] This is kind of the Bible's way of admitting, you don't have to say, but I'm a disappointment to myself. I thought this would come that. No, it'll, it'll be hard like any other thing the Lord asks you to do.

So, but this, but this is what Paul goes on to write to be lovers of their husbands, lovers of their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, subject to their own husbands, so that, here's the reason why.

Here's the reason why an older woman should encourage a younger woman to live in her home in this way, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. That's what I'm, where I would ground this concept that how we're living at home has an effect on the credibility of the gospel testimony.

Now, your follow-up question is, you know, how did we cultivate that? And I would say, Tandy was, for many years, kind of left alone in it.

I don't think I did a good job grasping what the challenges were for her, learning to support her in that. So I'd say, husbands, we would do well in our leadership to ask.

[31 : 42] You know, when we're told in 1 Peter 3, 7, that we are to, you know, basically, we are to know our wives, to live with her in an understanding way, sounds like, merely be polite, but it's stronger than that.

Live with her, live together with her, that's teamwork, according to knowledge. That means you're gonna have to find out. How are you gonna gain the knowledge of your wife, men? Well, you're gonna have to ask good questions.

You're gonna have to be careful in your observations. The other thing I would say is, just in regards to male leadership in particular, and how you cultivate this oneness of purpose, is, guys, just to be wise enough and humble enough that when you've announced some new spiritual endeavor that you're going to take, or some new discipline that you're gonna inaugurate within your family rhythm of life, just plan ahead of time that there are gonna be times you fall off the wagon and don't follow through.

And when that happens, plan ahead of time to not be discouraged and just get back on the wagon and acknowledge it and start again. I told my, if I'd had a nickel for every time I said to my kids, guys, guys, we have gotten off track again.

And it's ultimately my fault as the leader of this family team and we're watching too much TV or we're arguing too much and sometimes we'd go on what they hated this, what I called a media fast. [33 : 11] And I would literally hang a blanket over the television. Nothing for a week. Just recalibrate. We've got to, we just got, you know, and that's a factor of me and a factor of leadership.

So I came up with this little rhyme, guys, and maybe this, this is a way to make sure it gets cultivated. So as leaders, we're called to initiate and I think the word initiate helps me. If you say lead your family spiritually, for most of us, we're going, what does that look like?

What does that mean? Well, a lot of us know how to lead at work but maybe not so much at home. So, you know, if you're gonna, if you're gonna take an initiative. So I just initially replaced the word initiative, replaced the word leadership with the word initiate.

Tell me to lead, I'm a little bit paralyzed. What exactly does that look like? Because leadership's been corrupted by managerial science and, in what way do I lead a family? And so, so just start with initiation.

I'm the man with the plan, the man with an idea. You initiate, that happens in your mind, then you communicate that plan. That, that's the scary part, guys, because now we've gone public and once you speak the plan into being, now that creates what?

[34 : 23] Expectation. Accountability. And you're the one who's creating it and so that's why, guys, sometimes we think of a plan and never say it. So, how many times have I decided, for instance, you know what, I'm gonna lose 10 pounds and I just discuss it with myself and me and me usually agree.

And so, and then Tandy makes some amazing meal and I've decided I want seconds and she made dessert. This is great. So me and me have a private discussion. You know what, we'll start dieting tomorrow.

And me and me don't argue and me says to me, sounds like a good plan, let's do it, right? I don't have to talk to anyone except me because I formulated the plan and didn't go public with it. Guys, that's why we're sometimes scared to say, hey, every night at nine, let's make sure we do this or you know what, once a week we're gonna read a chapter from this.

And so, guys, we have to have the courage and the wisdom to just say, I'm gonna initiate a plan in my mind and then I'm gonna communicate it. What comes next is inevitable. So if you initiate and communicate, third step, guys, is at some point you're gonna deviate.

You're gonna deviate from this stated plan and what wise husbands learn to do is if you've deviated, just re-communicate. Come back and say, hey, baby, I want you to know I haven't forgotten.

[35 : 41] I know it's gotten crazy and I was traveling and then I was sick but we're back on track. Tonight, we'll pick up our book again and start reading. That re-communication, Tandi has just explained to me as a woman, just, how that just sets her heart at ease.

Good, because otherwise, Tandi's left with going, I don't know what to do. Right? We read for two weeks and now we've had two weeks without reading. Whatever the stated plan was, she said, so do I lay the book on his pillow at night so when he comes home we go, oh, thank you.

And will I get in trouble? Will he be irritated that I'm, am I nagging now? Or am I being a good helpmate? The silence, she says, just is maddening for me. I don't know what to do.

I don't know how to help. I don't know whether to just, you know, back off, trust God, pray, see what happens and go, great, another two years will go by and maybe, you know, then she's tempted to become bitter so that re-communication is huge.

A, it breeds humility in our heart. Look, I know I created an expectation and I didn't deliver and I just need to acknowledge that and get, get back on track.

[36 : 46] So, that's my little rhyme, guys. Initiate, communicate, not if, when you deviate, just re-communicate. So, if I had a nickel for every time I said to the kids, hey, gotten off track again, let's just reboot it one more time.

It's, it's humiliating, it's, it's hard, it fights against my laziness. You kind of hope everybody will kind of forget what you said we were going to do and sort of a lot of dynamics going but, but that's the nature of, of cultivating the teamwork that just says, you know, we, we want to approach this as a spiritual ministry project called our family.

The same way, and which is so strange, guys, I, I would know how to do that in, in a public ministry setting in my local church. I know what communication's required, I know what kind of support's required, I know what kind of encouragement's required.

I kind of have a good idea of the pacing with which it needs to go and for a lot of you, you are good at that at work as well, just bring the skill home and for some reason there's this strange bifurcation, these walls that go up that just like, I know what to do at work, I know how to lead, I don't know how to lead here.

Well, it can't be exactly the same and if you've got a military background, please don't try to run your family like the military. If you own a business, you can't run it exactly by business but the principles of thoughtfulness and communication and look, as the boss, if you want to change the plan every day, that's your prerogative but if you don't send an email to your team saying protocol changed, you're just going to demoralize the team and so in the same sense of building morale and communication and encouragement, just guys, bring those skills, bring those skills home out of love for your family.

[38 : 33] That's super helpful. Thank you so much for that. What if guys haven't started or were scared to start maybe the normal pattern of discipleship in the home with communicating truth whether it's opening up God's word for five minutes or whether it's in a conversation with a teenager and they're not really bringing biblical principles or just kind of bringing opinions and they're doing the best they can but how would one start, I need to bring truth principles into my home, I haven't either really done it, I don't know where to start or maybe I'm not doing it all that well and I want to grow in it so how would you encourage, especially the men but obviously the family and the lives of, you know, the marriage couple that are bringing truth into the home if it hasn't been a normal pattern quite yet?

Well, depending on the age of the kids, you're going to want to acknowledge that this hasn't been a pattern. You can't just suddenly change, you'll leave everybody in the car with whiplash. just acknowledge, you know, often after a weekend like this when Tandy and I would attend and be taught and encouraged just go home and saying to the family, look, I've been distracted, you know, mom has tried to tell me this but the word of God convicted me this weekend, you know, your mama said to me, even when you're home, honey, you're not home, you're physically here but your mind is a million miles away and so you can't just determine to start something.

Explain to the family why you're doing it. Explain to the family if you need to why you haven't been doing it. Say to them, I'm scared to do this because this is, you know, your mom is the bookish one maybe and you know then this is hard for me but I'm convinced Friday night's mandate that I must indoctrinate you, you know, people say, well, you're going to brainwash your kids.

Yeah, their brain needs to be washed. Please do. Just wash it with this and not opinions. So, so acknowledge that I'd start with but acknowledging to the Lord, to my wife, to the kids, I haven't been doing this and I'm, explain it's a conviction.

This is something God asked me to do and I haven't been doing it. So I would start there. Then I would probably talk to an older man as a friend to just make sure whatever you now try to put because some of you will go out, you know, and maybe your determination is unrealistic.

[40 : 56] So we're going to three times a day, seven days a week, get together over each meal. I work it from home so I can do this and sometimes it's just unrealistic. So you might need an older brother to say, maybe, maybe once a day, five days a week would be a good place for you to start.

Somebody who, you know, if you tend to be an overachiever, some of you will need somebody to say, you know, I don't think once a month is quite enough. And so some of you will need somebody to nudge you and say, I think you can do a little better than that.

So maybe a brother to talk to, to help you, you know, think through feasibility. I will say this, family life is fluid and it's changing and you're raising humans who are growing and changing and schedules change and it's, here's the discouraging, about the time, a handful of times when our family was growing, I would think, you know what, we kind of got this thing humming and you just, the moment you said that, you just messed it all up because something's going to change. Somebody's going to grow and add another sport to their life and it just changes. So it's just, accept the fact that the plan that works now might not work again in six months and there's just constant flex to make it work in the new season and the rhythm of family life.

The, you know, there just isn't a cookie cutter way to do it. So, you can talk to other brothers, find out what they're doing. I would also assume if you're not in the habit of doing this at all, that maybe you want to choose a book or a curriculum or a guide so that you aren't making it all up.

[42 : 37] So, whether that's some, there's so many good 365 day a week devotions and you could just choose the one for that day. I'm not saying you've got to do all 365 but just, just go with, go with that day.

In other words, if you're not in the habit of this, the thought of what am I going to come up with would probably be really intimidating. So, find something that you begin with that includes some scripture and some wise person's commentary on it and then maybe you just train yourself to add one additional personal thought.

On the other hand, you could also, there have been tons of families who would just say, we're going to read through the Proverbs regularly and there's 31 chapters and there's 31 days in the month at the most and so it happens to be, you know, June 3rd so we're going to read Proverbs 3 today. Depending on the age of your kids, you probably don't want to read Proverbs 5 at a certain age. You're probably not going to want to read Proverbs 7 so you can bend the system and be selective not because the Bible is indiscreet but there's just some topics that would be more apropos for your four-year-old than Proverbs 5.

It's not going to make any sense to them but selecting within there you can do that. So I'd say this, a lot of things fail because there's no plan. You'll be more likely to implement it if you have a plan.

[43 : 56] I would say as you mature, getting away from, it's not immature to use curriculum but I would want you to train your heart to sincerely bring, here's what the Lord is teaching me right now and so if you're being disciplined in your intake of the word and listening to sermons and saturating your mind so sometimes on the way home you're just thinking what could I share at dinner tonight from everything I read or listened to or was thinking about today and that's something I could have done a much better job at but it doesn't require a great deal of effort, men, to just drop that catalyst into the dinner table conversation.

I thought about this today. I thought a thought I'd never thought before today or I was convicted by this, I was encouraged by this and so men, doing that with your wife, just keeping her up with your, the inner landscape of your mind, Tandy has described it to me as I'm made by God to be your helpmate and when I don't understand what's going on in your heart and mind, I feel like a fish flopping on a hot dock in, you know, in Florida in July when I'm made to swim in the water of your thought life.

That's how she's thinking. Here's how I'm thinking. Why do you want in here so bad? It's a mess in here. I don't even like going in here. Why do you want in here so badly?

And that's when she just said because I'm, how can I be a helpmate and a partner in life to a man I do not know? So, you know, so that's just, that's just critical.

So, so whether that's, that's a blend of both sharing with your wife and sharing with your kids but your initial question was if you're at ground zero and not been doing this at all then just ask and you don't even know what book to turn to then ask your elders what would be a good resource for me.

[45 : 51] So, you could start with Spurgeon's Morning and Evening. That would be great for you and your wife. The old English in there doesn't play really well for kids. So, I probably wouldn't recommend that but there are lots of great resources so just start there or just determine I'm getting up, I'm feeding my own soul on a regular basis.

I'll just plan to bring, here is my favorite bit that I read today and you read that with the kids and you pray and you launch the day. Some of you, it's going to be morning. Some of you, it's going to be evening. Some of you, it'll be seven days a week.

Some of you, five days a week. The Bible doesn't tell you how but clearly the Bible does value saturation and most of us are doing, could do more, not, you know, most of us are not overkilling.

Most of us need to be pushed to do more. Remember, and the two things, there's the formal teaching of Deuteronomy 6 and there's the talking in the milieu of life and that's, I think that's, that's how we accomplish them together but if you're at ground zero, just do something and ask a trusted brother, what was the first thing you did or what was your favorite thing you did or to the young peacemakers and just start reading it and going through your kids.

If you've got elementary age kids, that thing is dead on, maybe even through middle school. Not, not great for high schoolers but, Tandy, can you think of anything else in particular that, we, we used to read missionary biographies to our kids.

[47 : 14] Do be careful about reading about great spiritual heroes whose lives end in martyrdom. Some of our kids found that really disturbing a little, I put that on them a little too early.

So, yeah, we used to read the, there was, there was a series of stories called Wisdom with the Millers, Prudence with the Millers, Missionary Stories with the Millers and the Millers are an Amish family and it was great for me as a new dad because I'm literally reading and the Amish father opened his Bible and taught the following things to his children.

So, I'm reading another dad and, but it was a place to start and it was, it was encouraging but, and sometimes a little bit moralistic. So, sometimes when I'm reading curriculum, prepared material, I'm, I'm editing it as I'm reading, I'm, I'm enriching it with a little more gospel, a little less moralism.

So, anything else, babe? Okay. So, someone's hearing a lot of this for the first time, maybe they're even beyond some of these years, maybe their kids are out of the house now and they're even learning principles now that, maybe I could have done it better.

How do you go back? How do you think through that? How do you, how do you temper your heart against the guilt that you might feel? Ways that you're like, yes, I saw this path, maybe I didn't step in the way that the word of God wanted me to and, and, blaming the outcome on yourself necessarily or, just ways that you've looked back now and said, yeah, we've all done it even up to this point no matter where you are in your parenting, you kind of look back and go, yes, there's things I could have done better.

[49 : 01] So, how have you, now we're kind of getting into kind of the 60 year old telling the 40 year old and, and beyond a little bit, you know, looking back well, a couple of principles, one I mentioned the other night, just admit the inconsistency of the fact that we tend to take credit, quote unquote, for our failures often in ways that we would never dream of taking credit for success.

So, if your kid's turned out in ways the world admires, it seems for some reason that we're less tempted to say, yeah, I did that. that's because of my awesome parenting.

We just say, it's just the grace of God. But when it comes to kids' failures, we were, we are often more willing to, so they're not walking with the Lord. You sowed the gospel seed imperfectly, but consistently.

They were in a church, they had, they grew up in a gospel rich environment and they've rejected it in their twenties. You can't assume that that's because of you.

Now, you'd want to go before the Lord and as you learn new principles and just say, I should have done that, I could have done that, I didn't do that, for sure, and own that, and now you're going to repent of that like you would any other sin.

[50 : 18] And so, acknowledging to all those who are, who do you confess your sin to? Only those who are affected by your sin. And so, that would be your spouse, your children, to just go and just say, really, the, guys, the longer I live, the more I see, the more I learn, so many things.

If I had to do over again, I would do differently and thank you for your patience and I know that, you know, say to an adult child who doesn't know the Lord, I know you don't share my faith and I just want you to know that, that I still need to acknowledge to you from where I'm sitting, here's what I could have done better.

So, so don't put this into a category of the unforgivable sin. There's not a parent that's ever been born who didn't look back and go, oh, so much, so much I could have done better, so much I should have done better.

Sometimes I was ignorant, other times I knew and I still just, but you really shouldn't be, if you're still shocked by that, it just shows that you're being inconsistent and remember I said the twin truths you can never doubt, I'm as bad as this book says I am.

And if you're still shocked by sin, you know what you ought to be saying if you've been walking with the Lord anytime and the Lord reveals you some sin you've never seen before, you just go, that does not surprise me.

[51 : 36] I'm done being surprised. Lord, that's, that's who I am and without you that's all I'd be, but thank you that that, that that sin may describe certain seasons of my life, but as Paul would tell the Corinthians and 1 Corinthians, sin describes you sometimes, but it no longer defines you.

That's not who I am anymore, Lord. So, you know, I'm sorry I was so slow to grow, I'm sorry that, but the other reason it shouldn't surprise you is just that parenting is selfless business and we love ourselves and so parenting of course would squeeze out, you know, and reveal stuff in you that you didn't know was there, that's why God gave you kids to show you stuff in your heart.

Think about David after, in Psalm 19, after talking about how God reveals himself in creation and then he talks about how God reveals himself in scripture, then the next thing he starts talking about is sin and he says this, he says, who can discern his errors?

Who can really see his blind spots? Lord, who can discern his errors? Acquit your servant of hidden faults. Hidden doesn't mean I've dealt with all the sequoias, I've mowed them down, now we're just down to the little sapling sins, Lord, and some of them are so microscopic, I'm sure there's little things I need to be forgetting.

No, he's not talking about size of sin. When he says, who can discern his errors and equip me of hidden faults, it just means they're hidden to you. There have been times I've sat down with my family and said, you know, I, the Lord is convicting me about something in my life that I've never seen before and I've literally had unfiltered teenagers scoff and go, are you serious?

[53 : 25] Dad, that's one of your most outstanding characteristics. That is news to you? Mom, is he being funny? I can't even tell. I mean, literally they're just going, right, blind spot to me but to anyone who has to live with me, they would just say it's as plain as the nose on your face.

You do, that's how the Christian life goes. I'm dealing with sin right now that I didn't see 10 years ago and 10 years from now at 73, God will be showing things that are in my heart right now that I'm unaware of and so just, just put that filter over all of this and just say, Lord, I, especially when it's sins and ignorance, I didn't know, Lord, I didn't see.

I remember my own dad saying to me when my son, it was the first time I let my oldest son and granddad go out alone and they came back and I said, how was your time, buddy?

He said, great. And he ran upstairs and my dad looks at me and goes, why did you tell, why did you tell your son that I hated you growing up? And I was like, what in heaven's name?

He said, so it's my son's first time to be with his granddad. And over the years he had asked me, did you get spankings when you were little? And I said, no. And then he put together Proverbs that I was teaching him when I'm spanking, look, the Bible's, I'm doing this because God says so.

[54 : 46] He says, if I don't spank you, it means I don't love you. He connects it all together. First chance to be with his grandfather. Hey, grandpa, the Bible says, you hated my dad because you didn't spank him. And my dad's not a believer and he's going, what are you teaching this kid?

That's what I'm saying. They can be too well taught sometimes. yeah, so look, don't create a separate category as if sin in the family, in your marriage and in your parenting can't be forgiven. There is pardon for all of this. Look, Jesus didn't die for the idea of sin or the concept of evil. Jesus died for what you didn't do as a dad.

And Jesus died for what you did do as a mom. That wasn't right. You understand? It's just unbelief that would make you think somehow I can't be forgiven. It sounds humble to say I've made too many mistakes to be forgiven.

That's not humble. That's actually pride. So you can sin beyond the power and the grace of God. This book says all sin can be forgiven, but somehow you've created, yeah, but Todd hadn't been born when this was written.

[55 : 55] Am I? No, just call that what it is. That's just unbelief. So repent of your known sin. Humble yourself knowing that even now when you're cleaned up as you know to be, there's still stuff the Lord in his wisdom hasn't shown you yet because we can't handle seeing it all at once.

We'd fall apart. So in his wisdom, which by the way, I've been thinking lately, whether I'm shepherding within the church or even at times within my kids' or grandkids' lives, there are times when when people have asked me, tell me what you see in my life.

And I've chosen not to tell them everything I see. For the same reason the Lord does, I say, search me, oh God, know my heart, try me, know my anxious thoughts, see if there be any wicked way in me.

And the Lord, do you think every time I've prayed that, the Lord said, all right, buckle up, the dump truck's coming, I'm going to show it all to you. No, in his wisdom, you know, I don't think, I don't think you're ready for that yet.

So, I don't remember where this began, but. No, that's, that's wonderful. Let's transition a little bit now into your life.

[57 : 02] We have many parents here that are parenting kids with kids and, you know, you talk about preferences, talk about opinions, talk about drawing lines, and so, how do you help your children now without maybe being a hindrance or how do you communicate certain things, maybe concerns that you see, but, you know, giving them the wisdom that they need without maybe intruding, being encouraging without intruding or invasive.

How do you and Tandy walk through the communication with your kids now as they're raising their kids? Well, I'll start by saying I don't think we do a good job.

We're not guilty of helicopter parenting once our kids are out and on their own and married. We're, we don't struggle with intrusion. But I don't think we built a great on-ramp.

The way we've worked is kind of like you're fully under my authority and influence until you're not. And I think we could have done a better job building on-ramps into the independence that they now enjoy.

Now once they go independent it's very clear to me not, not my problem. That's not my heart at all. It's just like it's very clear to me I give my daughter to this young man. I give my Stradivarius to an orangutan.

[58 : 22] I give my daughter to this young man and that, you know, he is now her provider and protector. That's clear to me and I don't go in there and, you know, we're just, that's not a particular temptation for us.

But I do think we could have done, I think it's really abrupt the way we've parented. So I look back and go, man, we could have, and some of that was our fear and, you know, on a continuum of, remember, I'm overcomp, tending to overcompensate for neglect and I had a lot of freedom and it was in a lot of dangerous situations that I should have been protected from.

So I tended to be on a scale. I know where I am. I am, I don't think I'm normal. I don't think I'm center. I don't think I'm middle. I'm way over here on the protective side. So that affected my willingness to let them make mistakes on my watch.

And it was, some of it was sinful self-protection. I don't want to feel the scary of that. I don't want to feel the shame of that. So you will toe the line while you're with me and then if that's how you want to live when you're on your own, that'll be up to you.

And, and off they go. And so, I would just encourage you be, I don't know how to say anything more because I didn't do it. Except, I do see parents around me and colleagues my age who I see handled it very differently in those years.

[59 : 39] And, like there were jobs we didn't want them to have and places we didn't want them to go because of the temptations that would have been associated with that. Looking back, I would just say it would have been okay under our watch to let them make some mistakes.

so that's, that's hard. So, repeat the question because that was just the beginning. Yeah, communicating with your kids now.

Yeah, communicating with our kids now. It is pretty rare for us to, well, our kids have made it easy. I'll just say this. Our kids will come to us and ask us, all right, you spend a weekend with our kids, you let us get away, that was very sweet of you, how did they do?

And what are you seeing? And to be honest with you, with our, four of our five children are married. One of those is pregnant where the first, they don't have kids but the other, you know, the other three have children.

There is, there are so many areas where they're doing so much better job than we were at their age parenting their kids that we have really just been able to really encourage them. Now, if we had unbelieving children, that would be a challenge we haven't exactly navigated with, we had unbelieving adult kids but by the time they became parents, God has graciously saved our kids.

[60 : 56] So, so, we haven't had a lot to go, should I talk to them about this or not because they keep opening the door. Tell us what you see, tell us, you know, and we are able to be encouraging.

There, there have been some times where we have stepped in and, and I kind of asked politely, hey, I'm observing some things that are concerning me a little, can we talk to you about it?

Would you, I've literally said, would you rather I keep it to myself? Well, no, what are you talking about? Now that you've brought it up, I'm scared to death, so yes, please speak. So, but our oldest grandchild is 10, so we're, we're only 10 years into this and we're still on a, on a learning curve and I fear that this is just, you know, parenting, here's the bad news about parenting.

You don't get your report card to find out how you did until it's over. I have a feeling that grandparent is going to be the same way till it's over. Towards the end of this, we're going to be going, how'd we do as grandparents?

But, if we come back to those principles we talked about Friday night of this mandate for intergenerational ministry, then, you know, there may be things we could do better, but we won't be guilty of not doing anything at all.

[62 : 08] So, so we, we've enjoyed, I'll say this the first time our oldest son, we've gone to bed and they were home for a visit. And we got this knock on our door and are you awake?

He said, I am now. They came in and in the dark they sat down on the foot of our bed and just said, they were maybe in their second year of marriage, he said, Dad, we bicker all the time and we don't really resolve well.

How did you and mom learn to resolve conflict? And I said, quote, in the dark, it's a good thing I'm laying down because otherwise I think I would have passed out.

What do you mean? I said, you know, just a short three years ago, you didn't want to hear anything I had to say. You had both fingers in your ears basically saying, la, la, la, I can't hear you and you're now asking for my advice on reconciling.

I can't tell you how much joy that brings me. I thought he'd think it was funny, he didn't. I think it's funny. I still think it's funny. Don't you think that's a good line? It's a good thing I'm laying down otherwise I would have passed out.

[63 : 18] Okay, maybe you don't think it's funny either but at the time it seemed like the right thing to say but yeah, what a joy. You know, and you know, on the other hand, man, we've had in the last few years, I sat the family down on the 4th of July, maybe five years ago now and just said, hey guys, it was one of those rare moments all the, we'd just eaten, it's hard to have conversations when we're all together now because there are little people and if you want to talk about something substantive, they're either interrupting or you know, but all the kids were tired, they'd been swimming all day and now they're, they were all watching something and I said, we've probably got 15 minutes before someone screams, I have something I need to say as the patriarch of this clan.

And I just confessed to them that, that, that Tandy and I had, had been having some struggles in those years in our marriage. The, the price tag of caregiving and, and changes in life and, I'm not blaming those things, I'm just telling you, we'd been in a season and we had kind of used up, I told them, I said, your mom and I have always had so much friendship equity because we've been each other's best friends since I was 15 and she was 16.

We're, we're high school sweethearts and we really like each other and, in addition to loving each other but, it was like, it's my fault as the leader. I have let some weeds grow in our marriage that I have never let grow in 40 years and I am, you know, I'm just, I'm, I said, we burned up all our friendship equity where all we've had left in the last couple of years is just our commitment to Christ and the vows we made and I want you to know we're on the other side of that and, what I'm craving and so hoping they'd say is, what are you talking about?

And instead, what they said was, yeah, we've seen it and my son who doesn't live in Florida with us said, dad, I'm so glad you brought this up because if you didn't bring it up, I was going to bring it up to you.

I said, what were you going to say? I was going to say, are you and mom okay? Because, last year, he said, I've even asked my siblings when I come home for visits, mom and dad see me.

[65 : 42] Am I doing this? Do I bring this tension in when I come home? Is this me? And it just tortured my soul that he'd think, you think you're the problem? He said, I'm so glad you brought this up and so, you know, I'm glad, you know, that you're on the other side of it and, you know, it just snuck up on us.

We were the frog in the kettle and we didn't see it happening and it happened and it never happened to us before. One of my other kids, one of the other couples said, seriously, dad? It took, however long we've been married then, 30 something or 40 years before you'd burned up all your equity and all you had left was your commitment to Christ and one another.

Well, my daughter said, dad, I think we burned that up in the first two weeks. So, you know, you're feeling all ashamed and humble and everything and I appreciate it but like, I'm really discouraged. That, you know, so, that kind of openness with adult kids, you think that hasn't glued and bonded and, but I was crushed that they noticed.

I was so hoping they'd say, I don't know what you're talking about but it made me really glad I opened my mouth because they did see it. They smelled it, they tasted it, they felt it and I was hoping it was, you know, somehow we were disguising it so that would just be an anecdote of the power of, you know, of admitting that and, you know, even as we are being encouraged in our marriage, you know, Pastor Jerry is a dear friend but he's also my pastor and though he and I are the same age, chronologically, one year apart, he had his last child the year I had my first child and so, he's been dealing with adult kids and grandkids though we're peers, he's light years ahead of me and so, Tanya and I being able to go to him for help with our relationship with our adult kids and seeing things and trends and so, he's been in my kids' lives, he's been in our life and it's just been so good and so, there have been other times we just sat down and say, looking back guys, [67 : 48] I just see some patterns in me where I didn't lead well and Tandy talked about some patterns in her so, we just convened a couple, two times where we've had these kind of big family powwows and it's just been really helpful and I assume this is, this is what this chapter looks like and I guess 80 year old Todd will tell 63 year old Todd, you know, how to do more of that or whatever but we're encouraged in this season though it's kind of been launched based on more confession than instruction.

Hey, we're just getting old enough to look back and go, oops, I see patterns and now acknowledging the kids but it's meant so much to our children and some significant relationships have been strengthened and healed between siblings, between, I mean, and I hadn't put it together and I was sharing with Jerry the other day, I said, we have, this happened and this conversation and this kid's thriving and now they're in a better church and things we've been praying about for 14 years and I hadn't put any of it together and Jerry just encouraged me by saying, brother, brother, you think that has nothing to do with the deep, hard things that you've sat down with your family and talked about?

This is the reward of that. God gives grace to the humble and you humbled yourself and saw it and owned it and repented and spoke to them and I was like, oh. So it's not just coincidence that some of these long-term prayers are being answered just now.

So, yeah, that's what this season, this is fresh and new to us and man, it's been deep, some of it's been really hard and some of it's been terribly sweet.

but we're pretty new at this, so there's 10 years view on that one but that's like asking, if your oldest child was 10 years old and you don't feel really ready to talk to anybody about parenting yet and I'm only 10 years into the grandchildren and adult kid thing, so we're learning.

[69 : 50] We're growing and I'll say this, when I was a young dad and would see parents with families you couldn't help but admire and I would say to that dad, I want my kids to be like this and those parents would say to me, look, it is just the grace of God.

I used to think they were being humble. Now I know they're being honest. Their kids aren't like they are because of awesome parenting.

Their kids are like they are because it really is just the grace of God and that brings us back to where we started Friday night. You're just called to be faithful steward. You can't make it happen and if it does happen, it's not because of your superior parenting, it's the grace of God and if it hasn't happened yet, you don't need to assume that it's over.

As long as there's breath, there's hope and that child is not too far gone to be saved. Those loved ones you're worried about. So confess where you know you failed.

Don't waste any time contemplating what might have been a failure. The Spirit of God will lay it at your feet and isn't he a gentle convictor? You know, it's never vague. You're a failure.

[71 : 02] No, God will say to you in private reading or in the middle of a sermon, you failed here. He never says you're a failure. Change that. Todd, stop that.

Todd, start that. He's specific and encouraging and the Bible says what does that do? It affirms my sonship. His training of me, Hebrews 12 says, proves I'm his son.

I'm tempted to think, man, if you've got to correct me and there's all this sin in my life, I'm probably not even a Christian. I go there so fast, so often, it's ludicrous. No, this is actually proof of your sonship.

I'm not going to leave you alone and I will reveal to you sin that you don't see today in my time and in my way and probably no better tool in the world than your spouse and your children.

It is a major source of sanctification. So, bring gospel comfort to your parental failure and now you're a good ad for the grace of God to continue witnessing to your lost kids.

[72 : 08] If you fall into self-pity, what are you going to have to offer them? Yeah, that is sweet. Thank you so much. you just mentioned kind of that trial.

I heard you say recently, I forget what context, that when you guys go through a trial, your family goes through a trial. How do we shepherd our kids whether it is an illness or whether it is in your case, you had over a decade of caring for parents and you willingly, gladly brought them in.

I know many of you are starting to get in that phase too and it would be a wonderful resource. They would love to talk to you guys about caring for aging parents as well. in our final moments here, shepherding your family through a trial, helping, this is a family trial.

It could even be just one person going through it but just the isolation that sometimes it creates, whether it's health, whether it's sin or something outside. How do you walk your family through?

This is a trial we are all going through together and we need to trust the Lord together.

Well, a trial is a great opportunity to communicate interdependence. I've been surprised how many of my kids mistook initially that adulthood was autonomy.

[73 : 32] But no, adulthood is still independent. You can be independent but we'll always be interdependent. And so, you know, using that word, interdependency, we need each other.

When one of us hurts, all of us hurts. So, this impacts all of us. We certainly learned in the years of caregiving, I had to stretch my faith to believe this. We made a choice to take Tandy's father in with Alzheimer's.

He lived with us for six and a half years. Two of those years, he was completely bed fast and continued to care for her mom up the street from us for another seven years, virtually.

And prior to that, caring for my parents for three years. So, we've been doing a lot of that and what I had to stretch my faith to believe was simply this.

This is all I know, kids. I don't know what the price tag of taking your grandfather in. We've never had somebody live in our house before. I just know this. This will call for sacrifice from all of us.

[74 : 33] Mom and I are convinced that this is what the Lord wants us to do. There's no doubt in our mind we're together on this and I just said, this is all I know. God's will for mom and dad's life is God's will for your life and I just have to believe that and so I did.

If I believed God was calling me to do something that impacts my kids then, you know, then that's part of it. So, praying together, confessing to them what's hard about it, making it safe for them to talk about what's hard about it.

You know, caregiving, I didn't, I found out it was harder than I thought it was going to be and it lasted longer than I thought it would last and I found out I did not like sharing my wife that much. I didn't like sharing the mother of my children that much and the Lord, you know, I don't look back at that period of caregiving as a high point for me.

I look at it as the Lord laid me low and showed me I am not, you know, one of my sons said to their mom one day, mom, dad is nice to everyone except your dad.

He struggles being nice to grandpa. Why is that? She gave the wisest reply she could. I think you should ask your dad that.

[75 : 50] So he came to me and I said, hey buddy, mom told me you asked her a question today and he said, I did. I said, did you ask her that question because she was handy when the thought occurred to you or because you were afraid to ask me?

And he said, I'm not afraid to ask you, it's just that's when it occurred to me, you know. So I told him, I struggle in this because somewhere in my heart I'm clearly self-righteous because the irritability and condescension I sometimes show to him proves to me that I think I'm better than him.

I didn't leave my family, he left his family and it's a sin in me that I need you to pray with me about and for me.

That, at that moment, that now becomes a family trial. Okay, so dad, I'm going to tell you what's hard about this for me. You're seeing it, you've watched my struggle and now you want an explanation.

So now I'm teaching him how to diagnose at a heart level what was really going on and so that would be the best way I know how to try to capture in an anecdote how to make a difficulty a family

event.

[77 : 02] I acknowledge that it affects all of us. I've acknowledged that we're all going to have to make sacrifices. I didn't know what they'd be until they were there and I acknowledge that I'm not doing well in all of it.

Nevertheless, I believe God's calling me to this. Pray for me as your dad. You think that doesn't begin to level the field and you know. One other thing I meant to say earlier in one of your other questions was when you're trying to connect with our kids I just can't say enough dads about you getting one-on-one time regularly with each of your kids.

So I used to take a different child out on a Friday morning and I would rotate between the three young ones that were left at home and we'd just go out every Friday one of them went every third week and I'd ask the same three questions every week.

number one are there any burdens or anything going on in your life you want me to pray with you about? That was my way of finding out are you hiding anything from me? Because a burden that could be a lot of different things or a prayer request and they'd usually tell me about some you know youth group high school drama you know that I'd need to hear about and try to offer them coaching on how they should respond biblically to that.

Second question was am I doing anything as a dad that you really really like that I could do more of? And they were always willing to talk about that. Some of my one of my children never answered the third question ever and that was and one of them was more than willing to answer it and one was kind of in the middle.

[78 : 31] The third question was am I doing anything as a dad that's hard for you that I could do less of? And one of my kids is the protector not going to make waves not going to hurt dad's feelings so not going to tell dad anything oh no oh no come on buddy.

Not a perfect dad there has to be no no. And then another one of my kids oh you ready for the list of things you're doing that you could do less oh boom boom boom. And the other one was kind of in the middle the middle child the pleaser was kind of like well I mean sometimes you you know so that was just a that's not a dictate that's not a prescription but it does I just that's invaluable and mom gets lots more time with the kids than I did and if I they knew that was coming it was predictable that that just really seemed to glue us together in some of those years and then I did start getting busy the my last my fifth child didn't get as much of that and and child number three had to say are you taking her out like you used to do me because that meant so much to me when I was her age in that season and I was like I kind of slacked off Tandy's dad was actively dying then it was just it was and it was a good nudge from a child I gotta get back to that find a way to get back with that child and so just a I just offer it as a as a not a not a template but an idea find your version of that and so for us it was a beach walk I we're close to the beach and we just go walk and if you walk early in the morning by the way no one is there and you don't have any of the the just the visual issues and the modesty issues a beach is not a great place to take a teenage boy for a walk to talk about the Lord it's just problematic you know but if you go early in the morning we literally have the place to ourself just fine with my older kids it was a donut shop in Little Rock and we'd go there on

Fridays and donuts and talk and just find your way to do that daddy one-on-one stuff that's just invaluable and even with your adult kids you know it's in my phone now to connect with my one son who lives out of state it's in my phone comes up every so often and I don't have to do it at that moment but it replaces it on my mind keep connecting keep proacting and so it's still going on with a 38 year old well thank you for not just shepherding us with the truths of God's word this weekend but just opening up your heart letting you know the areas you just really demonstrated for us what we can do in our homes just admitting failure trusting the Lord with it and taking the truth through our hearts so we are so thankful for you and Tandy to come to Squamish and to just lay out these truths and being willing to sacrifice your time and away from your own church family to shepherd us this weekend so let's give them a hand one more time this evening thank you thanks we do have one more song but can you please pray for us and our families of the

Squamish Baptist church father thank you for what this weekend represents again the my dear friends the currentes and and and clay and Andy Gerhard just relationships that I've had for a while and now to see a new season where you're doing a new thing it it just represents something special and and I've thought about it and I've tried to imagine it and tried to visualize it and I'd spent enough time with BK to know I loved him and that we shared a lot of the same spiritual DNA so I wasn't

worried but it sure is something special to come and and see people I know sitting beside people I don't and so Lord I do pray your continued blessing on on like I said this morning it's like a marriage the the newlyweds to to have decided to become one and now they're working out the realities of two becoming one so bless them in it encourage them in it enrich them through it and Lord people coming here on a

Sunday night after a long weekend what a marathon just proves these are people who care about their marriages and care about sheep and care about their children or they wouldn't be here and so Lord bless them as they now attempt to take these principles I'm sure all of which were just reminders of things they already knew but perhaps in new ways thinking through the the the nuanced way to apply them so Lord may true robust fear of you faith in you love for you meditation on you and your word may that be the foundation for change Lord for every parent every spouse who's here with a with an unsaved spouse or unsaved children Lord encourage their hearts help them not to give up help them to just continue to trust you on the timing you know how to save sinners you know when to save sinners and you value waiting in faith and so as we wait and hope and trust we remind ourselves of the nature of the God that we're waiting on a saving God a powerful God a wise God a loving God a patient God a seeking

[84 : 02] God that's who we're waiting on and so we need not be discouraged but trust you with the timing and at the same time we reaffirm our commitment Lord whether you ever save our children or not we will walk with you and love you and serve you and trust you and you don't owe us anything and we don't demand anything that you do tell us to pour out our heart to you so that's what we do Lord would you kindly save those we're burdened for do for them what you so undeservedly did for us we pray this in Jesus name amen amen