

The Great Transition

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Preacher: Chris Hamilton

- [0 : 0 0] I thought I should make a big show of it and limp up here and drag myself up here. I want to thank Chris and his six friends.
- You dragged me the last mile up the hill. No, he was very patient, very kind. Thank you guys so much for a great afternoon. And I've only been in Squamish for, well, not even 18 hours yet.
- And I just feel like I'm part of you. You're probably looking at me going, please don't feel that way. Go back to L.A. But I'm grateful to you for your hospitality.
- Chris and Lisa have been amazing in their family. And BK, thank you. And just thank all of you. You've made this more than just a weekend where we're talking about family and parenting.
- But the fellowship that we have in Christ together is unlike anything in the world. I feel like I'm in my church because this is the church. And so thank you.
- [1 : 0 0] What I want to do tonight is talk about the great transitions in life. And this is kind of a turn. This is, like I said, today really is focused on parenting.
- But this is a turn a little bit towards the end of this session where we make a turn towards relationships. And tomorrow we will focus on relationships.
- And the first session that we have tomorrow together, we're going to talk about what the Bible says about influence. And that has application to everything from choosing a spouse to being a good spouse to dating decisions to friendships.
- And then the second session that we have together tomorrow, we're going to talk about difficult relationships. And see what the Bible has to say about difficult relationships.
- And I'm looking forward to that. Tonight, though, you've heard of the Great Depression and the Great Recession. At least maybe you have. In my country, that's big stuff. But neither of those compare to what's coming for some of you and what has already occurred for some of you, what I call the Great Transition.
- [2 : 1 1] If you have children in the high school range, you may not have realized it yet. But you're staring down the beginning, or I would argue you're already in the midst of the Great Transition.
- Those kids that you have poured everything into, that you love, that you care for, that scare you when you think about them at night. And going off into the big world, they are leaving you.
- Completely dependent children are being transformed into independent adults. And by the way, that's the goal. That's not a bad thing. But it can be a hard thing.
- Compliant children, and maybe that was only when they first arrived from the hospital, they quickly transitioned to noncompliant adults.
- What I mean by that is they're going to make their own decisions. And they might not even ask you about what the decision is that they should make. They go from being accountable completely to mom and dad to being unaccountable to mom and dad.

[3 : 18] That doesn't mean that they shouldn't be accountable. But you may not be the source of that accountability. There's the expectation of complete obedience to you, to the hope and the prayer that they might honor you someday.

And we're going to talk about that. They go from intense training in your home and training and instruction like we talked about in the last session to becoming a peer in some sense in your friend.

And hopefully they're going to marry someone who will also be your friend. And maybe they'll bring home some grandchildren. There's an enormous transition from the life that for many, many years is somewhat predictable to that great expanse of possibility.

And I can tell you, I've been through that transition. Some of you have been. And I still marvel that 35 years ago I married this petite brunette woman named Ann.

And now we call her Granny. Granny. I don't know what happens. It happens so fast. And by the way, that's what she wants to be called. Granny Annie. And I've watched her transform from being an amazing mom to being an amazing grandmother.

[4 : 39] And I have no idea how it happened as fast as it did. But it did go quickly. And I know I sound old when I say that. Your children are going to transition from a member of your family.

And by that I mean they'll always be a member of your family. But should the Lord will, they will create their own family. And your family, what you're used to, the culture and the tradition and the fun of your family, which I hope you are experiencing, will no longer be the primary culture and the fun and the family environment that they're going to experience.

Now usually by this point somebody's crying. I hope I'm not upsetting you as you think about your children leaving the nest. What I really want to do is encourage you.

It's a good thing. You may not have realized this. And depending on how old your children are, some of you may have very young children and you think, this has nothing to do with me. Well, everything we're going to talk about tonight is to prepare your children someday to leave the nest.

What should you do? What must you think about? How to prepare them. And this transition when it comes is hard. Some parents never see it coming.

[6 : 01] And as of tonight, you can't say that. I'm telling you, it's coming. And I want you to think about it. Others see this transition coming and they fight very hard against it. I've seen parents fight against it with everything they've got.

They try to hang on. Today, I want you to think about being the parents that embrace it, that lead and guide your family towards that great transition.

Not doing everything you can to lead your family away from that kind of a transition. It's inevitable. And it's by God's design. Your children were given to you as a gift.

We read that passage. And the Lord made clear, and we'll look at that, that those gifts were on loan. And you have certain responsibilities.

And you do have authority. But that authority, like all other authority that's delegated by God, is limited in scope, limited in purpose. And it comes to an end. And before you think I'm raining on your parade, I need to tell you that the next phase, and some of you here would attest to this, is so different.

[7 : 09] And it's so fun. Ann and I have thoroughly enjoyed the empty nest. But I, and we're not the only ones. And that is not a statement of, phew, we got rid of those girls.

It was very painful in some sense. We deeply love them, and they are very close friends at this point. You're going to become an in-law, maybe a grandparent.

You're going to meet grandbabies. It's so fun. And you set the stage now. And so I want to look a little closer at that transition. I want to talk about the other great transition in preparation of the coming finish line.

Your parenting should be transitioning. From how the Bible describes the parent-child relationship at the beginning of life, to what the Bible describes as the parent-child relationship at the end of life.

And I'm not ready to kill you off and send you to the grave. But I think it's always helpful to think about what is the end. And like everything else that we've looked at, for example, what do you want to produce from your home?

[8 : 18] And we talked about that this morning. And what you want to produce from your home then rolls back and dictates how you parent and what you teach and what you train and how you do it.

And it eliminates some of the mystery of parenting. And this is, we're going to take the same approach here. And while none of the goals you have for your children change during this transition, the urgency increases because time is short.

And I remember feeling that way. Let's talk about what the Bible describes as the parent-child relationship at the beginning of life. Ephesians 6.1 says, Clearly, children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right.

Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. Colossians 3.20, a parallel passage, says, Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

There's two concepts that you heard there. One is obedience and the other is honor. In obedience, the expectation in Scripture is that that obedience is total.

[9 : 41] Obedience in all things. A child that comes home, an infant, comes home from the hospital, is incapable of disobeying.

You lay that baby in the bassinet and you say, stay. Is that baby going to go anywhere? The baby is incapable of disobeying that command.

They are completely compliant and obedient. That changes pretty quickly, doesn't it? They're sinners. They're dead in their trespasses and sins, and while they can't disobey if they wanted to, that, of course, transitions and changes.

The second concept in there is the word honor. It is beyond the capacity of an infant to honor their father and mother. But that capacity to honor mom and dad grows as the child grows.

And it's a concept that's developed, it's nurtured, and it's trained. You see, the Bible also says that we're to honor all men. And so, to be honored, we'll talk about towards the end of the session what that means from your standpoint.

[10 : 59] But if you want your children to honor their father and mother, you should probably teach them how to honor the king, as it says in 1 Peter. Honor all men, as it says in 1 Peter.

Teach them what that looks like. In the beginning of life, your children are dependent on you. You live with them. You eat with them. You travel with them. In Squamish, you have a lot of fun outdoors with them.

I'm learning. The parent chooses food. The parent chooses where you're going to live, what church you go to, what their relationships look like, what their schedule is, how they spend their leisure time.

Academics, you make the decision on what school they go to. That's all done by parents. And yet, your goal is eventually to move from that dependence to independence, where they make those decisions.

And then there's the issue of influence. The greatest influence you had, and I'll talk about it in past tense, was the day they were born.

[12 : 02] That is the height of your influence. And that's pretty high. It's enormous, and it stays pretty high for a fair amount of time. But necessarily and naturally, your role as their most significant influence is on a declining glide path towards somewhere between slim and none.

But that's up to them.

What's up to them, what I'm laying down. The relationship with the child, with your children at the beginning of life, is built on obedience. They have an obligation to obey you.

You have an obligation to require their obedience. And as we talked about in the last session, that is not for your convenience. You are ultimately teaching your children to obey who?

God. To fear God. But the tool and the authority to teach that is you require their obedience to you. At the end of life, I think it's fair to say there is no obligation to obey you.

[13 : 36] And just to be practical about that, how many of you called your parents and asked them for permission to come here tonight? I'm glad some of you are smiling.

It's a ridiculous question. How many of you asked your parents' permission to go climb a crazy mountain today? You didn't. You are completely independent.

You did not seek your parents' obedience. And why is that? Doesn't the Bible say to obey your parents in all things? Well, I think I will posit this, that you are required, your children are required to obey you.

Now, at the end of life, when you're on your deathbed, they have an obligation to honor you. And somewhere in between birth date and your death date, it transitions.

And the authority for that, it's really interesting. In the New Testament, Christ quoted the Old Testament command to honor your father and mother several times.

[14 : 41] When he did that, he was talking to Pharisees. He was talking to the religious leaders of the day. And in almost every case, honoring parents, not obeying parents was used.

And it was in the context, if you look at these passages, for example, Matthew 15, 4. Christ is confronting the Pharisees, and he's demonstrating to them that they're going to hell, basically.

That they cannot keep the law perfectly. And they were so proud of their ability to keep the law. Matthew 15, 4, Jesus says this. For God said, honor your father and mother, and he who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.

Well, he was quoting in that Exodus 21, 15, the law. He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 21, 17, two verses later, the law, it says, He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. The point there is Christ is teaching the Pharisees or speaking to the Pharisees and demonstrating they can't keep the law.

[15 : 56] He was talking to and teaching adult men. Jesus never quotes the command to obey parents when he does that. The command to obey parents is temporary.

He always quoted the command to honor parents in the New Testament, in the gospel. So obviously your relationship with your child changes. So when does the obligation for your children to obey you end?

When does your authority to require their obedience end? I don't know if you've ever thought about this. But this is a key point in thinking about the great transition that's coming with your children.

There is a range of thinking by parents. And I'm drawing this from interaction with parents at my church. It may not be true here.

I don't know. But some parents will say, My adult children are not required to obey me, which, by the way, is correct. It's biblical. On the other end of the spectrum, I have heard from several parents that there is no limit or end to the command that children are to obey parents.

[17 : 09] I don't know if any of you are in that camp. If you are, you're probably thinking about Colossians 3.20, where it says children are to obey their parents in all things.

Well, and parents use Colossians 3.20 to guilt their adult children into unquestioning obedience well into adulthood.

And that usually doesn't end well. Because a child will eventually understand they're not required to obey their parents. And it creates, for a parent who won't let go of that authority, that creates a conflict.

Do you see that? I don't think you want that. Some of us set up artificial gates or circumstances that end the need for our children to obey us.

I've heard some parents say it's when they're 21 years old. I have no idea what the magic is of 21. Some say my child has to obey me until they graduate from college.

[18 : 12] Some parents say, my child, as long as they're living in my home, must obey me. When they move out of the home, they no longer are required to obey me.

I've heard parents say when I'm no longer paying their bills, they no longer have to obey me. And as I move through these, some of you are jumping onto the boat going, that's it. That's where I'm at.

A lot of parents say, particularly when they talk about daughters, my daughters, for example, are under my authority until they step out of my family and they're under the authority of their husband.

So when marriage happens is when they no longer have to obey me. Is any of that biblical? Is any of that practical? Is any of that helpful?

And I would love to have you consider that question, that maybe perhaps that transition of you demanding their obedience, that maybe that transition happens even before they graduate from high school and leave your home.

[19 : 21] And I'm going to make the case for that here. And again, we're stepping now outside of thus saith the Lord. And I want to be very clear about that. What's so interesting is the Bible does make clear that the beginning of life, obedience is the requirement.

Not just for them, but for you. You must require obedience. It also makes clear that the end of life, as I've said, is that we have an obligation to honor our father and mother.

Our children will also have that same obligation. The Bible does not ever say when that transition happens. I want to be clear about that.

So we know the transition happens. We don't know from the Bible when that happens. And so what I'm trying to do from this point forward is to give you some thinking, some thought processes on when is that going to happen in your household.

Okay? The goal from the first day of life is to teach your children. And you can say this along with me. I know you've heard this so many times. But the fear of God, the wisdom of God, and the obedience to God, and obedience to the authority in their life.

[20 : 41] This is the purpose of the temporary authority God has given you. The God of the universe has delegated to you the authority to require their obedience.

And it's for a stated and specific purpose. And the purpose of that authority is for your children to learn to obey who?

God. So I want to ask you a question. All authority is delegated by God. It's limited in purpose and scope. All authority that is delegated, any authority.

I mean, look at Matthew 10 and you'll see this pattern when Jesus sends out the disciples. He gives them special authority. And he says exactly who they are to exercise that authority over, what that authority is, what the purpose of that authority is.

And the implication is that when that purpose is accomplished, the authority goes away. So, if you have children, and you understand that the authority to require their obedience, that the purpose of that is for them to learn to obey God.

[21 : 53] And you have children who are demonstrating in their life a pattern of obedience to God. Might that be the time to ramp down the requirement that they obey you?

Okay? Practical example of that. Particularly if your children profess faith in Jesus Christ in their teen years, which happened with one of my daughters.

From that point forward, she heard less and less about obey mom and dad. Because once they make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, the conversation changes.

And it is live in accordance with who you say you are. Obey God. Something to think about. And of course, when they don't obey you or they don't obey God, there is a discipline process.

And you don't let go of that. The discipleship doesn't end. If your child is not saved, they still must come to grips with their accountability to God and to all other authority in their life.

[23 : 07] And their exposure to the discipline of the Lord, which we talked about. There are also consequences for them for the lack of obedience and submission. And this understanding should be in place well before the teenage years.

That's the ideal. And if it is in place, then you have to start thinking about that transition of requiring obedience to you and submitting to authority in their life.

That's you and other sources of authority. So how does your parenting change? Again, this isn't thus saith the Lord. These are things I want you to think about.

I really think as parents, regardless of the age of your children, you need to have these conversations. You need to think about this. Dads in particular, lead your family.

See what is coming. That is leadership. You see what's coming down the road, and you begin to lead your family in accordance with what is coming.

[24 : 12] And this great transition is coming. But as your children demonstrate maturity, you honor them. You honor your children by granting them more independence.

And that independence, by the way, always comes with accountability. It's not let go and let God. You still are the primary source of discipleship in their life, the primary source of accountability.

And as they do well with more freedom is granted, you're looking for reasons to grant them independence rather than looking for reasons to withhold that.

Example is driving the car. Boy, is that scary. Why would you hand the keys to your car to an irresponsible, flippant, dishonest, disobedient child?

And yet, do you know how many parents do that? And you give away the leverage. You see, when your children are at that age and you're moving towards when they're going to be independent, there is a connection that they should be understanding in a visceral way before they get to the age of driving a car.

[25 : 32] But if not before then, then certainly at that age that with privilege comes responsibility. And outside of that responsibility, it is foolishness for you as a parent to hand them the keys to their destruction.

It's just an illustration, something to think about. That decision is in front of some of you. Do you hand them the keys to your car? And I would challenge you to think not about reasons why you shouldn't give them the keys to the car, but how you can.

And how they can demonstrate the maturity of handling that kind of responsibility. And you talk about it in the form of honor as much as obedience.

That you want to honor their maturity, their demonstration, regardless of whether they've professed faith in Jesus Christ.

But you want to honor their demonstration of obedience to authority, not just yours, but the governing authorities, the traffic laws, everything else, by handing them that privilege.

[26 : 45] Okay? The day is coming when they're no longer going to need your permission, nor will they seek your wisdom. And you want to consider when that will be.

And it's better that you open that door than waiting for them to push through that door. I remember one of my daughters, she was in college.

And she asked if she could travel with friends. And it was too inactivity in another state. And it was not activity that I was particularly excited about.

But I trusted her. I didn't trust her friends. But I trusted her. And I remember the moment when I said, You no longer need my permission.

You can do whatever you want. You're an adult. And I had the conversation with her. And it might have been a little late. And I say this to you, so maybe you think about having this conversation earlier.

[27 : 49] That the requirement to obey your parents is a mercy from the Lord. Do your children want to know what the will of God is? They just need to ask you.

Depending on their age. If they're 10 years old, there's an easy... I used to be in youth ministry for many years. It was really easy. We would tell the high school students, You want to know what God's will for your life is?

What do your parents say? And they hated it. Your kids might hate it. But when they get to a certain place, And it's better to prepare them that it's coming.

They understand the perspective that the ability to hide behind, if you will, What mom and dad say is how I know God's will for my life. That changes.

And the day comes when you should and will say to you, And I would advocate that you should affirmatively state it. You no longer need my permission.

[28 : 52] But, understand, you just stepped through the doorway. You have left behind forever the mercy of not wondering what God's will is.

At least in certain areas. You are now in an area where, if you want to know what God's will is, seek the Lord. I can't tell you that.

It's a great moment. And the second thing that I said to this particular daughter is, If you want to know what I think, I'll tell you.

And if there's one thing my daughters know is I always have an opinion, And I'm always willing to state it. And I remember in that conversation, she said to me, No, that's okay. It's the moment of truth.

I loved it. Because she's not required to seek my wisdom. That's not honor. And if she seeks my wisdom, she's not required to follow my advice.

[29 : 55] That is the great transition. And depending on what your home life is now with your children, That may be a small change. Or that may be an extraordinarily dramatic change.

In your relationship with your children. So that is the great transition. It's something you need to think about, consider, before you get there.

And all of this should frame your thinking as you prepare for seeing your children leave the home. And some of you have months. And maybe you have a lot to do in the next few months.

Some of you have years ahead of you before that great transition. And I think you thank the Lord for having those years. And you buy up the opportunity to grab a hold of a process that I promise you is going to happen.

Own it. Get ahead of it. Shepherd it. Land the plane. That's the opportunity you have as parents.

[31 : 04] So I want to transition to super practical training and discipleship ideas that should happen with your teenager to prepare them for the independent life on their own. There's the relationship between you and them.

That changes. But there's a whole scope and scale of life that is about to hit them. In our church in California, it's unfortunate in some ways.

But the most common transition is that people graduate from high school and they go straight to college. And I say unfortunate because they don't come back the same depending on what college they go to.

So that's beginning to change. But when your child goes off to college, you may have required that they're home by 10 o'clock the day before. I promise you the next day they're not calling you to say, can I stay out past 10?

You have no knowledge and you have no control. What will your child do in that environment? And if you don't know the answer to that question, you're not ready for that transition.

[32 : 15] If you know what the answer to that question is, good or bad, at least you're ready for that transition. Because that will happen.

I've been involved in college ministry at my church for many years. We enjoy it. But I've got to tell you, I'm astounded at how many kids in college away from home are completely unprepared for life.

I mean completely unprepared. And I wonder and I even marvel at what were the parents thinking. Why weren't they thinking? Or why weren't they thinking?

Why weren't they preparing their child for the decisions that are in front of them? If you're for your children, and I trust you are because you're here on a Saturday night, I want to help you to help them.

There's practical issues of life coming. There's basic day-to-day realities on money. What do they do with a credit card? I am astounded at how many college students are handed a credit card and they have no idea how it works.

[33 : 24] Teach your children. By the way, credit cards aren't evil. In the hands of an immature and unprepared college student, they could be deadly to you, to your life savings.

College students need to know about savings accounts, investments, what is debt, how to buy a car, pay rent, insurance, medical.

When did you learn all of that? Whatever the answer to that is, you have the opportunity to get ahead of that. You know, meals, buying a car, fixing and driving a car, a house, do they know how to clean it, maintain it?

Do they know how to fix it? Do they know where electricity comes from? I'm telling you, it's amazing what I've seen. The big-picture disciplines that all of us need to know and think about, whether you're letting your children exercise these muscles in the confines of your home to prepare them for that life, is what we want to talk about.

They want to exercise these muscles in your home and the safety of your home so that they are effective, functional, and wise when they leave your home. And all of these disciplines are critical as an adult.

- [34 : 42] So many leave home for college or whatever with no clue on some of this. What is their purpose? Why are they in school? Why are they doing what they're doing? Planning, thinking beyond tomorrow.

We talked about the difference between goals and dreams. It probably would be very good for your children to understand that difference before they leave your home. Decision-making. They're about to make the most life-impacting decisions in their life.

They're deciding where they're going to go to school, what their major is going to be, what their career is going to be, if they're moving away from home, what church are they going to go to? How do they pick a church?

Decisions about which boy or girl they're going to date and marry. All of these are big decisions. Do they have any idea how to make decisions? Do they know God's perspective on decision-making?

Friends. Do they know the value of a good friend? Do they know the dangers of bad company? The whole issue of wisdom. Do they know that the beginning of wisdom is to get wisdom?

- [35 : 51] Are they trained in that type of thinking? That that pursuit of wisdom is, according to Scripture, a pursuit that happens every day for the rest of their life?

Do they know the difference between wisdom from above? Do they know that wisdom is not defined by somebody saying pithy things?

That James 3 says wisdom is a life? It's not what somebody says. It's how they live.

Do they... What is their perspective on success? Do they know failure? Have you trained them with the practical wisdom of failure? There is no motivation for success if there is no risk of failure.

Do they understand that? Have they ever experienced that? Are they personally familiar and acquainted with failure? This isn't an appeal to you to set traps and cause them to fail.

- [37 : 04] That wouldn't even be fun. But what I'm saying is you need to let them feel the consequences for bad decisions.

When they fail, they need to feel it. Let them fail. And I'll say it this way. Failure caused by foolishness at 15 has far less consequences than that same exact foolishness at the age of 25.

So no, I'm not saying let them drive into a wall. But I am saying that when their decisions create consequences, when they're in your home, that is the golden opportunity and the safety and the security and the environment of your home to teach.

So that when they are 25, they don't make those same errors. Do they know about marriage? Here's a hard one.

Do they know about parenting? Yes, your children are going to be parents someday. That's kind of scary. So how do you prepare them for this? Well, I'm not going to take the time to develop this too much, but I'm going to challenge you that in Proverbs 1 through 7, every single issue that I just talked about is discussed in the context of a father teaching his children.

- [38 : 33] This is an appeal to you to spend time in Proverbs. And maybe even spend time in Proverbs with your children. Because all of the issues that were just discussed, money, marriage, the opposite sex, morality, all of that is covered in Proverbs 1 through 7.

I want to show you a pattern here. In Proverbs 1, 8, it says, hear my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. Verse 10, my son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

Verse 15, my son, do not walk in the way with them. Keep your feet from their path.

Chapter 2, verse 1. My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding.

Chapter 3, verse 1. Are you picking up a pattern here? My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments.

Verse 11, my son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord or loathe his reproof. Verse 21 of chapter 3, my son, let them not vanish from your sight.

[39 : 50] Keep sound wisdom and discretion. This goes on 17 times in Proverbs 1 through 7. It says, my son. And one time it says, go to the aunt, oh, what?

He didn't call him my son. He said, my sluggard. Proverbs 1 through 7 is the record of conversations between a father and his children to prepare them for life.

It is golden. You want to prepare your children for that great transition, I highly recommend you work through Proverbs 1 through 7.

We're not going to do it tonight. But just so you know, Proverbs 1 talks about wisdom. It defines it. It talks about the consequences of bad choices and bad company. And it talks about the ultimate difference between a wise man and a fool.

Do you want your children to be wise or fools? I think you should probably look at Proverbs 1 and maybe even look at Proverbs 1 with your children to prepare them.

[40 : 58] Proverbs 2, how to get wisdom. Why to get wisdom. Proverbs 3 talks about kindness and trusting the Lord and humility. The proper handling of money.

Perspective on discipline. There's sleep patterns. dealing with wicked people. Proverbs 4 talks about honoring parents. It talks again about bad company.

It talks about good company. It talks about how to guard their hearts. As they enter a phase of life where they're making big decisions. Proverbs 5 talks about discretion and honor.

Proverbs 5 is a difficult chapter to read to your children. I know that. For years in my house, we read Proverbs every night. I forget what the date is today.

The 6. Thank you. Our family would have read Proverbs 6. And tomorrow we would have read Proverbs 7. And I will tell you from experience that Proverbs 5, 6, and 7 were very difficult to read to a table of young ladies.

[42 : 02] Very difficult. Very difficult. Because in Proverbs 5, it talks about sexual sin and how it happens. It talks about marital relations. In Proverbs 7, it talks about how extramarital affairs happen.

And then it talks about how extramarital affairs don't happen. And it's very graphic. And yet we read it. I highly recommend it. Proverbs 6 talks about investing and borrowing money.

It talks about hard work and their speech and integrity. And parenting and the evil woman. A difficult passage to read to young ladies.

And the consequences of bad decisions. Proverbs 1 through 7. And actually throughout the rest of Proverbs. But particularly in the first seven chapters, it addresses all those issues.

And if you consider doing this, I want to encourage you this way. You want to take your time. Chapters 1 through 7 are loaded. The conversations represented in Proverbs 1 through 7 take time.

[43 : 07] And they're the result of a major time investment. You want to encourage your children. Much of Proverbs 1 through 7 is a father teaching his son the benefits of wisdom and the benefits of fearing God.

It is not a negative presentation. It is very positive. You want to challenge your children. Much of Proverbs 1 through 7 is also about the necessity of obedience.

Proverbs 1 through 7. You probably heard it in my quick overview. It's repetitive.

Don't be afraid to be repetitive to your children. Don't be scared away by a child that says, Dad, you have said this to me so many times. The best of us are prone to forget.

And I figure if Proverbs repeats, I'm going to repeat. And maybe it will stick. Be practical. You want to view the world around you through the lens of the fear of God, the love of God, the wisdom of God, and the need for obedience to God.

[44 : 14] And that's what that father does in Proverbs 1 through 7. He grabs real life, and he brings it down and presents moral truth. And he presents moral truth, and then he goes out and he grabs real life to illustrate moral truth.

That is phenomenal discipleship. And you may be sitting there going, That is so far beyond my ability. Praise the Lord. Read Proverbs 1 through 7. It's for you.

It's done already. Be creative. Proverbs 6 is a great example. The father probably is walking along with his children, and he sees a line of ants. Now, my inclination is to kill that line of ants.

Okay? But this father points at that line of ants and says, What a golden teaching tool. That small little ant. Created by God.

And Proverbs 30, by the way, talks about the ant also. What a teaching tool. Be creative. Be purposeful. The issue is their sin and their foolishness.

[45 : 20] The goal is the fear of God, the wisdom of God, and obedience to God, and this should drive your conversations. And then be complete. All issues are on the table.

I don't understand why, and I'm going to aim this at the dads, why fathers would ever say there's ever a topic you would not talk about with your children. If you're not going to talk to them about it, somebody else will.

Yes, it's uncomfortable sometimes. Yes, your children will come home from school or whatever and say the craziest things. That is not a reason to shut them down and say we're not going to talk about it.

It's the opportunity to prepare yourself and teach them from the word of God how to process that. The other end of life is how do you honor your parents.

We've talked about the beginning of life, obedience. We have just spent a lot of time on the transition from obedience to honor and preparing your children for the day when you no longer have the voice to say what you have now.

[46 : 31] Prepare them. Grab that opportunity. Prepare them for when they walk out of your house and you no longer have that voice. And if you do that, you can look back without regret.

Oh, there's always opportunity to say I should have said this better. I should have focused on that more. But you have the confidence to say that I obeyed what God called me to do to the best of my ability.

Now, I just want to spend five, ten minutes on the other end of life. Honor. How do you honor your parents? And you say, well, for most of the students and the children represented here, they're not here to hear this.

I understand that. But you all have parents. And I want to look at this question through the lens on how do you honor your parents so that you have a reasonable expectation of if your children were sitting here, I would say the exact same thing.

Because this is what the Bible says. You see, you don't ever get to demand that your children honor you. You can and you must require their obedience.

[47 : 47] The Bible never says that you can or must demand that they honor you. So how do you honor your parents?

It's the same answer to the question of how will they honor you, hopefully. And I just want to run through this really quickly. First of all, be humble. This is why in both lists for men and women, boys and girls, there was an element of humility.

You teach your children humility. And out of humility comes honor. Proverbs 30, verse 11. Listen carefully. There is a kind of a man who curses his father and does not bless his mother.

There is a kind who is pure in his own eyes yet is not washed from his filthiness. There is a kind, oh, how lofty are his eyes and his eyelids are raised in arrogance.

There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords and his jaw teeth like knives to devour the afflicted from the earth and the needy from among men. I love this verse.

[48 : 54] I love, Proverbs 30 is one of my favorite chapters. Verse 15. The leech has two daughters. Give and give. Think about that. You can think about that later.

There are three things that will not be satisfied. Four that will not say enough. Sheol. The barren womb. The earth that has not been satisfied with water.

And fire that never says enough. What is the point of all of that? What does that have to do with honoring your father and mother? And humility. Well, you heard the beginning of this.

This is a description of an arrogant person. The opposite of humility. The opposite of humility. The opposite of humble. Verse 17. The eye goes right into this. Verse 17.

The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother. The ravens of the valley will pick it out. And the young eagles will eat it. That entire passage.

[49 : 52] Is about honoring mom and dad. You see, humility goes with honor. If you have parents who are alive, the Bible commands you to honor them.

And that involves humility. Humility is the virtue that assures a good relationship with parents. Or at least the ability to honor parents.

Whether they deserve it or not. See, preference is the action that identifies your humility. Giving preference. That's the definition from Romans 12 of honor.

Number two. Be thankful for your parents. Parents. They have successfully launched you. One way or another. And I know there's a lot of stories in this room about parents.

And I don't know that because I've heard them all. I know that because I know the human condition. We have parents that did it well. We have parents that did it poorly. We have parents that hurt us.

[50 : 58] We have parents that have damaged us. We have parents in this room who did it right. Who you look back and you say, I want to be exactly like them. It's a sweet thing.

Whatever that background is, we must be thankful for our parents. They taught you wisdom. You need to find the good and be thankful to them and thankful to the Lord.

And I say that is a very dangerous thing to say that I am not going to be thankful for my parents when you understand that God appointed them to be your parents.

Be thankful for their role, even if not for the relationship. Third, how do you honor your parents? You forgive your parents. Some of you come from a background that requires you to forgive deep wrongs that happen in the context of your family.

Some of that you may not have shared with anybody. Some of you, though, may have built up slights and minor perceived offenses over the years, and that is all built into very significant, unresolved issues and bitterness.

[52 : 10] The command to you and me is that we need to forgive our parents. We need to be humble. We need to be thankful for them and to them, and we need to forgive them.

Colossians 3.13 says, Bearing with one another, forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. The inability to forgive parents is a reflection of a lack of understanding of how much you were forgiven.

And I have no idea how this applies to everybody in this room because I don't know your stories. So I want you to know I'm not thinking about anybody.

I'm not talking to anybody. Here's the thing. Whatever happened in those days, the Christian response is to let it go. In humility and thankfulness for the sake of now and the future, forgive your parents.

You give preference to them. You honor them by forgiving them. Number four, this one might be hard for some of you. Listen to your parents.

[53 : 20] If you have a relationship with your parents, the way you honor parents is you listen to them. I say that very carefully. That doesn't say you do what they say. But one of the ways that you give preference to your parents is that you honor your parents as you give preference to them and you seek their counsel.

The biblical command to get wisdom most certainly includes your parents. They have life experience and knowledge that you do not have.

They are decades. They have decades of shared life with you, which makes some of you uncomfortable. That's why you're not inclined to do this. They have context that you couldn't possibly replicate with anybody else.

And this is true whether they're saved or they're not saved. You're in a dangerous place if you've written off your parents as not relevant in the command that you obey Scripture in honoring your parents.

When you have a life decision, many of you are well taught to seek counsel. However, some of you would never even consider seeking that counsel from your parents.

[54 : 37] I'm not telling you you have to. I'm telling you one of the ways to honor your parents might be to seek their counsel, to talk to them. Proverbs 23, 32 says, listen to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old.

That is a difficult verse for people who have a difficult relationship with their parents. I remember my dad's counsel in my life.

Should I marry Anne? Absolutely. He cried. He loved Anne. I followed his advice. To my great benefit, by the way. Should I buy a house with a pool?

Absolutely not. Don't do it. I did it. You grew up with a pool. Let me tell you all the reasons why that was a bad decision. I followed his advice to my great benefit.

I remember I asked him, should I pursue full-time ministry? He said, absolutely. I'll never forget it. Sunday night, we're driving to church. I'm 20 years old. He pulls over to the side of the road.

[55 : 46] I didn't ask him. He told me. He says, you need to be going to seminary. You need to go into full-time ministry. He was a son of a Baptist preacher. And he caused a great conflict in my life by telling me that because I respected him so much.

For a lot of reasons, I didn't follow his counsel. He was not infallible. His insights and perspective were gold. And I haven't said much about my dad.

He was in so many ways my best friend. He was 50 years old when I was born, by the way. He was injured in World War II, got a late start in life, and me and my twin sister arrived when he was 50 years old.

Can you imagine parenting twins? I loved that man. I didn't realize how old he was until I was in junior high. And we were in the church softball league and I looked at my dad and it was literally the first time I realized he is an old man.

He's tired. And it was so sweet to me that he came out to play softball on the softball team when he probably didn't want to.

[56 : 56] But his counsel to me in that context set me on the path of understanding I was not called to pursue full-time ministry. He was humble and he knew that it was best whatever decision I made would be my decision.

And I think that's an important element that when you talk to your parents and you make a decision based on their counsel that you own that decision that you don't come back to them later and say I took your advice and it was really bad advice.

I can't tell you how often that happens. Fifth way to honor your parents is to prepare to provide for your parents. I read this this morning 1 Timothy 5.8 If anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

And number six number six is obey the Lord even if that disappoints or angers your parents. You always obey the Lord.

I had one of the best mother-in-laws if not the best mother-in-law anybody could ever have. I remember the time she landed in our home and told us that we needed to stop spanking the children.

[58 : 11] She has since passed away she died in her sins as far as we know very grievous. Love that woman. But I promise you we never for a second considered honoring her by following her direction not to discipline our children.

We loved her. We honored her. We listened to her. And we made some changes in our home that when she was in our home the discipline still happened it just didn't happen in front of her. That's honoring your father and mother.

And lastly be patient with your parents. Life is long. What you do today will follow you for many many years. In the dating and marriage process it's a source of significant struggle and tension for some.

Mom and dad don't approve. We deal with this at my church all the time. A couple wants to get married and the parents of one or the other are opposed to it. That's difficult.

And that's where the question comes down how do I honor my parents in a very tangible visceral way. I want to get married to this girl and mom and dad are saying no.

[59 : 30] Be patient. Take the long view. So honoring your parents and I've talked about this in the context of how you honor your parents and some of that might have been hard to hear.

Be humble. Be thankful. Whatever your background is with your parents. Forgive your parents. Listen to your parents.

Ask their counsel. Doesn't mean you have to follow it. Prepare to provide for your parents. Obey the Lord even if that angers or disappoints your parents and be patient with your parents.

I want you to leave tonight understanding and hearing that from a different perspective. As difficult as that might be for you to hear in your relationship with your parents, I want you to understand that that's what the Bible says to your children about you.

That your children in their relationship with you, they need to honor you. Their obligation before God is to honor you. You have no ability to command them to honor you.

[60 : 42] So you pray if you're so inclined. Lord, would my children be in such a place where they could honor their parents?

I would say to them in their dealings with you, be humble. Be thankful for your parents. Wouldn't that be nice? to hear them say thank you to you and thank you to the Lord for you.

Forgive your parents. That might be hard to hear, but it's probably pretty obvious. You've made mistakes, haven't you? I've made mistakes. Oh, what wonderful grace to have your children forgive you, to not write you off because of those mistakes.

mistakes. I would tell your children to listen to you, not just today, but after that great transition, as they leave your home, I would tell them, and the Bible tells them to listen to you, to give preference to you.

I would tell them that they should prepare to provide for you, not that that's what you want to have happen, but should it become a need, that is an obligation of children who honor their father and mother.

[61 : 51] I would tell your children to obey the Lord before they obey you. even if it upsets you, or intimidates you, or disappoints you, and I think you would agree with me, as hard as that is to hear, that that's what you want them to do, isn't it?

And I would tell your children to be patient with you. Be patient with you. Those are the seven ways that we honor our parents, and those are the seven ways I pray your children rise up and bless you as they honor you.

Let me close in prayer. Lord, thank you for the topic tonight, and the application of your word. Lord, I pray that it might be clear what your word says, and the application to our children as we prepare to send them away from the home, to leave the nest, to begin a new chapter of life.

Lord, I pray that on the issues that are not clear in Scripture that we talked about tonight, that you would cause each and every parent here tonight to think about these things, to pray about these things, to consider these things together, and that they would jump ahead of that process and grab ahold of it and shepherd their family through that process.

And Lord, I pray for each of the parents here that their children would rise up and bless them, that they would experience the honor of their children towards them, and Lord, that we as adults, as their parents, might be an example of what that looks like as we honor our parents.

[63 : 29] Thank you for all of this. Thank you for your church. We thank you for such a great salvation. We thank you for the word of God that gives guidance and help in these difficult issues of life.

In Christ's name, amen.