

# Crash Course to a Wonderful Family - Part 3

by David Servant

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*David Servant emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus as the foundation for a wonderful family while addressing the unique challenges and opportunities for single individuals in the church.*

**Duration:** 56:59

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Proverbs 13:24, Proverbs 14:1, Proverbs 22:6, Proverbs 31:27, Ephesians 6:4

**Topics:** "Parental Influence", "Christian Education"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of diligently raising children in the ways of the Lord, highlighting the impact of parental influence on children's faith and righteousness. It stresses the need for parents to prioritize their children over other commitments, to teach God's word consistently, and to model repentance and humility. The sermon also addresses the significance of homeschooling as a means to instill godly values and the importance of setting a godly example for children to follow.

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## Transcript

Well, we've been talking about the family and I'm giving you the crash course on how to have a wonderful family. And of course, in three sessions, you obviously can't do a whole, whole lot. When I was a pastor, I used to teach on the family sometimes for 10 weeks in a row, maybe I think 12 weeks in a row and cover all the bases.

And so we're just kind of hitting some things as the spirit seems to indicate to us. But I wanna start off this morning by just gotta lay the foundation of all foundations. You know, if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, I don't care how good of a family you have, you're all gonna go to hell.

And all this is pointless teaching unless we get the foundation laid. And so we're saved by faith in what? Faith in Jesus' sacrifice? That sounds pretty good. A lot of folks say it on the radio, but that's not how we're saved.

We're saved by faith in Jesus. More specifically, we're saved by faith in the Lord Jesus. Not believing in a doctrine, believing in a person.

You hear me? And so if you believe in the person Jesus, you cannot have the same life you had before you believed in the person Jesus because the person Jesus is the king of kings and the Lord of lords. And he's gonna, you know, judge you one day and he's either gonna say, well, come on into my eternal

kingdom or he's gonna say, depart from me. I never knew you, you practice lawlessness.

And so when you encounter Jesus, I think most of us have encountered Jesus as sinners. Can I see the hands of the sinners who have encountered Jesus? And so you can't stay in that same state once you encounter the Holy Lamb of God. You've got to adjust your heart.

You've got to, you know, sometimes it's agony. If you're a real bad sinner, like Terrell was, right, was. Yes, right, okay.

And you know, sometimes we know our hearts should take a while to soften, but it comes to that place where you come to Jesus Christ and it's not accepting Jesus as your savior. No, no, Jesus does not need your acceptance. You need his acceptance.

And he doesn't accept you until you repent and start following him with your heart. Did I say you're automatically perfect? No, no, no. But your heart is perfect.

You love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and you wanna please him. Do you always succeed? No, that's called sanctification. You grow, you blow it, you repent and confess, but your heart is aligned with Jesus because preeminently you want to please him and you're always conscious, one day I gotta stand before him.

And he has the right to speak into every area of my life. I am no longer my own. I've been bought with a price.

That's Christianity 101. I get so tired of these preachers saying, well, Jesus is asking us and they tell us what he's asking us to do. Christ doesn't ask anyone to do anything.

He commands people to do things. And you either say yes, Lord, or you say no, because you're not my Lord. You can't say no, Lord.

And so Jesus is commanding us. And again, do we always succeed 100%? No, no, no, no, no, no. We're always growing.

We still stumble. But I'm saying a person who really believes in Jesus, there is something about them that sets them apart from everybody else. Amen.

And I'm telling you, if you say, well, I'm kind of ashamed to sing in church. My goodness, if you can't sing in church, I'm embarrassed to lift my hand in church. Man, if you can't lift your hand in church, what are you gonna do outside the church, man? You know, come on.

People who love Jesus, it shows up, right? People who believe in Jesus, it shows up. All right, so all that, just gotta say that because I always feel like if I don't say that, I'm just wasting my time on everything else that I might say. All right, so you get that straightened out, and now you've crossed into square one, and you can progress from there.

Now, two things I wanna focus on today. I'm gonna ask my wife to help me a little bit here. I wanna focus on a neglected segment of the body of Christ, especially, of course, when it comes to talking about the family.

And those are, particularly, the people among our family who don't have their own families or they're, maybe just say it simple, they're single, they're not married. And a lot of times, single people feel like second-class citizens, but let us see the hands of all these wonderful single people here today. Hold your hands up.

Now, look around. Yes, that's a good idea. Let's applaud these single people because these people could very well be more spiritual than you married people.

In fact, come on, come on. Turn in your Bible to 1 Corinthians, if you would. Chapter seven now.

That's in the New Testament. 1 Corinthians, chapter seven. That's right before 1 Corinthians, chapter eight.

And Jesus was single. It wasn't because he was a dud. I'm sure there's a lot of people that would have married Jesus.

Don't you think so? That's insane. Well, scary thought, but of course, an impossibility. He's the Son of God.

But all I'm saying is that, to look down upon single people or for a single person to feel like, well, I'm less spiritual. There's something wrong with me. My, my, my, my, my.

Look what Paul says in 1 Corinthians seven and verse number seven. Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. Now he's speaking of I'm single.

However, each man has his own gift from God. One in this manner and another in that. Well, that means some have the gift to be single and remain single.

Some have the gift to be married. It takes a gift either way. It's not easy either way.

Can I have an amen? People say, well, if I was married, all my problems would be over. No, you would just trade some problems for other problems. You know, just grass always looks greener.

And then so he goes on and he says verse eight. But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. But if they do not have self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn.

And my Bible adds a little clarification with passion. I won't comment on that because that's a little bit embarrassing. But probably most people don't know what he's talking about there.

So you either have a gift and one gift or the other. Paul actually says it's preferable to remain single if it's possible for you, if you have that gift, because then you can be more devoted to Jesus Christ. And there's absolutely no doubt about that.

Because when you're married, you've got somebody you gotta please. Isn't that what it's all about? Keeping that person happy. Yes.

And you gotta put some effort in to keep that person happy, right? You can't like just always be praying to Jesus. You gotta be talking to her sometimes. Can't always be out doing the work of the Lord, you know? Because you got somebody else to care for.

And if you're gonna get married, you know, there's a good chance you're gonna have kids. And so you're not gonna have to have one person to keep happy. You could have two, three, four, five.

The sky is the limit on how many people you have to keep happy. And so singleness is preferred if God calls you to that. And if He calls you to that, He gives you that, you'll be able to remain single and you'll have that desire within your heart.

Praise God. Now, I didn't have that gift. How many did not have that gift? Let's see the admission right now, okay.

Don't feel bad, feel good. Praise God. This is all of grace.

Praise the Lord. So all the glory goes to God himself. Okay, now many single people, of course, don't feel like they have the gift of celibacy.

In fact, all of the married people here at one time were single at one time. Great revelation there, okay. And all of them obviously didn't feel like they had the gift of celibacy.

And so there was a time when they were single, but yet open and desiring and looking for that time when they would get married. You know, and that happens, you know, quite frequently to most people within the body of Christ. Nothing wrong with that.

But it's a frustrating time because you feel like, man, there's still someone out there, there's still something out there waiting for me and I wanna have all of God's best in my life because I don't have the gift to remain single, okay. So I wanna spend just a few minutes at the beginning here, not neglecting, hey, there it is up in the scripture, up on the bulletin board. You gonna play that DVD too that I threw you back there? You think it will? Okay, that'll come off a little bit later.

Let me just give you a couple of things that I think are the most important things for single people who don't have the gift of celibacy to keep in mind, okay. And I'm saying all of these things because I love you and because I've been married now for 20, 28, thank you. 28 years, I knew it was 28 or 29, this was doing the math.

And I was single at one time and boy, I'll tell you what, I just wanna testify, thank you Jesus for the grace of God because I could have very easily married a person who it wouldn't have turned out as happy as it's turned out. And I wanna try to give some advice to people here today who are single as they are thinking about that whole process because the way that we do it in America, about 50% of the marriages wind up in divorce and even amongst professing evangelical born again believers is actually a little bit higher than that, okay. And so something's wrong with the system.

Yet I travel in countries all the time. I'm sure Nepal is one of these, it's right close there to India and I know they do this in India. Marriages have a much higher rate of people staying together much, much, much, much, much higher yet their marriages are arranged which is a horrifying thought to most single people.

I've often joked with my kids and told them, hey, we're doing the Bible way kids, you're not picking out anybody, I'll be picking them out. They always object to that and so forth. But I've thought about this over the years and I wanna tell you something.

I was reading not too long ago in National Geographic, a magazine that I subscribed to and they did a whole article about falling in love and what happens and so forth in that process. And they actually did medical studies on the chemical reactions that are going on in people's brains when they fall in love. And it was just hilarious.

But it was presented as a pure fact of medical science that they've proven that people who are in love or falling in love, the same chemical reactions are going in their minds that also occur in the brains of insane people. Now, is that a surprise to you? It verifies what we all know. When you fall in love, you lose all sense of judgment.

You're out of your mind. Love is blind, marriage is the eye opener. There's so much wisdom in that.

And so, here's the blessing in an arranged marriage. You think that these arranged marriages in India and elsewhere, they're just like randomly selecting people. No, no, no, no, no.

Parents get very, very involved in determining who will be the best mate for their child. Because why? Because they care about their child, right? And the parents are not floating in the ether of falling in love, they're rational people who can give a very objective opinion and so forth and they're meeting with other parents and they don't just evaluate the prospective mate, they talk to the family, the extended family, they get recommendations from other people that have worked with this young man or know this young woman all their lives and so forth. I mean, they get this huge resume and check them out for their past history and all their personality traits, their bloodline, see what things were going on in the family in prior generations and they do a thorough job.

And when it comes time to say, we picked this one for you, son, that son can know they've done their homework. They've done their homework and I can be secure that they love me, they're also experienced at marriage, they've seen other marriages, they're older and wiser and I tell you, it works really, really, really good. And I was at an Indian marriage one time in India and I'll tell you, it was nothing like it because the bride and the groom had met about a month before for 15 minutes for the first time in their lives and the next time they saw each other was at their wedding.

And they were young, just early 20s and so forth and they did not even look at each other during the entire long ceremony. They were absolutely terrified and when it came time to pronounce them husband and wife, the minister, my good friend, asked them to hold hands and very reluctantly and they don't even look at each other, they held hands and it was kind of like a yucky thing, like what hand am I holding right now? And he pronounced them man and wife and needless to say, he did not say, you may now kiss the bride. I can guarantee you there was no kissing for weeks because then they move in with, I think the parents of the groom first for a few weeks and they move in with the parents of the, and they get to know each other slowly but surely and there may be no consummation of this marriage until like three or four months down the road because then they don't feel so inclined.

Do you understand? But yet, they learn to love each other and they begin to see those wonderful qualities that their parents are already so sure because they know all the background of this spouse and so forth and it works and they're so glad. Now again, there's exceptions to the rule. Now, am I proposing that this church begin to adopt the system of arranged marriages? No, I joke with my kids about it but you can apply some of the same exact principles that are applied in arranged marriages and get the same benefit, okay? So what's the principle? Well, the principle is don't trust your judgment, rely upon the judgment of others who love you.

You are absolutely foolish to not have a circle of friends who love you who you're saying, please give me your evaluation of this person and it's such a shame. Some people do less background check on potential mates than banks do on potential borrowers who just wanna borrow \$1,000 for a year. Why are the banks checking out your credit history if we take it home? Because they found out you can predict the future by looking at the past because people have a track record and that track record usually continues unless the Lord intervenes or something.

And so, don't just take some person's word for it. Any guy can put on an act for a year, easy. Mr. Right can be Mr. Right for a year, you marry him, you find out it was Mr. Always Right.

You didn't know that but he pulled the wool over your eyes. So get the advice of trusted spiritual friends who can evaluate your decision and so forth. And something else, this is kind of a new thing and I've actually got into trouble for saying this and this is probably the last thing I'm gonna say on this subject.

Because we tend to be very, we wanna be spiritual, wanna please the Lord and so forth, we believe that marriage is a divine thing and that God's involved in putting us together and so we don't wanna mess with his divine sovereign plan. And so, oftentimes we are waiting for God to send that person with whom I'll be compatible and we'll have a good relationship and so forth. And that's fine.

However, the Bible says he that finds a wife finds a good thing. And in that phrase, I think the finding implies the seeking. Seek and what do you say? You shall find.

Knock and the door shall be open. Ask and it shall be given unto you. And so I encourage single people not to take a passive place in this but to do everything they can to prepare and to keep their periscope up and always be on the lookout.

One of the best things you can do to prepare for marriage is to, you know, move into an apartment with about three or four of the same sex roommates and learn to get along with, you know, jerks. How many ever had some roommates? You know, marriage is gonna be a huge adjustment to living with a person every single day who is unlike you in many ways even though you don't know all that. And so the best way to prepare is not so much to look for that perfect person but first of all, to become that perfect person.

Work on yourself, get ready. Say, now how can I wind up being a better husband, a better wife? Well, the main thing is you need to learn how to walk in love, how to be patient, long-suffering, easy to get along with. And the way to do that is to be in fellowship with other people who could rub you the wrong way.

Amen. Amen. Well, you guys have more than that in most churches.

Praise the Lord, man, because you're meeting and so forth. You know, I've got relationships here. A little poem I heard so many years ago applies to this.

Ah, to live above with the saints we love, that will be all glory. But to live down below with the saints we know, that's another story. Amen.

How many know that spiritual growth comes by interaction with other people? How can you learn to walk in love unless there's somebody who's a little bit tough to walk in love towards, right? Okay? So work on being that better person and growing spiritually yourself so that you'll be... If you can't get along with your sister or your brother with whom you live now, how are you going to get along with your wife or your husband? You can't have any friends, you know, come on, okay? So, you know, work on yourself. And

then secondly, and this is what I'm hesitating to say, I was just stalling with that last comment because I'm trying to avoid this second one because I've gotten... I don't know why. People are like, stop talking to me because I've said this.

I said this one time in a church and I mean, they just said, that's it. You're not spiritual. Okay, I take great comfort in knowing that Terrell has given sermons here before.

That is my greatest comfort. You know, but I think this fits into the arranged marriage concept and because arranged marriage is something that is biblical. Please give me an amen.

Do you know that? I mean, you know, reading 1 Corinthians, Paul talks about the father that wants to give his daughter, does a good thing, but he doesn't give his wife, you know, the parental authority. He's given her. It's up to him.

He can say no if he wants to. And look at the Old Testament stories of people that had arranged marriages by their parents and so forth. But the principle is, is that you do your homework first and you find out all you can find out and you become all that you can become in order for it to be successful in the end.

Well, if you're waiting around for God to send somebody, but you have a very limited pool, you know, it just seemed to me like, it just seemed to me like, it just seemed like some of this modern stuff like e-harmony. Now, this is not a paid endorsement. E-harmony, where you can write all these criteria and say, I don't want anybody unless this person says they love Jesus with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Well, you do that, you're eliminating everybody that doesn't fit that category, right? You can meet some people in church who are just there looking for girls, posing as a sheep, but they're really a goat. You see? And so you go through that process anyways. You know, you got your parents who grew up in church and you know, you're all going to this weird church, which is good and bad, you know, because, you know, it's not a mega church so you can't have your parents go up looking at 5,000 prospective people.

You know, your parents goes up looking, you know, a few, and you only have these joint meetings once every quarter, so it's just their own little Bible study, and there's only one other single guy there, you know, or another one single guy there. That might not be God's will for, you know, those two. So I'm saying, you can extend your periscope to look out over a whole lot more, and you set criteria, so you set your criteria where they need to be.

I have a friend who did the eHarmony thing, and he's actually, he's a Christian. He's been married three times, maybe four, I'm not sure. So the track record, not that, you know, but for the grace of God.

But on the eHarmony thing, I said, he told me, he said, they rejected me. They didn't hook me up with anybody. And I know other people who have just got, like, hundreds of, you know, people, you know, and I said, well, I guess because you're married so many times, he goes, no, they didn't even ask that question of whether or not I'd ever been married before, you know.

He said, they were just able to tell. Just from the answers that I gave, and he postulated a few things, which I won't repeat to you, and so forth, you know. But, you know, when you say, I'm 50 and I'm looking for a 20-year-old, you know, they're probably gonna say, nah, you're probably not really what we're looking for on eHarmony, you know what I mean? Aren't you glad for that? He said, and they didn't tell me why they rejected me.

He said, but they did tell me, in consolation, that they reject 25% of the people that even apply, they're done. And he said, so another company started up, that their whole advertisement, their whole marketing scheme is this girl comes on and says, I was rejected by eHarmony, but look what I got here, you know? And so, it's like the plan B eHarmony, for people to get rejected by eHarmony, and they're making lots of money by all the eHarmony rejects. Isn't that funny? But if this brother, whom I love dearly, would have asked me, David, you think I should get married again? I would have told him, I think you oughta just keep it single for a while, till you die.

And I love him, and he loves the Lord, but he's devoted to his job, and I can understand why he's had troubles. And he's really grown a lot, he admits all his mistakes and so forth now, and so maybe God will, maybe, I don't know. But back to my original point, is that when you go to, say you go to a megachurch, and you've got your paraschool up, and you've got 300 possible people at the singles meeting and so forth, well you gotta go through the, what would you call that, the evaluation process? You look, well, is that person attractive to me? Is that person have a good personality? Is that, and eventually you get to, is that person committed to Christ? And you have to, how do you find that out? You gotta like, get to know them and so forth, you maybe ask people about them, watch them.

It's a long process. You go through one of these other things, like eHarmony, well you can just, let them do all that stuff for you, and just get right to a very limited number of people who maybe could, you know, fit your criteria. I'm just, so yeah, you're not gonna, okay, so it's okay, okay, okay, all right.

Because I've been, and I've had single people get mad at me saying, well I'm trusting God, I'm trusting God, God's gonna, okay, that's fine. I'm just telling you this, God, I love you. I'm saying that the whole arranged marriage, the principle behind that, all that homework that is done, and it's proven to work over thousands of years, folks, and now to reject something that has some of the principles of that because it's not spiritual enough, and it sounds like I'm not trusting God because I'm doing this electronic thing on the computer, you know, and so forth, and I'm just persuaded.

I've seen it work for lots of people, you know, and so praise the Lord, praise the Lord. Still out there? Okay, they're not paying me to say this, okay. Okay, I gotta just about finish up now because I want Becky to say some things this morning about things that are on her heart about raising kids, and I'm just gonna preface it, why don't you come on up here and stand by me? That'll hurry me up.

Just stand up here, right here, and your presence will help me. I'm gonna say what I think is the most important thing, and then I'm gonna let Becky, some of the things that are on her heart in the time we have left. Have you ever heard of the evangelist Billy Sunday? I think he was a famous, famous baseball player turned evangelist, and amazing ministry, often quoted even today and so forth, well-respected in the evangelical circles.

It's estimated that he spoke to 85 million people during his day, and he did not have the media access that we have today, so that was an astounding number of people that Billy Sunday shared the gospel with, but did you know that three out of his four children went completely to the devil, and all died in tragic ways in sin-related events? Three out of four died before they were age 30, and so we could all talk about the 85 million that he preached the gospel to, but what about the three out of the four of his own kids that by all indications, unless they somehow repented in the final breath, are in hell today? You see, and so what it all comes down to, listen closely now, moms and dads, it all comes down to what do you prioritize? Billy Sunday, feeling the call of God, prioritized the call of God to get out there and win the world for Jesus

Christ, and deprioritized his children, and he reaped the benefit in that regard, but he reaped the sorrow of it in this other regard, and so what it all comes down to, because there's so many resources available, if you want to be successful and know how to raise children, there's resources out there, you'll spend the time, and you'll devote the time to your children in order to see that they're raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but it takes T-I-M-E. I'm not talking about quality time, I'm talking about T-I-M-E all the time. The more your kids are around you, the more you include them in your life, the more they're likely to be influenced by you, and as a pastor for 20-some years, Becky and I, I mean, that's why we decided to take the radical step, and I'm not saying this is something that everybody has to do, we decided to take the radical step of homeschooling our kids, because we knew as pastors that we would have every temptation that we could possibly face to neglect our kids, every excuse to neglect our kids, and the chances are that if we didn't force ourselves to have them around us and have Becky around them, primarily homeschooling them, that chances are we'd wind up, like most pastors, with kids who are gone to the devil, and I think I told you this weekend, yesterday, when I would minister or be a part of pastor's prayer meetings, the number one prayer request of pastors was they were always asking for prayer for their wayward children, and there's biblical examples of that same thing, isn't there? Sure, so devoted to God, but yet their devotion to God was not reflected in their devotion to their families, and that's a major part of our devotion to God, okay, and that's why Terrell, so why, as we said yesterday, the main qualification, one of the main qualifications to be an elder, a pastor in the church is you've gotta have your family together, because that's the criteria, that shows whether or not your priorities are lined up correctly, and then that secondly shows whether you're gonna be able to oversee the flock of God.

If you can't handle a household, how can you handle a household of saints? Okay, all right, so I asked Becky, you ready, babe? Ready. Ready, okay, I asked Becky if she would just share, because she's been at it for many, many, many years of ministering to our kids, and we can pretty much say at this point in time, although there's still some question about our youngest one, Elizabeth, sitting right over here, who's just 16. We're still hoping that she turns out good, because she's not out of the nest yet, put that in your pocket, but we're very proud of our kids.

We believe that we have not been perfect parents, we've made huge mistakes at different times, we're still on the road to trying to get better at parenting and so on, but little bit we knew, we applied, and we can speak from experience now, it has worked, praise the Lord. Let's give her a big, warm welcome. Thank you.

Thank you. I really wish I could give you a few tips that were just magic formula to raise kids to serve the Lord, but there's not any. And if I did tell you something like that, I'd be lying.

So I do wanna give you some principles that are true. I wish there was a few magic things that you could do to raise kids to serve the Lord, but really, I was hoping David wouldn't say too much of what I really wanna talk about, but he really did touch upon so much of it. And we cannot be passive in raising children to serve the Lord.

The greatest asset that we have, the most precious thing that we have is our children. Yeah. I mean, in our culture, in the Western world, we are so materialistic, and we are always looking and striving to obtain more things.

And right under our nose are the most precious thing we have that we just take for granted after a while because they're with us. But you know, that time goes so quickly. Boy, does it ever.

I mean, my baby's 16, and I'll never forget when she was born. I'll never forget the moment she was born. And you hold those children in your hands for the first time, and you look at them, and the weight of the responsibility that God has given me really hit me.

In fact, as David and I never really had a baby dedication in front of the church when they were born, that day we dedicated to the Lord, just ourselves. My goodness, we couldn't wait a month or a week or so. We did it immediately.

And we committed them to the Lord, but we knew really we were making the commitment, the dedication to God. Because God placed them in our lives, and he gave us the commitment. He gave us the responsibility to train them.

And I'm sure you're very familiar with the scripture in Proverbs, which says, train up a child, and the way should go. And when he's older, he will not depart from it. Now, I have heard like Chuck Swindoll, who has said that this really is not a promise.

This is an observation. You know, and I thought, well, what's the difference? If you do it, it's gonna make a difference. It's not a promise, he said.

But if you do train them, when they get older, they will not depart from it. That's God's word. If it is just an observation of Solomon, it was a great observation that if you do these things, when they get older, they'll not depart from it.

If you would turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 6. I know David Witten touched yesterday upon my testimony, really, of why I started homeschooling. And I don't want to really push that particular idea of homeschooling, but something that the Holy Spirit really gave to me and really, really impressed upon my heart in such a, oh my goodness, such a very real way, is David and I met in Bible school, and I wanted to be in ministry. That was my goal.

That was my passion. That's what I wanted to do. And we got married, and then three years later, we had our first little girl charity, and I was still planning.

I was a mom, dedicated mom, but I still wanted to be in ministry. I mean, school time came. I was gonna be diligent.

I was gonna find the best Christian school I could find. That was my plan. And I was, I mean, David and I were inseparable when we first were married.

Whatever he did, wherever he went, that's what I did too. I was very involved in ministry things and being an institutional pastor and pastor's wife. That's what motivated me.

And then when charity was about four or five years old and David had heard, listened to Dr. Dobson about homeschooling, he thought, oh, this is just what we need to do. This is great. He came home so excited, and he was telling me all about it, and I thought, I don't think so.

Sure, you like this, but this doesn't sound so good to me. Not at all. I knew that I was the one who was gonna be doing all the work.

And the more he heard about it, the more he liked it. And the more I heard him telling me about it, the more I didn't like it. And he went and got all these books.

Oh, Becky, you gotta read these. You gotta read these. I went and got the enrollment to the Christian school.

That's what I did. And I was, you know, I had my dreams of being a homeschool, or not homeschool, but the homeroom mom, you know, bringing in cupcakes and all that kind of stuff on my turn. And in Pennsylvania, you don't have to send your children to school until they're eight years old.

The compulsory age is not until they're eight. Now, not too many people even know that. Or even do that.

But we did know that. And we had been going, making plans. And we were actually in Europe for about almost three months.

Charity was six. She turned seven, actually, when we were there. Stephen was still in diapers.

He was about three, almost three years old. And I knew that when we came back that I was gonna have to make a decision. And I really had already made my decision, but I had to really tell David, and I had to convince David about the decision that I had made.

And he had gotten me all these books on homeschooling, and being the nice little obedient wife, I was reading them, and I didn't like what I read. I didn't like it. It spelled a lot of work, a major commitment.

And he had gone into Romania. I had stayed back in Austria with another missionary family whose husband had gone with David. This is when the curtain was still up.

He'd gone into Romania. And there was one day, one of those rare days, that both my kids laid down to take a nap. And I also did the same.

And I laid down, went to sleep, and I had a dream. And in my dream, I was in heaven, and time was over. Now, I don't remember exactly what it looked like, that kind of thing.

That wasn't necessarily what impressed me the most, but I remember searching and looking all throughout heaven to find Charity and Stephen, and they weren't there. I couldn't find them anywhere. And I woke up with tears streaming down my face, and the Holy Spirit said to me so clearly, and I'll never forget it.

And I know, I guess because I'm so hard-headed, he had to do something like this to really get my attention, something that really stuck with me when the going got rough. The Holy Spirit said, what you do now can determine eternity. And immediately, I knew what he was saying.

The idea was not just homeschooling, but it was what you do with your children, how you teach them, how you train them. And so I said, Lord, I'll do it, because nothing is more important to me than my children are with me forever and eternity. I mean, there's nothing more important to me, nothing.

And in Deuteronomy chapter six, I'm sure you may have heard this many times, but I want you to hear it one more time. And in verse four, it says, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one, "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, "with all your soul, and with all your might. "And these words which I command you today "shall be in your heart, "and you shall teach them diligently to your children." Diligently means intentionally.

It's not passive. It's diligently. It means, diligence means when you don't feel like doing it, you do it anyway.

Diligence. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

That sounds like homeschooling to me. Whatever you're doing, you diligently teach your children the word of God. Diligently do it.

As we were institutional pastors, we saw many committed Christians, committed believers, really good parents too, who loved their kids. I saw moms who went to work just so they could pay for their children to go to a private Christian school, and they made that sacrifice, worked hard in order to send their children to school. I saw those kids grow up and reject the Lord, reject the faith that their parents worked so hard to try to put into them.

But one of the things I know that is so important, it's not, like if you're a homeschooler, it's not the curriculum you use. There are so many of them out there, and that's not the important part. The important part is that you diligently teach your children the word of God.

You implant into their hearts a love for righteousness. Now see, diligence doesn't mean you cram it down their throats. It's that you lead them, you teach them, because you love them.

I know in Proverbs 14, and this is talking to the moms really, but it says, every wise woman builds her house, and the foolish one tears it down, or pulls it down with her hands. But a wise woman will build her house. Now this is not talking about the brick and the mortar, or the wood and the stone.

This is talking about her family, her home. A wise woman will build it. She'll build them.

You know, I know as being a mother, there were so many times that I wished that I could send my children home with anybody. But I know too, the Holy Spirit is so good and so faithful, that there were times whenever I would sit down, you know, and you get weary sometimes. I would sit down, I'd have all these papers on my lap, or on the couch, whatever, and I was doing something, my kids would do something, it's like, and I'd let it slide.

Instead of getting up and addressing it, and the Holy Spirit would say, you get up and you correct them now. Because he loves them even more than I do. Because it's so important for them to be corrected by love.

Not yelling, but because we love them. Doesn't it say in Proverbs 2? It says, he who spares the rod hates his son. But I love this part.

But the one who loves him disciplines him promptly. It's consistency that says, I love you. But letting them go by and not taking care of doing that says you really don't love them.

You don't care about them. But it's putting God's word in their hearts that's gonna make the world of a difference. Now we have all read, and I, we've all read the Proverbs 31, woman.

But the part that always has stuck out with me so much is verse 27 and verse 30. Verse 27, one of the things that says, she watches over the ways of her household. A wise mother that builds her home or builds her house is one who knows the ways of her household.

I can tell when my children's hearts seem to be straying or growing cold. Because God gives you that insight. He gives you that, I don't know, maybe they call it intuition, I don't know.

I really, it's the Holy Spirit. Because you watch over the ways, over the hearts of your children. The one thing I wanted to do was to implant righteousness into their hearts.

And the only way we can do that, because we have a tendency when our children are young, is we laugh at the things they do that are wrong. And we encourage that. And we're not building righteousness and a love for righteousness in them, but we're teaching them, hey, hey, you do something foolish or you do something that's bad, and everybody will laugh.

We don't realize we're doing that. We are, we're encouraging them to do wrong. And so we need to watch over the ways, watch and observe on how we're training their hearts.

So we want them to be to where they love righteousness. When you tell them to do something, they're not sitting down. If you tell them to stand, they're not sitting down in their hearts.

And they'll be obeying you on the outside, but on the inside, they're disobeying you. But you want to reach their hearts to where they love righteousness. They want to do what is pleasing to the Lord because they want to please God.

I wish I could put this in their hearts, really place it there to make this more of a desire of yours, that you'll be more than, the only way you can honestly, the only way that you can teach your children to love righteousness is if you every day teach them God's word. If you have family devotions, if you don't have family devotions, start, make it a priority. I know you get tired.

I know you get tired in your lives. I know that you work hard, you come home and you're tired, but it pays off. It pays off.

My oldest daughter went away after she graduated from high school. She went away to Colorado Springs, and that was a long ways. And she went to YWAM, to a DTS, a discipleship training school.

And there was, they have speakers who come in just about every week or every other week, something like that. And they had a guy who came in and they had the boys with the boys and the girls with the girls, and they had a time of incredible repentance. And Charity called me up and she said, mom, thank you so much.

And I went. Because I really was hearing what the Bible says, that someday your children will rise up and call you blessed. And she was doing that.

She said, mom, you saved me from so much. She said, I learned about sins. I didn't even know what they were.

There's so many of these young girls have gone through so much and so much pain. She says, I didn't have any of those things to tell them. And she thanks me.

And I was so blessed. All those difficult years, they paid off. They paid off.

I was so grateful. I was so grateful to the Lord for really hitting me over the head and making such a strong impression upon me. As I know that over the years, and I'm in my 19th year of homeschooling.

And you know what? I'm tired. I'm a little tired of it. I really, and sometimes I feel guilty about that because I think poor Elizabeth.

My younger ones, you know, they had, I was fresher. But God has been so faithful. But it's, I'm telling you, it's not because I am a perfect mom or I am a, I have all the tricks of the trade.

It's because we serve a faithful God. And if we will obey him and diligently do what he says, it'll pay off. It will.

It will pay off. You know, one more thing I want to say too. And that is, I think that lots of parents think that rebellion is normal.

I want you to know that rebellion when your children are teenagers is not normal. It's not normal. And I don't think as Christian parents, we shouldn't expect that that's going to happen.

If we raise them up in the training and admonition of the Lord, we shouldn't expect that. I honestly can tell you that I have not had any of that with any of my three children. I haven't had any of it.

But let me clarify that. I am convinced that every kid grows up and at some point in their teenage years, they have what I call a crisis of faith. Where they, they have grown and they come to a place where, do I believe what mom and dad taught me? Is this what I'm about? And they're either going to, and I think as parents, we need to recognize that and not take offense at it, but help them through it.

Help them to realize that what we did teach them was God's word. And this is something you can live by. And it works and it pays off in the end.

And the only way they're really going to choose, choose God and choose what you've taught them is if you lived it. If you have been hypocritical, there's a good chance they may not choose God. But we must not only teach them what we must demonstrate before them.

This is work. This is a lot of work. If you're wise, you'll build your home and you'll keep a watch over the hearts of your children.

And you'll be a mother and a father who will diligently pray for your children. Pray for their hearts to love righteousness. And then you'll demonstrate it in front of them.

And I think one of the greatest lessons you can demonstrate in front of your children is a heart of repentance. If you've done something that is not right, go to your kids and ask their forgiveness. Because they need to learn how to humble themselves.

And if they never see you do it, they won't know how. So if you will demonstrate that in front of them when they have their crisis of faith, they'll choose what they've been brought up to. Amen.

I've said a lot. My prayer is that you will take it to heart. Don't be half-hearted in training up your children to serve the Lord.

You know, there was a couple that I met who was from Nigeria. And they went and said to me one time that there was a man who came to their church in Nigeria who went and said to the parents, if you do not train up your children to serve the Lord, you could go to hell for it. Wow.

I never heard it quite like that. But he was calling parents to repentance for not teaching their children the word of God. We live in a world today in this country that years back whenever I was growing up, there was morality.

And the people around you were moral. But that's not the way it is today. You're going against the crowd.

You're going against the culture to raise your children to serve the Lord. You must set your face like Flint. And you need to choose friends for your children.

Be diligent, parents. Don't let the devil have your children. Don't let the devil steal from you the most precious possession that God ever gave to you.

Oh, be diligent. When you get up in the morning, talk about the Lord. When you're sitting in the day, talk about the Lord.

Before you go to bed at night, pray with your children. Talk about Jesus. Talk about his faithfulness.

Oh my, there's nothing more important than spending eternity with those precious little ones that God gave you. Amen. I know what I said has been very serious, but God takes this very serious too.

And I set my face like Flint after God hit me over the head. But it's paid off. And I am so grateful.

I am so grateful. God has been so faithful. His word is truth and it works.

Now, if it works for me, I can tell you that it'll work for you. Because I'm a hard-headed person. And so I know it works.

Amen. Okay, thanks so much, honey. There's nothing that I can add to that.

And I'm so blessed by Becky's passionate heart to share those things with you. I'm gonna wind it up now. But, you know, I would like just to say by way of conclusion that for those of us, maybe who are parents, who our kids have grown and they've gone the wrong way, we're not in any way trying to condemn anybody or make anyone to feel badly about that.

That's between you and the Lord. And many of us didn't know when we were raising our kids what we know now. And so if we would have known better, we would have done better.

Nevertheless, I'm encouraged to tell you that God is in the redemption business and he's still gonna answer your prayers. And he still has his eyes on your kids, no matter how far they have strayed, because he loves you so much. And you have a special dispensation, I believe, just being one of his children.

He cares about our extended family and he's working harder to reach them than anybody else. All right, so we can tell you some good stories about that too, about prodigal sons that have come back and prodigal daughters that have come back who had a good deposit, maybe not the perfect deposit, but a very good deposit growing up. And it ultimately worked out for good, praise the Lord.

Okay, so don't receive this in any way as a discouragement, but rather as an encouragement, okay?

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