

# The Next Generation

## *A Call to Spiritual Parenthood*

Image Church // Abide and Abound Week 2

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### Introduction

Image family, I hope you're doing well!

If you're a guest with us, we're so glad that you're here... I want to invite you to stop by the **Connection Center**...

Also, if you're **new around here** and you want to join in or find out more about what we have going on- the **Connection Center** is also the place for you!

**Reminder Members Meeting**... October 14<sup>th</sup>

- If you're not a covenant member **Connection Center** sign up to become one- next class is **October 17<sup>th</sup>** and one on **November 7<sup>th</sup>**...

Alright, last week I invited you to come on a journey with us over the next year as we kicked off a new series called **Abide and Abound** that will give us the framework for where we're headed over the next year...

This series is based out of **John 15:4-5** that I preached last week... It is the foundation for that we will be building on over the next year...

I told you that we have **two primary goals** that we're going to be orienting around...

**1. Abide:** We want to abide in the riches of the gospel in order to take us deeper in our knowledge and love of God.

**2. Abound:** We want to abound in the gospel by bearing fruit that expands our impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

So, those **two goals** are going to be our two focuses over the next year that we're going to be orienting ourselves around and mobilizing to as a church over the next year...

And, as a part of orienting ourselves around these goals, and to help fuel our efforts, I want to challenge you to give toward these goals...

So, during this series I'm going to be holding up what we're calling **The Abide and Abound Initiative**...

**The Abide and Abound initiative** will help give us the *financial means* to catalyze our efforts as we peruse these goals together over the next year...

You got a guide when you came in, we walked through this last week but if you look at **page 6** you can see specifically what we would like to see this Initiative will fuel...

Every dollar that you give toward this **Abide and Abound initiative** will go toward, and enhance, our missional efforts locally, nationally, and internationally as you can see there on **page 6** in your guide...

So, here's what we want to see happen specifically through this **Abide and Abound Initiative**...

Together, we want to give above and beyond to see **at least \$15 thousand dollars** come over the months of **November and December** to fuel our missional efforts locally, nationally, and internationally.

For those of you giving, the challenge I'm putting in front of you is to give above and beyond what you're currently giving toward this initiative...

For others of you, you're not giving- I want to challenge you to start! This is a great opportunity for to have an incredible impact through these different needs and opportunities...

*Next week you're going to be getting a Commitment Card as you begin praying about what God is leading you to give toward this initiative...*

And then on **November 7<sup>th</sup>** we're going to be having a **Commitment Weekend** on where we will come together and commit our **above and beyond gifts!**

- And then you'll have the opportunity to give toward your above and beyond gift over the months of **November and December**... That way you're

**One thing to note:** this is not a yearlong initiative- this **Initiative** will end in **December**, and it's designed to fuel our **efforts** and our **focus** over the next year...

I am really excited about what God is going to do and how God is going to use this!!

**Alright, well last week I laid the foundation from John 15**, this week we're going to build on it as we begin to look at where we want to **abound** as a church in light of the gospel at work in us...

Remember the flow in all this- **the gospel works in us, and then through us**... And it's what happens **through us**, that reveals whether or not we're resting in Jesus...

And so, this morning what we're going to do is look at how we should be abounding **locally**... And we're going to talk about why this should be a reality and how this is something that ultimately is the overflow of the gospel at work in us...

For most people when they think about their localized mission field they think about their community, for others they think about physical neighbors... And those are great, we'll get there...

But this morning I want to key in on an area of local missions that often gets overlooked, arguably it's the most overlooked... **Our kids**...

And so, this morning I want to walk through a series of **4 truths** that framed by, and held up by God's word in order to help us navigate this mission field...

*By the way if you're here and you don't have kids hang with me, there's a lot in here for you...*

*In fact, let me give this disclaimer- this sermon is not specifically about how to parent... It's about our call as a church to raise up and reach the next generation setting the tone for a key focus for us over the next year...*

*Let's jump in, Here's the first truth we need to understand:*

**1. Parents your first missional assignment is to make disciples of your kids**

**Matthew 28:18-20:** All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

When we hear this we think about going and we should, but it's not **only limited to going to people, it's also a call to disciple the people that God has brought to you**... Mainly, your Kids...

I know this may be tough to hear, but your Kids are sinners who need to be taught about Jesus, and shown everything it means to follow Jesus...

- They are not born Christians...

- Your Christian heritage will not save them...

And here's the good news, Jesus promises that He will be with you always... *Can I get an Amen from my parents...* Cuz this journey is hard!!

**Example:** Worker comes over Adalyn asks Him if he knows Jesus... Followed by you have a big but... It's a grind folks...

But this is our missional assignment...

**4** "Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. **6** These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart.

**7** Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8** Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. **9** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.

In **verse 5** you have what's called the **Shema**: *A declaration of the foundation belief...* Should be familiar it's what Jesus quotes in the greatest commandment...

And what God does here is that from the very beginning that God's sets the expectation that parents tell and teach their children about who God is and our call to love Him...

**Psalms 127:3-4** Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. **4** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior...

- Children are a gift from God... They are not for your position but for His...
- They have a purpose... **Arrows in the hand of a warrior...**
  - Arrows take time to make, refining, sharpening... your kids take time and investment and intentionality...
  - Arrows are shot out – the goal being they are raised up in the Lord and then sent out for the Lord to use!

- Here's the last part of this: ***You can't control the flight of the arrow, but you can aim it in the right direction...*** The same is true when it comes to your kids... You cannot save them, but you can point them in the right direction!

**Ephesians 6:4** would say it like this: **Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

A few quick practical points here on this...

- Invite them into what you're doing and bring them along to what you're doing... **Jesus model: follow me!**

- When you pray, when you read, when you serve...
  - **Example:** praying with AG the other day... Ashley does this a lot...
  - Bringing AG with me to serve and talking to her about it when she can't go...
- Talk your kids through the **why** behind **what** you're doing...
- Look for creative ways to show them who God is and to point them to how good God is...
- Put God's word in front of them- read it to them... Have them memorize it... Have them sing about God...
- **Here is the goal:** you put the word in their mouth and pray that God takes it to their heart...

**Lastly:** make sure they are involved in the local church!! When you miss the gathering your kids miss the gathering! Bigger than just you! *Which leads me to the second truth that we need to understand...*

**2. Your family is more than just biological**

The church at its foundational level is not an organization, it's not an event, it's not something that you go to, **it is a group of people centered around the persona and work of Jesus...**

**Matthew 12:49-50:** Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **50** For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. Jesus defines a spiritual family that is as strong as the biological family...

**Ephesians 2:19** says that through Christ we are **Members of God's household...**

**1 Timothy 3:15** points to **God's household**, as **the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.**

The NT uses the word Brother/sister 112 times as it relates to the church...

The Church is a family, and as a family we're called to spiritual parenthood...

Paul Models this with Timothy and Titus:

- **2 Timothy 1:2** To Timothy, my dearly loved son.
- **Titus 1:4** To Titus, my true son in our common faith.

Here's what this means: **The call to disciple the kids of our church is not just a familial call, but a communal call!**

*As a church we have to partner with parents in this... It's why we say that we want to partner with parents to raise a next generation for Christ.*

- *This is not only the responsibility of the parents...*
- *It can't be, discipleship is more than just 1-2 people...*

**Parent:** This is again why being present in the life of our church matters...

**Church:** this is why you matter... this is **our** call...

It was known that takes a village to raise a child, and we have gotten away from this mindset...

- This is freeing if we go back to it... means that no one or two people carry all of the weight!

We do this together... This is why we don't have **child care**, we have **Image Kids...**

- *Flesh out*
  - **Example:** AG and all she gets out of Image Kids and how much she loves it... It help the foundation Ash and I are building...
- I need you to understand this... When you serve in Image Kids, you're not just watching children!
  - You are engaging with the larges lost population we have at our church...
  - What you do matters...
  - We need more people seeing this as a mission field...

**Doesn't stop at Image Kids...** This is why Community Groups are important... Intersecting with one another and with the families throughout the week...

- **Example:** the impact our CG has had on my kids... people coming to the house and helping and stopping by and just spending time with us... They see and know people from our church who are invested in them!

**Your family is more than just biological...**

*Ok, here's the 3<sup>rd</sup> truth that we have to see...*

**3. Our call to spiritual parenthood goes beyond who's inside the church**

**I know that you think our kids** you think about the kids that are part of Image Church... *That's true but,*

*I want to show you that the kids in the community we live in (and even beyond) are our kids...*

**Matthew 18:5** And whoever welcomes one child like this in my name welcomes me.

**James 1:27** Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

**Isaiah 1:17** Learn to do what is good.  
Pursue justice. Correct the oppressor.  
Defend the rights of the fatherless.  
Plead the widow's cause.

None of these passages specify in the church- it would most certainly include them, but not limited to it...

*So how do we care for the fatherless, how do we care for the orphan, how do we welcome children in the name of Jesus??*

**We be to children what Jesus has been to us... Specifically through the avenues of *foster care* and *adoption*...**

***Foster care*** is a temporary service provided by States for children who cannot live with their families... **It is creating a refuge in response to the refuge Jesus was for us...**

***Respite Foster Care:*** a support service to allow foster parents "time away" from their parenting responsibilities.

There's a huge need in both of these spaces...

**Some of you need to pray about this being a next step for you...**

**Adoption** is the other way that we welcome children in the name of Jesus, it's how we care for the orphan, defend the rights of fatherless and care for the vulnerable...

**Adoption** is the act of legally taking another's child and bringing it up a one's own... It is a chance to be to children what Jesus has been to us...

- It is a picture of the gospel- through adoption you get to mimic and respond to what God's done for you...
- **Ephesians 1:5** He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself,

***Listen every family and every individual that is able should be asking the question should we foster, should we adopt, and praying to that end...***

Some of you God's been working on your heart... Some of you need to open your heart...

For Others of you, maybe God's not leading you to this... You need to ask how can you support the efforts of others that are pursuing this?

We have a lot of different folks doing this or taking next steps to do it- ***we're going to begin coordinating care teams to come around them...***

We're going to be doing a Christmas give where we are collecting items for building ***Compassion Closet...***

- *Flesh out...*

**We want to be able to get behind this financially as a church in a big way...**

- **Abide and abound Incentive** will help contribute to helping adoption...

**I want you to think about this...**

We have multiple people in our church as a result of faithful adoption...

Adoption/foster care in the scope of what we're taking about is about bringing children in to our spiritual family... And if we can own **next generation ministry** together as a church, it's one of the most powerful displays of Jesus because in it the child gets to see Jesus' whole body!

*Ok, here's the last truth that we need to understand...*

#### **4. Son and Daughter first, and then Mother and Father**

This is where we see how abiding drives all of this that we're talking about...

*You need to son or daughter first before you mother or father...*

For many of you, you're not motivated to engage in the things we've been talking about because you don't understand or fully comprehend the gospel...

You don't understand what and incredible Father Gd has been to you...

#### **Gospel appeal here...**

You cannot spiritually parent if you're not in a posture of son or daughter... Your ability to spiritually parent comes from how God has Fathered you...

I want you to listen to how several of the Psalms describes the passing on of the faith...

And I want you to listen to how the desire for passing along the truths of God are an overflow of experiencing the truths of God...

#### **Psalm 71:18**

**18** Even while I am old and gray,

God, do not abandon me,  
while I proclaim your power  
to another generation,  
your strength to all who are to come.

To proclaim power you have to know if first...

#### **Psalm 78:4-7**

**4** We will not hide them from their children,  
but will tell a future generation  
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord,  
his might, and the wondrous works  
he has performed.

**5** He established a testimony in Jacob  
and set up a law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach to their children

**6** so that a future generation—  
children yet to be born—might know.

They were to rise and tell their children

**7** so that they might put their confidence in God  
and not forget God's works,  
but keep his commands.

Look what God has done, look at how God's faithfulness has been experienced and it is the driver for passing it on...

#### **Psalm 145:3-4**

**3** The Lord is great and is highly praised;  
his greatness is unsearchable.

**4** One generation will declare your works to the next  
and will proclaim your mighty acts

Again... see how there is a personal impact first that drives the desire for the next generation to know...

If there is no sensitivity and compassion toward raising up the next generation then there is a gospel void in your life...

Raising up the **next generation**, Spiritual parenthood, isn't an option, it's the call... The questions not **if** but **how**??

So, the question for you is how are you engaged in raising up the next generation?? *How can you be involved?*

Every person here should walk away asking how am I involved in **reaching** and **raising up** the next generation? What are my points of intersection where do I need to be intentional to take a next step...

**Call to action:** We want to be about raising up a generation for Christ...

- There are internal implications to this and there are external implications to this...

#### **Internally in the life of our church:**

- Image Family Ministries
  - Staff position- need to hire
  - Volunteering- you need to serve
  - Commit to engaging in the life of our church and being intentional with your kids and with the kids of others...
    - Spiritual investment through community group engagement...being present in the lives of the kids your connected to ...

#### **Externally to those outside of our church:**

- Foster Care
- Adoption

More information on how you can take next steps toward this?

**Connection Center...**

More information on how you can specifically come alongside people who are doing this?? **Connection Center...**

Be engaged in your CG and participate in the our efforts to create a compassion closet...

***GIVE: This is what we want this abide and abound initiative to fuel***

This is going to be a huge focus for us over the next year to set a culture here in the life of our church...

## **Conclusion [VAMP]**

I am going to pray, parents who are participating in the commissioning you can go ahead and slide out and grab your kids for that...

Pray...

Sing...

## **Parent Commissioning**

***Mike Charge***

***Russ Prays***

***OUTTAKE:***

**Romans 8:14-15** For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. **15** For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!"

**Psalms 68:5** God in his holy dwelling is a father of the fatherless and a champion of widows.

**6** God provides homes for those who are deserted.

**John 14:18:** I will not leave you as orphans