

- QUIET/PASSIVE?
- ACTIVE/BUSY?
- UNPRODUCTIVE?
- DESTRUCTIVE?

When you think of a tornado, which of these words seem appropriate?

TR: For the number of families in our fellowship who have family living in places like Oklahoma, we have nothing good to say . . .



. . . about tornados.

**-- They may be very active and busy, but all the energy expended is certainly unproductive and often very destructive.
TR: It is the imagery that the prophet Hosea had in mind when he spoke about . . .**



... READ SLIDE

TR: The rebuke was for the northern kingdom of Israel. In Hosea 8 we read . . .

**For they sow the wind,
and they shall reap the whirlwind.
The standing grain has no heads;
it shall yield no flour;
if it were to yield,
strangers would devour it.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- They sowed foolishness and reaped even higher velocity foolishness.

-- How did these 10 tribes who had broken away from the more faithful southern two tribes, usually labeled "Judah," sown the wind?

TR: All we have to do is look before and after in Hosea 8 to get the better part of the picture . . .

Hosea 8:4-5

They made kings, but not through me. They set up princes, but I knew it not. With their silver and gold they made idols for their own destruction. ⁵I have spurned your calf, O Samaria. My anger burns against them. How long will they be incapable of innocence?

ESV

In verses 4-5 . . . READ SLIDE

- They set up their own authority, without God's leading.**
 - This northern kingdom, also called Samaria, set up temples of worship in Bethel and Dan, with calves of gold as idols.**
- TR: and then in verses 9-10 . .**

For they have gone up to Assyria, a wild donkey wandering alone; Ephraim has hired lovers. ¹⁰Though they hire allies among the nations, I will soon gather them up.

ESV

... we read ... **READ SLIDE**

-- When things got hard, the northern kingdom, called Samaria and now referred to by one of the most influential tribes, Ephraim, didn't turn back to God but cozied up to the superpower of the day, Assyria.

TR: We sow the wind and reap the whirlwind when we answer these two questions incorrectly ...



SOWING THE WIND & REAPING THE WHIRLWIND

To whom do we give thanks?

To whom do we look for help?

READ SLIDE

-- Often we “give thanks” or give the credit to our hard work, our smarts, our persistence . . . the “princes we set up” to rule our lives.

-- Often, we don’t really know what’s in our hearts until the pressure is on and we need help. To whom do we look? In our pride, do we hold off looking as long as we can?

-- As we parent and influence others, when we look to give thanks to ourselves or to seek help from the world, we sow the wind of foolishness and reap the vortex of even more foolishness.

TR: The principle remains the same . . .



God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. (from Galatians 6:7)

TR: Keeping in mind Hosea's imagery of sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind . . .



SOWING THE DEATH SPIRAL OF BITTERNESS

... we need to be wary of ... READ SLIDE or “sowing TO the death spiral of bitterness”

-- In relationships, especially in parenting, I can think of two different ways we sow to this death spiral, but ALSO two different “spins” that the bitterness circles around.

-- Hurricanes and tornados are two different weather phenomena, not just one is over land and another sea.

-- Then, I thought of the difference of hurricanes and cyclones. But, I found out that hurricanes, cyclones, and typhoons are all the same weather phenomenon, just being different names in different places.

-- (Dictionary.com of “cyclone”) - a large-scale, atmospheric wind-and-pressure system characterized by low pressure at its center and by circular wind motion, counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere, clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.

-- TR: The spins can go in different directions, but things get devastated either way.



SOWING THE DEATH SPIRAL OF BITTERNESS

Two different “spins”:

- 1. The strong-willed child**
- 2. The outwardly compliant child**

As parents, we can sow the death spiral of bitterness with the strong-willed child AND with the outwardly compliant child.

- It is a challenge to deal with the outwardly rebellious child, who always demands their own way. The defiance is there for all to see.**
- Unwise parenting of such a child often leads to bitterness.**
- But, so does dealing foolishly with the politician of a child who knows how to look compliant but inwardly be seething with defiance.**

TR: When either child, usually over 5 years of age, defies us as parents, we tend to have two common reactions . . .



SOWING THE DEATH SPIRAL OF BITTERNESS

Two common reactions:

1. To PLACATE

. . . the first is to placate the child.

-- We just want them to stop . . . we are tired of the battles, the raised voices, the rolling of the eyes, and all the stress.

TR: When we avoid dealing with their defiance, and by default end up giving in to their terrorist demands . . .

And I declare to him that I am about to punish (Eli's) house forever, **for the iniquity that he knew**, because his sons were blaspheming God, **and he did not restrain them.**

ESV

**. . . we are like Eli the high priest in 1 Samuel.
-- We read of what God said to young Samuel, that he was to tell Eli . . . READ SLIDE
TR: Or, think of King David . . .**

(Adonijah's) father **had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?"**
He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

ESV

. . . who never seemed to confront his sons. Absalom rebelled against him and now Adonijah . . . **READ SLIDE**
-- Like Absalom, Adonijah was a product of fatherly neglect . . .
. an unwillingness to deal with the situation, to "displease" the child.
-- I understand, not only as a Dad but as a pastor . . . what a temptation to preach in order to tickle ears.
TR: Eli and David are examples of placating their children.
But there is often a note at the end of these stories . . .



Two common reactions:

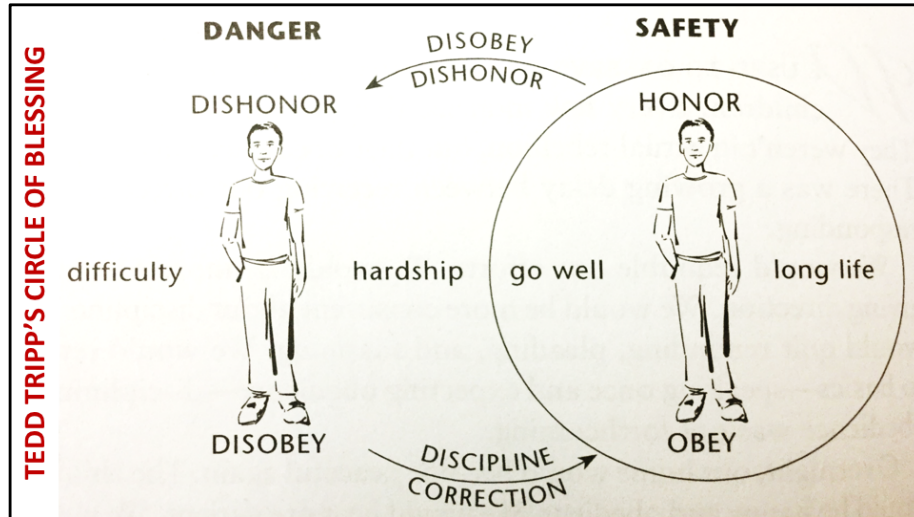
1. To PLACATE

Note: when we “placate” by leaving unresolved conflict, we can deeply wound our children.

. . . of deep wounds in our children.

-- Sometimes people ask, “When do I know I’m placating and not just being gracious and kind, bearing another’s burdens?” When we’ve lost freedom in a relationship it is time to do something. For me, it’s when I don’t feel comfortable making eye contact.

TR: Remember, it is our duty as parents to help our children stay in the circle of blessing.



As we saw last week, within the circle there is the promise of things going well and long life.

TR: In my experience, even parents who often placate their kids will often reach the boiling point and then more to the reaction of . . .



SOWING THE DEATH SPIRAL OF BITTERNESS

Two common reactions:

- 1. To PLACATE**
- 2. To PROVOKE**

... provoking their children.

TR: Ephesians 6 and Colossians 3 teach us ...

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

ESV

READ SLIDE

- The NIV translates, “do not exasperate your children”**
- Our provocation seems to be able to lead to ANGER and/or to DISCOURAGEMENT.**
- Either way, we have sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind.**
- Some may say that they have no choice but to get worked up . . . the constant grumbling and murmuring just wears them down.**
- TR: When I read about Moses recently, I understood his complaints against the people. Psalm 106 captures some of the dynamic . . .**

**They angered him
at the waters of Meribah,
and it went ill with Moses
on their account,
³³for they made his spirit bitter,
and he spoke rashly with his lips.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- [Meribah] = quarreling.

-- The death spiral of bitterness. You can almost hear Moses say, "They drove me to this."

TR: But in the context of Numbers 20 we read . . .

"Hear now, you rebels: shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" ¹¹And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice, and water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their livestock.

ESV

... Moses, embittered and speaking rashly, making the best speech he'd live to regret, said ... **READ SLIDE**
TR: And the LORD replied ...

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them."

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Most parents who end up provoking their children to anger or discouragement will excuse themselves because they were "driven to it" by the child's provocation.

-- But, we must be the parents, empowered by the Spirit, to not get sucked into the death spiral.

TR: At the end of these stories of angry, inconsistent parents, we will often find the footnote . . .



Two common reactions:

2. To PROVOKE

Note: when we “provoke” we often sow in anger only to reap deep bitterness in our children.

. . . that reads . . . READ SLIDE

-- Cf. the account of several folks with anger issues who were later told by their children never to talk to the grandkids about Jesus.

TR: I am saddened by the frequency of people denying that they are in the death spiral until it is almost too late. So, I created a tool . . .

AM I IN THE "DEATH SPIRAL" OF CONFLICT?

AM I IN THE "DEATH SPIRAL" OF CONFLICT?

© 2000 by the author. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this worksheet for personal use only.

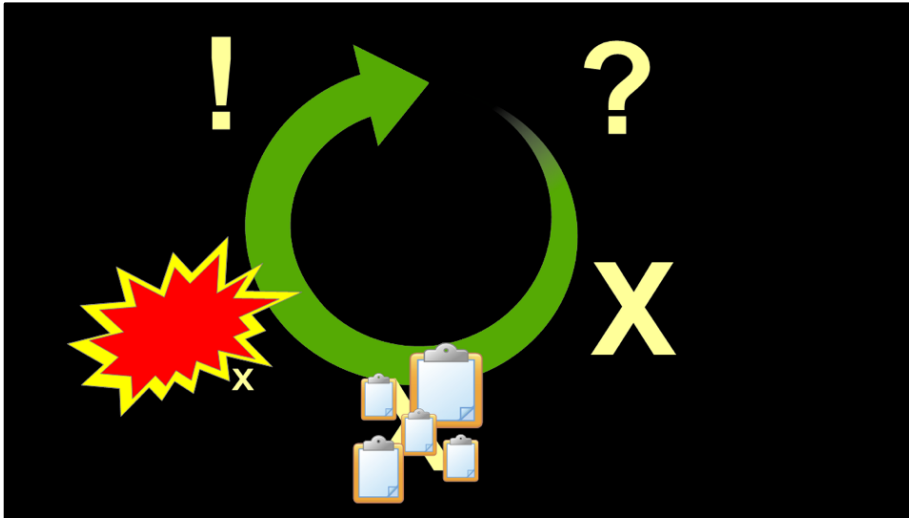
INSTRUCTIONS: For each of the behaviors described below, circle the number in the column that reflects the approximate frequency that you practice this behavior. Total your scores to reflect to what degree you are in danger of being sucked down into the "DEATH SPIRAL OF CONFLICT." It can be helpful to think of a single key relationship (such as a spouse or friend) as you think through these behaviors. Be sure to be as honest as possible, but don't worry about being too "honest" or not being.

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR	APPROXIMATE FREQUENCY				
	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rarely
1. Do I feel that I am in a "win-lose" or "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
2. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
3. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
4. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
5. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
6. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
7. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
8. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
9. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
10. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
11. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
12. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
13. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
14. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
15. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
16. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
17. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
18. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-lose" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
19. Do I feel that I am in a "lose-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1
20. Do I feel that I am in a "win-win" conflict?	5	4	3	2	1

TOTAL SCORES (add all the circled scores together):

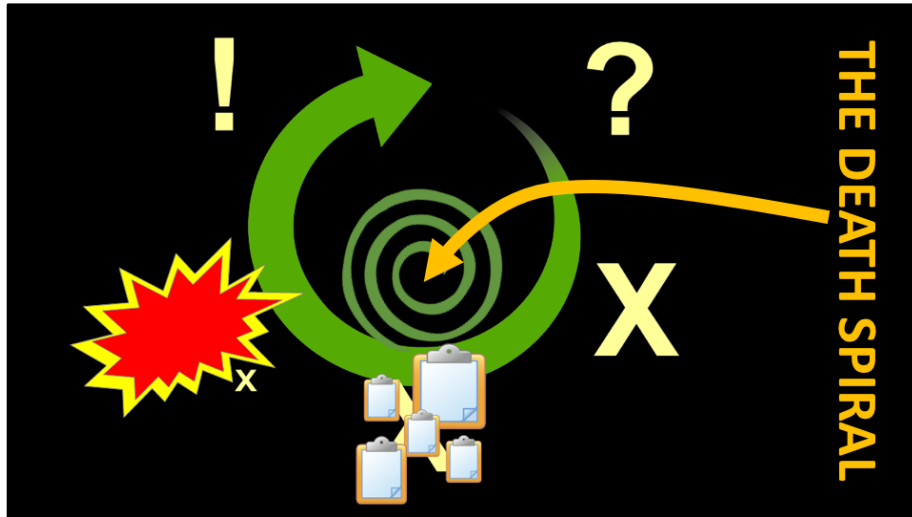
This is not a scientific test but a tool to cause personal reflection. The "winning" side is only a marketing tool and is always in danger of becoming a "losing" side. 1-20 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 21-30 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 31-40 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 41-50 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 51-60 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 61-70 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 71-80 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 81-90 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side. 91-100 = A conflict, you are NOT getting the best of either side.

... first used in teaching young married women to be honest about the conflict in their marriages.
 -- But, it applies to all of us in all stages of life. Won't you take time later this afternoon or this week to complete it?
 TR: The premise of a death spiral is based on the cycle of conflict that I have often taught ...



REVIEW SLIDE

TR: The cycle is a helpful paradigm but we must be aware of when we sow to the wind . . .



. . . and reap the whirlwind of the death spiral.

-- A death spiral is the downward, corkscrew motion of a disable aircraft unrecoverably headed for a crash (Wiktionary.org)

-- Our marriages, kids, friendships are all in grave danger when we start spiraling in injustice gathering, proving to ourselves how the other party is to blame for it all.

-- Those who placate and only occasionally provoke when “driven to it” are sowing the wind as much as the tyrant who always seems angry.

TR: The danger of sowing the death spiral is real . . . the result is a root of bitterness, in our lives and in the lives of our kids. So, what do we do?

**BREAKING OUT OF
THE VORTEX . . .**



We need to find a way to break out of the grip of the vortex that sucked in even people like Moses, David, Eli.

-- We must stop giving thanks for the artificial peace of the kids being away at camp or college.

-- We must stop looking for help in the guru's of the internet.

TR: WE must turn to God and ask His help to . . .



BREAKING OUT OF THE VORTEX

- 1. Ask God to help you AROUSE COMPASSION for your child**
 - **Remember the “oil and incense” (see Hosea 11:8) . . .**

. . . first of all, arouse compassion for our child (or for the other party we are in conflict with).

-- God's righteous anger was justified in the book of Hosea, but He stirs His heart to have compassion.

TR: In terms of the tools of family living . . .

Becoming an Intentional, Godly Parent



. . . we must remember the oil and incense. We are to be healers and lovers of our children.

-- In addition to showing delight in our children whenever we can, that's the incense . . .

-- . . . we must also use the oil of healing and ask God to help us arouse compassion when we've been deeply hurt by their rebellion, defiance, and even betrayal.

-- This is similar to what I've called, "Fighting for the judgment of charity."

-- This is not placating them by avoiding the conflict or accommodating their crossing of the line.

-- It is keeping your own heart tender and humble.

TR: Like the father in Luke 15, where Jesus tells the story of the lost son . . .

And (the prodigal son) arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him **and felt compassion**, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

ESV

READ SLIDE

**TR: How do we break out of the vortex of the death spiral?
By asking the Spirit to help us arouse compassion. And, then**

...



BREAKING OUT OF THE VORTEX

2. In the power of the Spirit, take up *again* “the rod and staff”

READ SLIDE

- This is the set of tools that we focused on last week.
 - We exasperate our children when we only take up these tools when “we’ve finally had enough.”
 - When we “placate until we provoke!”
 - When our jaws are tightened, our lips are pursed, and our brows are furrowed . . . and only then will we take up these tools, then we are sowing the wind of believing they will only pay attention to us when we are hot and angry.
- TR: Rather, out of compassion we must, in the power of the Spirit, . . .**



2. In the power of the Spirit, take up again "the rod and staff"

- **ENGAGE with your kids. Manage your family with truth and grace (love).**

... engage with our kids.

-- Some of us did not parent well when the cement was soft . . . but the answer is not to give up or back away.

-- The answer is not to seek to **NOT DISPLEASE** our kids until we can't bear it anymore and then blame them.

-- No, we have to engage our children.

TR: The qualifications for an elder tell us . . .

He must manage his own household well, **with all dignity keeping his children submissive,**
⁵for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

ESV

. . . that an elder must . . . READ SLIDE
-- “with all dignity keeping his children submissive”
-- NOT just keep them submissive NOR act like nothing bothers you and keep a stiff upper lip of dignity.
TR: Titus was instructed to appoint elders who were . . .

... anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

ESV

... READ SLIDE

TR: As we engage with our kids, managing them with truth AND love, not just one or the other ...



2. In the power of the Spirit, take up again "the rod and staff"

- Use the ROD: when possible, restrain them from evil.

... we must ... READ SLIDE

TR: Of course, I'm thinking back to fat Eli the High Priest we talked about a few minutes ago ...

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: Eli took some action, as verse 23 tells us . . .

23And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people.
24No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad.

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: But talk was not enough. The text we looked at of God's words to young Samuel for Eli read . . .

And I declare to him that I am about to punish (Eli's) house forever, **for the iniquity that he knew**, because his sons were blaspheming God, **and he did not restrain them.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

- Restrain your kids from evil.
- It is not a spanking, like for a younger child, but rather a painful consequence to help them come back to the circle of promised blessing.
- They are not entitled to cell phones, internet, access to a car, using a driver's license, going out in the evenings, your paying for college, etc.
- Stop imagining that our "unconditional love" isn't just placating them and our sowing the wind into the death spiral of bitterness.
- "Unconditional biblical love" is not indulgence.

TR: On the back side of the insert with the Death Spiral

assessment is an overview chart of . . .

THROUGH THE GENERATIONS

THROUGH THE GENERATIONS - of parents and children		
Parental Responsibilities		Children's Responsibilities
CONSIDERED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Honor "in the Lord" (1) 2. Devote a Christ honoring marriage, including your God-given roles of father & mother and teach Christ first to your individual child and as a couple (2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before Conception of Child
HONORABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Pray for the conception and for the child (4) 4. Offer thanks for the child, as a gift from God (5) 5. Receive advice from those who are wise (6) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Surrendering to God
CONSTITUTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. "Walk the talk & talk the walk" (7) 7. Pray and nurture your family (8) 8. Discipline wisely, including appropriate corporal punishment (9) 9. Move from "love to glare" to help them "love to glare" & then learn from their faith (10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Child's Temper Tantrums
MAINTAINED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Manage our families well, seeing to it that we are as follows (11) 11. As much as is possible, records our children from age (12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Obey your parents and honor them that the Lord wills the chief of parents (13)
PROVIDED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. If possible, help your child with a financial foundation (13) 13. Keep your sons (8 hearty) open to the world who return home (14) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Do not despise discipline (14) 6. Listen to and obey discipline (15) 7. Respect your parents for discipline (16)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Start a home of your own (Leaves) (17) 7. Fill the valleys (18)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Take care of their physical needs (19) 9. Don't try to meet out of your responsibility to honor them

References in brackets indicate points on chart above: (1) Col 3:14; (2) Cor 3:16, 18; (3) Eph 6:23; (4) Col 3:23; (5) 1 Cor 13:13; (6) 1 Tim 4:12; (7) 1 Tim 3:15; (8) 1 Tim 3:15; (9) 1 Tim 3:15; (10) 1 Tim 3:15; (11) 1 Tim 3:15; (12) 1 Tim 3:15; (13) 1 Tim 3:15; (14) 1 Tim 3:15; (15) 1 Tim 3:15; (16) 1 Tim 3:15; (17) 1 Tim 3:15; (18) 1 Tim 3:15; (19) 1 Tim 3:15.

- ... what the Bible teaches our responsibilities are as parents and children ... through the generations.
- I include it to give an overview that puts today's teaching in a broader context.
 - I know parenting teens can be exhausting.
 - I know it is a huge adjustment when young adults return to our homes after being away at school.
 - But, with God's help and in the power of the Holy Spirit ... as you and I sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh ... we can do this!
- TR: One last reminder about taking up the rod and staff ...



2. In the power of the Spirit, take up again “the rod and staff”

- Use the **STAFF**: teach them like adults, helping engage their head and heart by equipping them with “scales and weights” to determine the wise choices of the “next right thing.”

... don't just take up the rod. If that's all you use, almost certainly you will provoke your children to anger and discouragement.

-- We must talk with our kids.

-- We must teach them like young adults . . . not like little kids.

-- This past June I challenged you to review each child's toolbox list. I hope you did that and that now you are teaching them how to use the scales and weights of weighing everything by the wisdom of Scripture.

-- Some of us have our heads spinning and our hearts being decimated by our kids choices. My encouragement to you is, “Don't placate. Don't provoke. Engage them with a heart of compassion that is consistent, firm, and forgiving.”

TR: Break out of the vortex . . .

**BREAKING OUT OF
THE VORTEX . . .**



**. . . TO SOW
RIGHTEOUSNESS &
REAP STEADFAST LOVE**

. . . and READ SLIDE

TR: God speaks to His erring people through Hosea, this time in two chapters later in 10:12 . . .

**Sow for yourselves righteousness;
reap steadfast love;** break up your
fallow ground, for it is the time to
seek the Lord, that he may come
and rain righteousness upon you.
¹³You have plowed iniquity; you
have reaped injustice; you have
eaten the fruit of lies.

ESV

READ SLIDE

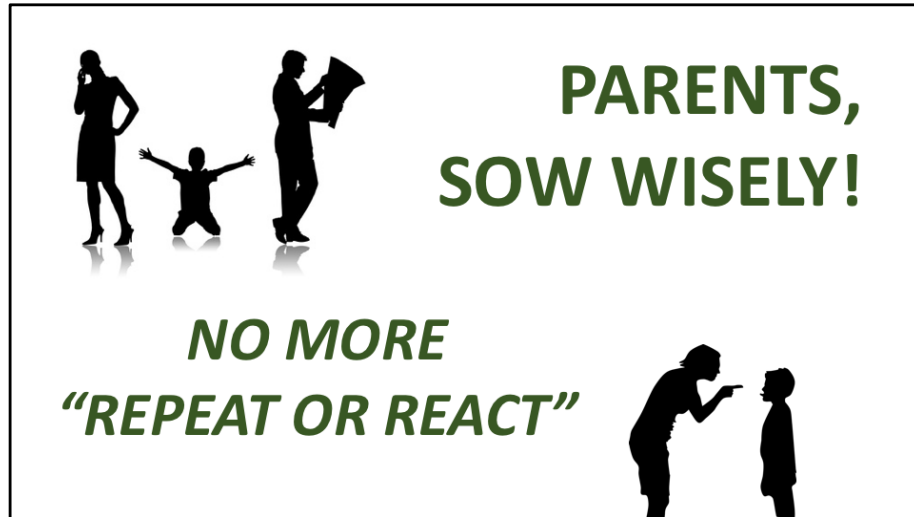
-- “steadfast love” = HESED.

-- The world lies to us and says the only way out of the death spiral is either to give in, to leave, or to get angry and put our foot down.

-- How we deal with the conflicts of parenting older children will tell us to whom we give thanks and from whom we ask help.

-- Let us not sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

TR: Let us . . .



... sow wisely.

-- Let us not just repeat our parents' mistakes or react against them, swinging to different extremes.

-- Let us with tender and humble hearts plow up our fallow ground.

-- We don't control the crop ... our children are responsible for how they respond to our parenting ... but we are responsible to sow wisely.

-- May God help us and the Spirit empower us.