

**Leadership Tip!**

Using examples from your own life can make it easier for others to open up and share theirs. Share your failures, not just your successes. See how the conversation soars!

**THE ART OF RELATIONSHIP**

“...with your parents”

**STARTER QUESTION:**

**What was one of the best pieces of advice your parents gave you when you were growing up? How did this advice shape you as an adult?**

*“His parents didn’t know what to think. “Son,” his mother said to him, “why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere.” “But why did you need to search?” he asked. “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they didn’t understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.”*

-Luke 2:48-52 (NLT)

**MAIN IDEA:**

As parents, it is natural for us to want the best for our children. Our hopes are often that our children will achieve goals that we may have missed, know successes and happiness similar to ours, or have rich and fulfilling relationships of their own. Ultimately, a parent’s responsibility is the process of preparing children to leave. Children eventually become adults, responsible for their own decisions, their own mistakes, and eventually (most likely) their own children.

**Pastor Hank mentioned that kids don’t need their parents to be their friends; they need them to be their parents. Why is this an important distinction?**

**Why do children need consistency and boundaries?**

**What boundaries did your parents provide and how did you view them when you were young?**

**Conversely, maybe your parents did not provide consistency and boundaries. How do you think this affected you as an adult?**

## **THE ART OF RELATIONSHIPS**

Children eventually become adults, and the balance in relationship shifts out of necessity. A parent's role shifts from authority figure to more of an 'advisor'; from the enforcer (of rules) to encourager; from coach to cheerleader. Again, parenting is the process of preparing children to leave.

*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh."*

-Matthew 19:5 (NIV)

A child's role also shifts from dependent to independent; from responsible to their parents to responsible to God; from obedient (to parents) to respectful (of parents' opinions).

**How easy is it for parents to shift roles as their children grow up?**

**What are some obstacles to the natural shift in the parent-child relationship? What are things that help with the changing relationship?**

**How easy is it for children to shift their roles and responsibilities?**

**What are some obstacles to a child's transition to the role of adult? Conversely, what can help with this transition?**

## **LETTING GO**

Just, "letting them go," is not as easy as it sounds. The reality is that parents and children are inseparably linked. Pastor Hank gave us three reasons why parents might try to control their adult children.

- Dysfunctional Relationships – Children have become extensions of the parent
- Fear – What if they get hurt?
- Living Vicariously – What could have been

Pastor Hank also spoke about three behaviors parents might use to control their adult children.

- Guilt – Look at all we've done for you
- Finances – Paying for insurance, phone bills, etc.
- Rescuing

**How can a parent recognize when they controlling their adult child in an unhealthy manner?**

**What steps might they take to return to a healthier relationship?**

**How might an adult child deal with a parent that uses controlling behaviors, whether on purpose or inadvertently?**

## **FINAL THOUGHTS:**

### **OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GOD**

Parents are responsible to God, to the best of their ability, for raising healthy children to adulthood. In a sense then, parents are like tenant caretakers watching over God's creation as they mature. But also remember, God's children are also responsible, to the best of *their* ability, to listen to God's calling for *their* lives.

## THE ART OF RELATIONSHIP

“... With Your Parents”

February 26, 2017

*“His parents didn’t know what to think. “Son,” his mother said to him, “why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere.” “But why did you need to search?” he asked. “Didn’t you know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they didn’t understand what he meant. Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.”*

Luke 2:48-52 (NLT)

### Shifts Adult Children need to make with their Parents:

<u>When a Child:</u>	<u>When an Adult:</u>
Dependent	<u>Independent</u>
Responsible to parents	Responsible to <u>God</u>
Obedient	<u>Respectful</u>

### Shifts Parents need to make with their Children:

<u>When a Child:</u>	<u>When an Adult:</u>
Authority	<u>Advisor</u>
Enforcer (of rules)	<u>Encourager</u>
Coach	<u>Cheerleader</u>
Parent	<u>Friend</u>

*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh."*

Matthew 19:5 (NIV)

### Why Parents Control their Adult Children:

- Dysfunctional relationships
- Fear
- Living vicariously through their lives