

## **Packing Your Child's Suitcase**

### ***An Anchor***

Ephesians 4:14-16

November 5, 2023

HDBC

This morning we are past the mid-point in our series on *Packing Your Child's Suitcase*. It focuses on ***What Every Child Needs Before Leaving Home***. In the series we are examining essential items that need to be in your child's suitcase when they leave home.

And to a great degree it is up to you to pack those things. Once they leave home, you will have missed your opportunity to do so. These things need to be packed over the course of their childhood. We've already considered the first two items that need to be in every child's suitcase.

**A Ticket Home** – Salvation

**Wisdom** – Discernment to make good decisions.

Will consider a third this morning. Here it is. Every child also needs **An Anchor** in their suitcase. That may seem like an unusual thing. What is an anchor?

**An anchor is a tool that is used to keep a boat steady.** To keep it from drifting with the currents. To provide safety when storms arise, or when the water gets rough. **An anchor is a stabilizing force.** Our kids need that when they launch out on their own. But not just any anchor will do. They need a specific anchor. **The anchor of truth.** Listen to our text.

### **READ Ephesians 4:14-16**

Paul is encouraging his hearers to no longer be tossed about by every wind of doctrine, or by the trickery and deception of men. Every parent wants that same thing for their children. They want to know that their kids are not going to be driven by the winds of culture that will push them in the wrong direction.

#### **1. Problems they will face**

Three things that can knock them off course and get them into trouble. Three things they need to be prepared to encounter and handle properly.

## 1) Unexpected storms

*Tossed here and there by waves.*

Paul mentions being tossed by waves. If you have ever been in or at the ocean on a stormy day, then you know how the waves can kick up. I've never been in a storm on the ocean and never want to be in one. Storms can arise quickly over the ocean and when they do, they produce waves that can bounce you off course, cause you to become disoriented, and even to cause you to sink.

Clearly Paul is not warning us about literal waves on a literal ocean. He has something else in mind. Those are simple illustrations. So, what do the waves illustrate?

I believe they illustrate the unexpected storms that come into our lives. Those things that come with little or no warning that rock our world.

Sickness or disease

Death of spouse, child, parent

Loss of Job

Broken relationships

Natural disaster – tornado, flood, etc.

Accident that alters the rest of your life.

These kinds of storms can quickly knock you off course and cause you to lose your way. They can impact your spiritual development and your ability and willingness to serve God.

When storms of life come, you need an anchor that will enable you to weather the storm without losing your place or getting off course. But sudden storms are not the only reason they need an anchor in their suitcase. There is something else that threatens to push them off course.

## 2) Unrelenting pressure

*Carried about by every wind of doctrine.*

Speaks of false and dangerous belief systems that cause us to drift. Paul speaks of a constantly blowing wind that never lets up. This kind of unrelenting pressure can wear us down and get us off course.

Have you ever been at the beach and gone out into the surf on a floatation device and just relaxed in the water? Within a matter of minutes, you can find yourself a long way from where you started. Not talking about drifting out to sea but along the coast. There is a persistent current that steadily moves you in a direction away from the place you start. If you want to not drift, you have to fight against that current.

There are some cultural currents that place unrelenting pressure on people to move away from their starting point. Belief systems that are not anchored in truth and are actually anti-god.

I want to share three that have been around for a while but are still causing generation after generation to drift away from the truth. These currents are often very subtle. They can lazily and almost imperceptibly carry you in a direction without you really even being away of it. Like gentle swells in the ocean can seductively carry a person far away from where they began.

**a. Humanism**

The tenets of secular humanism are laid out in two manifestos. John Dewey was the chief designer of the 1933 Humanist Manifesto. Let me share a few of the tenets.

Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing, not created.

Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process.

Humanism refuses to accept anything that is supernatural.

Humanism believes the chief goal of man is to reach the greatest satisfaction possible in this life.

Humanism is a philosophy of life that denies the existence of God and places man at the center of the universe. It is all about “me” with no belief in a superior being, such as God.

**Humanism affirms what the Bible radically denies: that man is basically good.**

**Humanism denies what the Bible radically affirms: that there are absolute values in this world.**

We must teach our children that God is the center of the universe, and indeed of all of creation. That everything was created by him and for him, and ultimately is made to bring Him glory. In short, it is all about Him, and not about us.

**b. Relativism**

The belief that **there are no moral values** that transcend the culture or the people. No absolutes to guide our actions. No absolute rights or wrongs. Everything is subjective. Personal opinion rules. Whatever one wants to do is fine. The individual or the group determines whether or not something is right or wrong. It is all relative. Something could be right today and wrong tomorrow.

**Relativism manifests itself in statements like, *I don't believe in that, but I would never force my beliefs on anyone else.***

Relativism has redefined tolerance and holds it as the ultimate good. **Relativism redefines tolerance to say that you can believe one thing and I can believe the opposite and we can both be right.**

May I just point out that if you believe opposite things, you cannot both be right. **If I believe the earth is round like a ball and you believe it is a thin flat surface, we both can't be right.**

We must teach our children that there are absolutes, rights and wrongs. God has declared the moral and ethical standard of conduct. Some things are right because God has declared them to be right and other things are wrong because God has declared them to be wrong. There is evil in this world and no explanation or excuse that cause it to be less than evil. **Hamas is evil. Nazism was evil. Those who torture, rape and murder because of their worldview are evil. Those who enslave other people are evil.**

### c. Hedonism

Philosophy that teaches that the chief goal of life is to minimize pain and the maximize pleasure. **Pleasure is the highest good.** Whatever feels good is what you do. Do whatever it takes to get pleasure.

**Hedonism** is at the heart of sexual immorality. Turning a wonderful God-given drive into an animal instinct which must be followed. The greatest expression of hedonism is found in the dismantling of all sexual values. **There is an agenda** to destroy all Biblical standards that govern sexual activity. To not only allow for sex outside of marriage, but for any kind of sexual expression to be acceptable.

We are constantly bombarded with sexual images. Internet, TV, Movies, Magazines, Songs, Videos, Etc. We are immersed in a sea of sexual temptation in this nation. Let me tell you the strategy of the sexual agenda. It is to **overwhelm us with a volume of sexual images and stimulations**. All in an attempt to weaken our resolve and to desensitize us to its danger.

**We must teach our children** that the greatest pleasure comes from a right relationship with one who created us. The greatest joy comes when we please Him. Real joy comes when we are serving Him. He is the only one who can ultimately give us fullness of joy.

There are some unrelenting pressures that are attempting to move your kids away from their Biblical foundations. They will need a good anchor to keep them from being swept off course by these pressures.

**Unexpected Storms & Unrelenting Pressure & finally . . .**

### 3) Unethical people

*Trickery of men and deceitful scheming*

There are unprincipled people in our world who will deceive and lure your children into all kinds of destructive things on purpose. They will specifically target your children with the purpose of deceiving them. Let me mention just a few categories that our children will face:

### **False Teachers**

Men who masquerade as Bible teachers, but who are seeking money or fame or power. They do not believe the truth revealed in the Bible. They preach a false gospel that will lead your kids away from salvation and from God rather than toward Him.

### **Persuasive Salesmen**

Could be selling a worldview, a philosophy of life, a product that is promised to bring you happiness and joy. Promise of making money, gaining power or influence. They often offer shortcuts to things that common sense tells us take time, effort, wisdom and patience.

### **Arrogant Politicians (and political parties)**

They promise to solve the world's problems through legislation and leadership when the real solutions are spiritual.

Well, Paul has warned us about three things that can get our kids off course. Three things that can wreck their faith and destroy their lives. Three reasons to pack an anchor in your child's suitcase.

Now for a moment let me talk about . . .

## **2. Anchor they will need**

The anchor is a person . . . Jesus Christ. We want to make it our goal that our kids will be so close to Jesus that His presence will keep them stable. We want them to be fused to Jesus. He cannot be shaken and those who are tied to Him, close to Him, resting in Him will also be stable.

The goal is that they ***grow up in all aspects into Him***. In other words, we want our kids to be mature followers of Christ. To receive their life, their strength, their enablement from their relationship with Christ. Note that Paul points out that this goal is achieved through a process of growth. It is not confirmed upon them through some verbal declaration, ceremonial act, or some activity. It happens over time as parents ***speak the truth in love***.

**So, parents**, your job is to speak the truth in love. The truth Paul writes about is the Word of God. We must speak it, live it, model it . . . in love. Not talking about force-feeding it to them, but lovingly leading them to hear and accept it.

The anchor is Jesus. We want our kids to have an unwavering, unbreakable relationship with Jesus.

This is what will keep them safe in the storms.

This is what will keep them from the danger of false philosophies.

This is what will keep them from falling for the deception of false teachers.

This is what will keep them on track to finish the race and finish strong.

**The goal is to strengthen their relationship with Jesus.**

**The process involves teaching, modeling, living the Word of God.**

2 Tim 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

**Our kids need to know that there is such a thing as absolute truth.** That truth is the same regardless of the environment, circumstances, situations, and culture. Truth is the one thing that is constant in the midst of changing times.

**The source of that truth is the Bible.** Jesus is the living truth. The Bible is the written truth, and it is what God has given to us as a guide for living. Must teach our children to trust the Word of God. To learn it.

It reveals that there are some things that are absolute rights and wrongs.

There are some things that are right and other things that are wrong. Period.

If ever you have the chance to visit the catacombs in Rome, those tunnels under the ancient city, where many of the early Christians were buried, you can see the symbols of faith on their tombs. Three common symbols appear: the dove, the fish, and the anchor.

The mighty Niagara River plummets some 180 feet at the American and Horseshoe Falls. Before the falls, there are violent, turbulent rapids. Farther upstream, however, where the river's current flows more gently, boats are able to navigate. Just before the Welland River empties into the Niagara, a pedestrian

walkway spans the river. Posted on this bridge's pylons is a warning sign for all boaters:

"Do you have an anchor?" followed by,

"Do you know how to use it?"

Before you send your child into adulthood, you must ask yourself the question.

***Does he or she have the anchor of God's Word? Does he or she know how to use it?***