

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Series: Uncommon Family
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Uncommon Fathers

1 Thessalonians 2:8-12

⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. ⁹ Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰ You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

All right! Welcome. Hey, happy Fathers' Day, once again, to everyone here. I'm so grateful for you dads who are in the room. Nate, when we started this series on Mothers' Day, started off by saying Mothers' Day is the third-highest attended Sunday in the year. Fathers' Day is #52 on the list, the lowest-attended Sunday. But not here at Harris Creek. I'm so grateful, dads, for you. We're so thankful for you today. We're going to share a message that I hope will encourage and challenge all the dads in the room. Typically, in a church setting—I don't think we do this here; I think we do a good job of this—but often dads just get criticized and beat up all the time. My intention is not to do that today. My intention is to encourage you in your role, to challenge you to excel still more, and I want you to walk away just having a greater desire to be a better dad, to be a better parent in what I share, but specifically, I'm going to speak to the dads.

I am a dad. New Dad Class of 2004, and so, four sons. We have twins who are 18 and just graduated from Midway High School. Their names are Duncan and Drew. One is headed to Baylor University; I don't know if you've heard of that school before. Duncan's headed there. His twin brother, Drew, is going to Belmont in Nashville. I've got a 15-year-old named Carson, who is a rising tenth grader at Midway High School, and Lincoln is our "baby" who's 13, and he's going to be an eighth grader at Midway Middle. I absolutely love getting to be their dad. My biggest mistake two weeks ago, when I preached, was not talking about how incredible my kids are, how much I love being their dad. Apart from being a follower of Jesus Christ, being married to Kristen, being their dad is the greatest joy and privilege in my life. So, I enjoy getting to be celebrated on Fathers' Day.

But Fathers' Day also brings up some baggage for me. My dad, Dennis, had a major heart attack when I was 4 and he was 37 years old. He was largely out of the picture the next few years, just in and out of the hospital. He passed away when I was 6. He was 39. We got a picture of my dad. (*Two pictures of his dad appear on the screen, one as a boy and the other as a young man.*) He kind of looks like me a little bit, which kind of warms my heart. I never really knew my dad, but what I've heard about him, just the best things about him got passed on to me: a lover of people, walks into a room and just cares for people so well. So, I don't know him, but I'm thankful for

the input and legacy that he's left to me. But he was not around to help raise me. Mom remarried a couple of years later. I had a good stepdad. He was my stepdad for 30+ years, married to my mom. There were some things he did well. There were some things he didn't do well. If you heard my message in March, I talked about the fake autograph collection that he passed on to me. That's him, and so, maybe not always the highest in integrity, but he was great in so many ways. But I never had a dad to sit down with me and really tell me what it looks like to be a man. I never had anyone tell me, "Here's what it looks like to follow the Lord." I never had anyone affirm me and encourage me and give me an "Attaboy!" and encourage me to walk in the right direction. I never had anyone tell me about the dangers of alcohol, and premarital sex, and pornography, and as a result, I made a lot of really dumb decisions in my life. And by the grace of God, I've turned out relatively okay. That's only because of His kindness and the way that He has worked in my life. But there's been a massive void in my life from not having a dad. I have craved the approval of human beings my entire life, largely because I never had the "Attaboy!" and "I'm proud of you, son!" and "Way to go!" I seek it from others, and there's just this massive "Feed me! Feed me! Affirm me! Affirm me!" that's been a big problem in my life.

And there have been other issues. A presence of a dad or an absence of a dad has a tremendous impact on every single one of us. The problem that I see, as we look at the world around us: there is an epidemic of fatherlessness in our country and in our world. If you want to know why we have as many problems as we do, I think it's largely because dads are either completely absent, or they're present, but they're really, really passive. They don't do what God has called a man to do.

So, today we're going to talk through what it looks like to be an uncommon father. We're continuing and wrapping up our series on the uncommon family. Today, the hope is that dads, we would be uncommon in the way that we live out the job that God has given us. I've heard it described by Jon Tyson; he's a pastor up in New York City, an author. He talks about five different kinds of dads. See where you fall in this spectrum. There's the Completely Irresponsible Dad. This is the dad who has absolutely no presence in the life of his child. Next, there's the Ignorant Dad. This is the dad who is sometimes around, but everything he does leads to more damage, not help. There's the Inconsistent Dad. I bet we have a lot of Inconsistent Dads here. I've been inconsistent at times. We make big promises. We say we're going to pour into our kids, we're going to spend time with you, we're going to disciple you. But then work gets busy, a hobby gets busy, and it pulls us away, and we're just inconsistent. There's the Involved Dad, and I think we have a lot of Involved Dads here. There's a lot of good to the Involved Dad. This is the dad who goes to the games, who goes to the meetings, who cares for their kid, who prays for them, who has the hard talks with them. But there's something missing in the Involved Dad. The dad that I want us to be, that I want to be, is the Intentional Father. This is the dad who is all-in with his kids, who looks at each one of his kids and parents them differently. He sits down with them, and he disciplines them, and he disciplines them, all with the intention of saying, "There is a greater purpose to your life. You are a child of the King, and I want you to know that your life counts and your life matters." My hope is that we would move along that spectrum and become Intentional Dads as we parent our kids. That we would really be uncommon in the way that we father our children.

Now, I am speaking to dads. It is Fathers' Day, but this message is 100%-applicable to all of us. Let me tell you why, a couple of reasons. One is that in a few moments I'm going to crack open

God's Word. When we open up God's Word, which is living and active, inspired by God's Spirit for us to learn from today, we get the privilege of learning. It doesn't matter how old you are. It doesn't matter your gender. It doesn't matter if you're a child, or a parent, or a mother, or a grandparent. We have the opportunity to learn from the Word together. We're going to learn from God's Word. Second, the things that I'm going to describe that the uncommon father does are things that we all can do. I'm going to talk specifically about three things that uncommon fathers do, that uncommon friends do, and uncommon moms do, and uncommon children do. The three main points are things we all get to do. Third, there's something hidden under the black tarp over here. (*Scott indicates a black covered object on the stage.*) Everyone wants to know what that is, so you'll pay attention to find out what's hidden from you. Fourth, I think we have a really wrong view of dads, and I want to help correct and think rightly about the role of the father. And then, consequently, not just earthly dads, but we have a wrong view of our Heavenly Father. I want us to think rightly about who God is, who God the Father is. And then, last: I really want you to pray for dads. As you leave here today, and you drive home, as you turn off the live stream, as you sit around the table today with family, with Life Group friends, I want you just to take a moment, or take more than a moment, and pray for us. Because we need all the prayers you can muster for dads. Because there's a big problem and we need your help. We need the Lord's help to continue to help dads become more and more uncommon.

This has been a seven-week series. Nate started off by talking about uncommon moms on Mothers' Day. Then we talked about uncommon gender: what does the Bible say about a man and what does it say about a woman? And then J.P. talked about generational baggage that we pass on to our kids and being really careful about what we give to our kids. Then Dale talked about the uncommon legacy that we leave behind, that we have the opportunity to help point our kids in a different direction. Week 5 was our most handsome speaker, that was me. I talked about uncommon marriage, and how selfishness affects us in marriage. And then Derek, our youth minister, just did a great job talking about the role of uncommon parents. Today, we wrap up talking about uncommon dads, uncommon fathers.

We're going to see three things specifically:

- Uncommon fathers encourage
- Uncommon fathers comfort
- Uncommon fathers urge

Please open up your Bible, your phone, to 1 Thessalonians 2. We're going to be in verses 8-12 today. So, Thessalonians, the church in Thessalonica—it's a mouthful to say that word repeatedly. This letter is written by the Apostle Paul and he wrote it to the church in Thessalonica. Thessalonica was a pretty big city by modern-day equivalents; think the size of Dallas. It was the biggest city around. A lot of trade goes through there; there's a lot of different mindsets and different thoughts. Not everyone was a follower of Jesus Christ, so you've got battling opinions. Then you've got Christians who were there who were largely getting persecuted for their beliefs. Paul first visited Thessalonica on his second missionary journey in Acts 17. This is the letter he writes to that church. There are two of them, and we're going to be in the first one. He writes the church to do a couple of things: to correct some thinking, and then really to encourage them to live out what they know to be right and true. It's written by Paul, who, as far as we know, was not married, was not a dad, but just really had some incredible wisdom for us. I'm so grateful—this text is incredible—that we get to learn from Paul's wisdom

to the church in Thessalonica. I'm going to read 1 Thessalonians 2:8-12. Paul writes, **"so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed."** Typically, Paul is a little bit hard. He doesn't mince words sometimes. He delivers the truth and packs a punch. This is a little bit of a different side of Paul, where he's very, very tender and pastoral. And he says to them, **"We not only shared the gospel of God with you, but we shared our lives with you, as well.** We sat around a table together. We broke bread together. We told stories. We shared our past. We shared our struggles. We cried together. We laughed so hard we cried at times." And it's this very pastoral, tender moment that we see in Paul. He says, "I didn't want to be a burden to you. I love you so much that I toiled night and day so that I might encourage you." He goes on in verses 11 and 12. He says, **"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children."** I don't like the word 'deal' in there. The NIV translates it a little bit different. It sounds like, "Hey, I've got to 'deal' with my kids!" That's not the right rendering of it. A better word would be how a father 'treats' his children. So, I got to thinking: what does the ideal father do? How does the ideal father treat his children? He loves them, he disciplines them, he disciplines them, he points them in the right direction. He doesn't just preach sermons to them; he sits down at the table, and he encourages his children. So, Paul is doing that with us. He's telling us, "This is what a father does." We're going to see that if we don't do this, the world is going to disciple our kids. If I don't point my kids in the right direction, if I don't have the sex talk with my children, then the world is going to teach them about sex. If I don't tell them about social media, the world is going to tell them about social media. And so, a father who deals with his children, who points them in the right direction, he tells them, "This is the way, and I want you to walk in it." Verses 11 and 12 are really closely connected. Again, verse 11, **"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,"** specifically by doing three things: **"encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."** So, your three points today, I'm going to give them to you right now. Uncommon fathers, right from the text, encourage, uncommon fathers comfort, and uncommon fathers urge. When I say that this applies to everyone, this is something that every one of us can do. Again, single, married, old, young, male, female, mother, child—it doesn't matter—grandparent: every one of us can encourage, every one of us can comfort, and every one of us can urge to live lives worthy of the Gospel.

1. Uncommon fathers encourage

Uncommon fathers encourage their children to become more like Christ. This is when we instill them with hope, we instill them with courage. The word 'encourage' literally means to put courage in somebody else. Somebody is lacking courage, our kids are lacking courage, so a father gets to put courage into them. A few times we see the same word used in the New Testament. Three chapters later, in 1 Thessalonians 5:11—**"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."** Paul says, "Don't quit. Don't stop. Keep going." Hebrews 3:13, one of my favorite verses in the entire Bible: **"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."** That verse just scares me, that if we do not take this seriously—dads, if we do

not encourage our children—there’s a really good shot that they’re going to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. That sin in going to pull them off track, that they’re going to believe the lies of the enemy and give in to their fleshly desires instead of following what the Lord wants for them. I was thinking about what does this look like to encourage our children? I was talking to Derek, our youth minister, just about what do kids really need to hear? What do youth need to hear? And I loved Derek’s response. He said, “The things that our kids lack the most, what our children, what our youth, what college students, what they’re lacking the most is to rightly understand their identity.” The world continually tells them one thing, and they’re pulled off by the world, but we get the privilege to tell them who they really are. And this starts at a really young age. This is just as applicable for any one of us. It doesn’t matter how old or how young we are, but we need to know who we are and what our identity is. So, that starts at a young age of telling kids, **“You are made in the image and likeness of God.”** That’s Genesis 1:27. Telling our kids that **“You are fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psalm 139:14). The Lord knew us in the womb. He knew what we would be like. He knew what we would look like. He knew what our desires and likes were. He knows us and we’re fearfully and wonderfully made. And then I think of John 3:16—**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”** What if our children knew those things? What if they knew they were made in the image and likeness of God, that they’re fearfully and wonderfully made, that God loves them so much that He sent His only Son to die for them? What would our kids be like if they grew up with that kind of confidence? Not in themselves, but in what the Lord says about them. I think about Genesis 49, when Jacob, with his last breaths, sits down with his 12 sons, and he looks at them, and he says, “This is what I see in you. Here is a blessing over you. Here’s some encouragement for you.” That is what we get to do, dads. We get to sit down with our kids and tell them who they are in the Lord.

This is so lacking in my life. As a teenager growing up, I looked for affirmation, attention, identity, in everything the world had to offer. I looked for it in grades, and I did very well academically, and so I got affirmation from my grades. I looked for it in athletics, and I got cut by the 7th grade baseball team, so I didn’t find it there. I tried to find it in girls and relationships to varying levels of success as a dumb kid. And so, I looked for affirmation everywhere I could find it. I wanted to be like everyone else. I hated the way that God made me. If I was honest, I hated the way I looked, I hated the gifts that He gave me. I resented them. I knew that I was an encourager, but I didn’t want to be an encourager. I wanted to be able to speak like JP, or sing like Drew, or have Brie’s enthusiasm. I wanted to be like everyone else, so I just resented the way God made me. It wasn’t until 20 years later—20 years from the fall, actually—that a pastor in Dallas sat down with me and said, “Scott, you are looking for your identity in all the wrong places.” He said, and I choose my words carefully here, the most valuable lesson I have ever learned in my life, apart from what God’s Word says. He said, “Scott, you need to know yourself; you need to like yourself; you need to be yourself. You need to know how you’re wired. You need to like how God made you, and you need to be that person. We don’t need another JP. We don’t need another Drew. We don’t need another Brie. We need you to be Scott. Scott needs to be Scott.” And as I think about parenting, that is the kind of encouragement I want my children to know. I want my kids to know there is only one Duncan Kedersha, only one Drew Kedersha, only one Carson Kedersha, only one Lincoln Kedersha. I want my kids to know that they are made in God’s image and likeness in a specific way, and that their identity is in nothing

else other than this: that they're a child of the King. That they have been made intentionally be a God who loves them and knows them. So, uncommon fathers encourage.

Let's go back to verses 11 and 12. **“or you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, number one encouraging, number two comforting”**

2. *Uncommon fathers comfort*

Uncommon fathers provide comfort. They console, they care in the midst of challenges, and sometimes with dads, we like to try to CLEP out of this one. We say, “Well, their mom does this better than me, and I'm a guy, and we're not that way. We're rough and tough, and we're just going to tell our kids what to do.” And I want to tell you, you don't get to CLEP out of this one. Just because God gave you a Y chromosome does not give you an excuse to not comfort your child. I'm going from God's text; He tells us that *we* are to comfort them. Fathers comfort. I hate gender stereotypes, so I'm not going to let you out of this. God's not going to let you out of it. This is comforting your child when they need comfort. In John 11:19-31, when Mary and Martha lose their brother, Lazarus, and the same word, this 'comfort' word, is used in this text. This is what their friends did for them. They comforted them in loss of their brother. 1 Thessalonians 5:14—**“And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, the next says *encourage the disheartened.*”** That word 'encourage' in the Greek is actually the same word that's used for 'comfort.' 'Encourage' isn't the best word. The best word is really 'comfort.' Comfort the disheartened, those who lack heart, those who are discouraged. We need to comfort them. Uncommon fathers look for opportunities to comfort their children. This looks different for every one of us, but when our kids are discouraged, dads, we get the opportunity to sit with them and help comfort them. This starts when they're young, when they get a boo-boo and they start crying, when they fall off the bike, when they're just scared of going to school. And sometimes, the response of the dad—and this has been me; I'm not proud of this—but it's more like, “Hey, get over it! Quit whining. Quit being a baby. Quit crying. Get back on the bike. Just stop whining; you're annoying me. Get over it!” Or when they're older, and they get cut from the sports team, and we're like, “Well, baseball's boring anyway. I'm glad you're not on it!” Or everyone is invited to a party, and they see it on social media, and they feel left out. The dads are like, “You don't want to be there anyway! They're a bad influence.” Or they get a bad grade, or they don't get into the school they want, and we just say, “Romans 8:28, all things work out,” which is true, but sometimes they don't need us just to fix them. Sometimes we just get next to them and we cry with them. We have these things called emotions and we let them come out. We care for them, we empathize, we're kind, we get in their shoes. Empathizing is putting on the shoes of somebody else and walking in them. There are times, dad, when the right response is not to encourage or to urge, but to comfort. To sit in it with your child. They need that from you, dads. They don't just need it from moms. This is the role that we are privileged and get to play as well. Uncommon dads comfort.

There's a runner from Great Britain; his name is Derek Redmond. Derek Redmond was a great runner who won some medals in the 1991 World Games. The 1992 Barcelona games come up. He's representing their country. There's a really great chance that he's going to medal for Great Britain. Of course, we want the USA to win, but he seems like a nice guy, someone we would want to cheer for. He's running the 400. He gets through the first round, he gets through the

second round, gets through the third round, and now he's in the semi-finals. You get in the top four in the 400 in the semi-finals, and you get to run for gold. So, he's in the semi-finals in 1992 in Barcelona. I want you to watch this story, this video, of what happens in the semis for Derek. (*Video of the race begins playing on the screen. As Derek is running, he pulls up, grabs the back of his right leg, and falls to the ground. In obvious pain, Derek gets up and runs/limps his way down the track, persevering to the end. In the homestretch, Derek's dad shows up and helps his hurting son cross the finish line. The announcer says, "That is the Olympic spirit."*) You can't see it, and you might have missed it, but there's part of that video where you see that dad sprinting down the stairs towards his son. I love the way he pushes off the security guy. He's like, "Back off! This is my boy!" Puts his arm around him. In probably the most vulnerable, the hardest moment in Derek's life, his dad is the one who races to comfort him. I don't know what their relationship is like. I don't know Derek, I don't know Jim, but what I do love is that the son is willing to let his dad comfort him. He puts his arm around him and says, "Dad, I need you to get me across the finish line. I'm so discouraged right now." Uncommon dads comfort their children.

Verses 11 and 12, again, **"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging them, Point One, comforting them, Point Two and urging Point Three.**

3. *Uncommon fathers urge*

A little bit of a weird word. What does it mean to urge? It might be better translated as 'charge,' 'implore,' 'insist.' In Ephesians 4:17, the same word is used. Paul says, **"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking."** This is when, dads, we don't just encourage, we don't just comfort, there are times when we are going to *insist* that they walk in the right way. This is when the world is pulling them in one direction, and we've got to grab them, and we've got to point them in the right way. This is when we don't prepare the road for them, we prepare them for the road. We say, "This is the direction you need to walk. Walk in it." This is when we see them moving towards sin, and we're stepping in, and we're grabbing them, and we're doing everything we can to pull them back to the Father. As I think about my kids: where do my kids need to be urged? It's with technology. It's with cell phones. I think about cell phones and tech; there's enormous opportunity and great stuff with a phone, but there are dangers in this thing. So, I'm not just going to give them whatever they want. I'm not going to give them full access to the internet on their phones when they're younger and less mature. I'm not going to let them get whatever app they want to get. I'm not going to let them get every social media that they want. We're going to sit down, and I'm going to say, "The world may be telling you this, and candidly, I don't care if all your friends have it. We're going to be a little bit different. We're going to be uncommon in the way that I'm going to urge you." This is if they come across porn. If they do it intentionally or accidentally, we're going to sit down together. We're not going to just let them do whatever they want. We're going to say, "Here's why it's dangerous. I'm urging you to walk in the Way. Don't follow the world." We have what we call an Open Door policy: our kids can come to us no matter what. We're not going to shame them; we're not going to mock them. We're going to have a conversation. Uncommon fathers urge to become more like Christ.

I'll admit, there are times that I absolutely missed it here. There are times when I just didn't want to have the hard conversation. I didn't want to put the restrictions on. The easier thing is just to say, "Do whatever you want." There are times I missed conversations. I think about current events that I could have urged them in the right direction and think rightly with politics, with mass shootings, the Capitol riot, and all these things going on. There are opportunities that I missed, that I wish I have urged them in a different direction. Not that they were going the wrong way, but I wish I was more strategic in the way that I urged my children. I think about one of the best things that we did when my boys turned 12 or 13, we did the very unfortunately named "Puberty Trip." We'd go away for a weekend, and we'd just talk about what God is doing in their bodies. We'd talk about peer pressure. We'd talk about their friends. We'd talk about community. We'd talk about God's design for intimacy. Those are some of my favorite moments as a dad: when we very intentionally spent some time together to urge in the right direction. I know a lot of us in this room have missed it. There might be some guilt and shame. There might be some resentment towards Dad for not doing some of these things. I'm sure my kids, there is no question, when they go through a recovery ministry, and they put their inventory together, I'm going to be number one on the list. I'm not bragging about it, but it's a fact. There's a lot of things I've done really well. There's a lot of ways I've missed it. Today is a great day to start making amends with your kids. Tell them you're sorry. You apologize. You tell them you wish you had done things a little bit different. You ask for forgiveness and let God's grace shine through in those moments. For some of you, your kids are long gone. This is a great way for you to pour into other dads. Come to our men's ministry and sit at a table with younger dads and tell them, "Here's what I did well. Here's what I wish I could have done different." Every one of us has the opportunity to continue to urge others to move toward Jesus Christ.

I said in the beginning, and I'll repeat it again. This is written to dads. Dads encourage, they comfort, and they urge, but that is something every one of us gets to do. You get to do that with your Life Group, with your friends, with your parents, with your kids, with your spouse. Paul is writing to fathers, but every one of us has the opportunity to encourage, to comfort, and to urge. One more time: this is what we do as dads. Uncommon fathers don't follow the pattern of the world. Uncommon fathers encourage their children in their identity as a child of the King. Uncommon fathers will sit down with their kids, and they will comfort them in their hardest moments of life. Uncommon dads will step in when their kids are walking in the wrong direction, or even proactively, will tell their kids, "This is the way you want to walk." So, we encourage, we comfort, and we urge.

A friend of mine from Dallas, a very good friend named John, described to me his thoughts on what it's like to be a dad. He said, "When you have a kid who's born, you really have 18 years with them. I know you get more than 18 years. I'll always be their dad, whether they're one or seventy, if I live that long. I'll always be their dad. But typically, we have 18 years with our kids at home. Sometimes less, sometimes more, but 18 years is typically the average." John told me, "It's like I have a shot clock above my head, and when my child is born, it starts counting down. It starts at 18 years and it goes all the way down. There's a point, when that buzzer sounds, when the kid leaves the home." My buzzer just went off. My twins just left the home. I'll tell you; I remember those years in the beginning, those 18 years. When it said 18 years above my head, I'm like, "*That* is an eternity! I cannot wait until that thing goes off. I can't wait. I love my kids, no question. I adore them. I love being their dad, but I'm ready to be just alone with my wife.

I'm ready to travel. I'm ready to be a 'Double Income No Kids.' I'm ready for that season of marriage. I want to go back to that. These kids suck all my time away, they take all my money away." I wanted that time to go by quickly.

So, as I thought about that, a good way to illustrate that is that in this glass bucket there are 18 ping pong balls. (*Scott walks over to a table with two glass bowls. One is filled with ping pong balls and the other is empty.*) Every one of them represents one year of life. When my kids were born, as I told you, I resented all of these balls in here. I couldn't wait until they went from one bucket to the other. I couldn't wait to get our life back again. So, the kids were babies and they're screaming all the time, and they're in diapers, and we're not getting any sleep, and I resented those years. (*Scott transfers several ping pong balls from one bowl to the other.*) The kids wouldn't sleep through the night. They stopped crying, but my friends would all say, "Hey, we've got a baby who's two weeks old, and they sleep through the night." Ours were nine months, and they wouldn't sleep through the night. I resented my friends and I resented my kids. And then they became two, and the phrase "Terrible Two" is accurate and exponentially more difficult when there are *two* of them! So, it felt like the Terrible Twos went on for a decade, and I resented those years. (*Scott transfers another ping pong ball.*) Then they started to go to preschool, but I really wanted them to go to preschool more than two days a week. I wanted them to get to elementary school so they would be out of the house, and I could get a little bit more time, and my wife could get more time. (*Scott continues to transfer ping pong balls as he talks.*) Then they started elementary school. Elementary school comes around, and they're in a great school, and I'm excited for them, but those years lasted an eternity. They were in the same school from kindergarten through sixth grade. How many more Back to School Nights do I need to go to? How many more Meet the Teachers? Teachers, I love you. You're amazing. You're underpaid, and I think you're the absolute greatest, but I just didn't want to meet you anymore. I wanted to just meet my wife on a date. So, Back to School Nights. Then it was sports. Good gravy! I already told you they didn't inherit their athletic ability from me. One of them is a good basketball player and one of them is musical. They're all smart. I love them; they all love Jesus. But nobody is getting a full ride anywhere, athletically. Who knows, it may change. Lord, please? Anyway, soccer practices every single night. There's two of them, and then there's three of them, then there's four of them, and it's soccer every single night, we're going to practice. Then we add choir and band on top of that. So now it's not just soccer practices, now it's all the other stuff as well. Then the real problem really kicks in when all four are playing soccer on a fall Saturday. That means we have an 8 AM game, and a 10 AM game, and a 12 PM game, and then another game, and another game. And that's a big problem, because when the fall comes around there's only one thing I want to do. I just want to sit on my couch and watch College GameDay and watch college football all day. I don't want to watch my kids play soccer, and so, I resented all those Saturdays that went by. Then they've got academic projects and group projects, so we've got to hang out with other kids, and so 11 goes by and 12 goes by. There's one point where I look up and say, "There are a lot more balls in this container than this one." (*Scott first indicates the bowl representing the passing years, then touches the bowl representing the years left.*) All of a sudden, something started to change for me. When I looked at my kids, and middle school started, and I've got 6 years left. Here's what I've learned. Here's a pro tip, parents: if you've got a teenager, it's not 18; it's really 16. When they get their driver's license, they don't want to be with you; they want to be with their friends. So, I looked, and I realized I don't have much time left, and things started to change. We still had the practices, and the

concerts, and this thing and that thing, but all of a sudden, I looked at it very different, and I started to embrace this role that God has given me. I said, "I want to do everything I can with my children. I want to do everything I can, before they leave the home and after they leave the home, to encourage them, to comfort them, to urge them to be more like Jesus Christ." My kids are gone. They're working at camp the first half of the summer. They're back here the second half of the summer. This fall they'll be at school. I am so sad my children are leaving. I love them so much, but I think what would be really sad is if they left the home and they never felt encouraged, they never felt comforted, they didn't feel urged to become more like Christ. That would make me sad. Harris Creek, I want us to be a body who is filled with uncommon families. Dads, I want you to be uncommon in the way that you parent these children. God has stewarded us amazing gifts and amazing opportunities. Let's be a body of Christ who encourages, who comforts, and who urges to become more and more and more like Jesus.

God, thank you for your Word. Thank you that you chose to preserve a text from the Bible, from thousands of years ago. You allow us today, in Waco, Texas, you allow us online, to learn from a text that you shared from Paul to the church in Thessalonica. Thank you for these words that give us a roadmap for dads to be men who encourage, who comfort, who urge to become more like your Son, Jesus. God, I pray that we would live out the role that you have given us. I pray that our families, in this body, would be uncommon. We need to be uncommon. We need to be different than the world, so help us, for our good, and ultimately for your glory and your name. We love you and we thank you. In your name we pray. Amen.