

Westside Fellowship Sermon Transcript

Title: Practical Wisdom for Parenting

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Text: Selected Scripture

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Because this has been more of a special Sunday, it is Mother's Day, and we were celebrating child dedications, we're actually gonna step outside of our sermon series where we've been looking at 50 days that changed the world.

We've been looking at that time from the resurrection of Christ un- until the ascension. We'll pick that up again next week. Today actually, I actually wanna get a little more topical in nature. All right, so it's gonna be a topical message. We'll just kinda jump around to a few different scriptures.

But if you have your Bible, I would like to invite you to go ahead and open with me, and I will, for each point that I'm gonna give, I'm gonna share an anchor verse, and you can flip with me to that anchor verse while we're there, and we're gonna talk about this. But I thought that it would be really nice, a- at least from a dad, from the perspective of a dad I'm a father myself, and I'm getting ready to send my first, my firstborn is going to college in August, right?

And so I th- I think back on life, and for those parents who just dedicated their children unto the Lord, I'm gonna kinda just speak to you for a little while, if I can. Now, i- if you're here and you're not parenting young kids, that's fine. Don't tune me out, because everything that I'm going to say today, that we're gonna talk about, pertains to parenting young kids, teenagers, adult kids.

I- if you're not parenting any children, this pertains to discipleship relationships. Everything we're gonna discuss today is directly applicable to your life and the way that you are to make disciples of others, all right? But as a dad who's getting ready to send my first born off to college it came to me this week, thinking, "If I'm a young parent if I'm standing in the position where these families are standing what are some principles of biblical wisdom for parenting that could really benefit me as I am seeking to raise up my child in a way that will seek to give

them every possible opportunity to love and follow Jesus?"

So this morning, the message, like I said it's topical, which is not normally how we study the scripture, but it's okay every once in a while. And we're gonna go through three focus statements that I'm gonna share with us. We're gonna have anchor verses for each statement, and then we're just gonna kinda talk about them for a little bit.

So first, we're gonna be in Psalm 139, and here's the focus statement that I want to share with each of you this morning. It's this: Your child is uniquely, fearfully and wonderfully made. The first focus statement I want us to grasp this morning: Your child is uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made.

Once again if we're just talking about discipleship in general, your spiritual child is uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made. Look at Psalm 139:13-16. It says, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."

Listen to me, church. For the first time in Western civilization, we are being confronted with the need to define what marriage and family is. This has never happened before in all of history where we have to actually spell out a definition for what we mean by marriage or what we mean by family. Our families are under siege by an unbiblical worldview and a culture that's consumed with counterfeiting truth, with counterfeiting the identity and the value of human life, and with brainwashing people with what I'm gonna say is deceitful lies, schemes of the enemy aimed at gender confusion, identity politics, and a redefinition of what constitutes the nuclear family.

All right? While I would like to think that we are all able to combat these lies with the truth of scripture, I will certainly not leave this up for assuming that we're able to do that, and I want to actually walk us through this. Therefore, the first statement that I want us all to understand with regards to wisdom in parenting is

this: Your child, your grandchild, your spiritual child disciple is uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made.

To this point, I wanna give you two truths. I wanna give you two truths that are gonna lean into this. First of all, your child is made in the image of God. Your child is made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 says this, "So God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created a male and female, He created them."

This is an essential truth for us to recognize in our culture. Your child is made in the image of God. Listen to me, both boys and girls are image-bearers of God, uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made. What does this imply? First of all, it implies that boys are actually created to glorify God in a way that girls are not.

It also implies that girls are created to glorify God in ways that boys are not. And what it further implies is that when a young boy and girl grow up and reach the age of marriage, that when they enter into the covenant of marriage, that relationship is able to glorify God in ways that no other human relationship is able to.

Your child is uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made. Secondly, this truth clearly indicates that your child's gender, listen to me here, your child's gender is not a mistake Nor is it up for debate. God has uniquely fashioned your child as a male or female for the purpose of bringing glory and honor to his name.

As Christian parents, it's essential that we help our children understand their identity as image-bearers of God. Furthermore when our children come to trust in Christ as Savior, it's essential that we help them as now disciples to, to understand and embrace their identity in Christ, of who they are in Christ.

And therefore, as an image-bearer of God, jumping back to just b- even outside of trusting in Christ as Savior, there are both believers and unbelievers who are image-bearers of God. And because of that, their life is valuable, their life is filled with purpose. They have a purpose. God has created them to share, listen to me, to share in relationship with him, to serve him with the purpose of bringing glory to his name.

Every single human being on this earth is called to glorify the name of God. That is the purpose. And as parents, as disciple makers, it is our responsibility to guide our children to discover that their identity as an image-bearer of God is not a mistake, that we can trust him because he loves them. And as we are better embracing this truth that our kids are uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made that our children are made in the image of God I wanna share a second subpoint for this.

Not only is your child made in the image of God, but your child has been pre-wired for a purpose Your child has been pre-wired for a purpose. Look again at Psalm 139:13-16. Specifically looking at verse 13. Even from the time it says, "For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb."

That word knitted, it translates a Hebrew word that means to weave or to shape. I want you to think about the process of weaving something together, all the different strands that interlock, and they ultimately form one unit. They become one cohesive unit. Even from the time that your child was conceived in the womb, God has actively and intentionally formed and knitted your child into the person that God wants him or her to be in order to bring glory to his name.

The point is this. Listen to me. The point is this. Not only ha- has God pre-wired them with a specific gender, but God has wired, pre-wired your child with a unique blend of different qualities, different skills, different personalities, different interests, different talents and abilities. And all of these things have been given to him or her for the purpose of what?

Bringing glory to God, every single person. While your child... This is important for us to grasp. While your child may be like you in many ways and may have inherited a lot of similar traits from you, your child is not you. They are a unique individual. He is a unique individual. She is a unique individual shaped by God for the purpose of glorifying God.

And part of the challenge and part of the excitement of parenting is helping our children discover who God has shaped them to be and nurturing their heart to cultivate a sincere love, a sincere respect for God so that we are, in a sense, watering the seeds that God has planted inside of them To teach them to trust in the Lord with all their heart, to acknowledge him in all their ways, rather than

being self-reliant or following the wrong kinds of models or influences.

That is our role. And so our first focus point is your child is uniquely, fearfully, and wonderfully made. The second focus point is this, your child is an inheritance from the Lord to be stewarded faithfully. Your child is an inheritance from the Lord to be stewarded faithfully. Our anchor verse here is Psalm 127.

It says this in verse three, "Behold, children are a heritage." We can put inheritance right there. "Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them. He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate."

All right the first subpoint I want us to get from this is that children are an inheritance from the Lord. We see that in verse three. Children are an inheritance from the Lord. Some people in today's culture view the blessing of childbearing and of children as a responsibility rather than a reward.

Some people view children as an obstacle rather than an opportunity, as a burden rather than an investment. But what if you were to change the way you thought about children? And every time I say children, please understand I'm talking even disciple-making in general. What if you changed the way that you saw the person that you were discipling To see that children are an inheritance from the Lord, that God, think about it this way, that God has invested something in you, to you, given you something to steward on His behalf, to care for, to manage, to oversee.

Certainly, parenting can be stressful, even burdening- burdensome at some times, but we must push against the culture's way of thinking and shift our thinking to align with what God's Word says about the role of parenting, right? And that we have inherited this gift, and we are to function as a steward rather than a sole proprietor, a steward rather than a sole owner.

Do you know what the difference is? A steward is caring for and managing someone else's belongings. The Bible talks so much about stewardship. In Genesis 1, we see the stewardship mandate that Adam is placed on this earth as a representative ruler on behalf of God to go out and to subdue the earth to, to fulfill the earth, to multiply, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.

This is a stewardship mandate. A- and God is charging Adam to steward God's resources and God's revelation, His Word. We even see coming into the Gospels, especially the Gospel of Luke, Jesus talks so much about stewardship. We see both in Luke 12 and in Luke 16 these parables of a manager and stewards who are going to take care of the manager's possessions, and one day the master's gonna return a- at a day and an hour that we don't really know, and the steward is gonna therefore have to give an account to the master for the way that he tended to the master's possessions.

And so the Bible actually talks about parenting a- as a stewardship relationship, right? Whereby your child is actually on loan to you from God. Your child belongs to God. Let's understand that. Your child belongs to God, and God has entrusted you with someone who belongs to Him for the purpose of stewarding that life, training him or her up in the way that he should go, she should go, and releasing this child back to God to love Him, to walk humbly before Him, faithfully before Him.

And I think we need to all recognize that one day we too will stand before the master and give an account for the way that we stewarded the inheritance given to us Paul says in First Corinthians 4 that it's required of all stewards to be found faithful Guys, I desire that we're faithful. Are we faithful?

Are we stewarding faithful what's been given to us? That's what Psalm 127 is affirming, that your child is an h- is an inheritance from the Lord to be stewarded faithfully. That's what we see, right? Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. The second point that I see in this is that parenting, wh- when I read verse four I see these words, parenting is discipleship.

Parenting is discipleship. That's what verse four says. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Parenting is discipleship. Like an arrow in the hand of a warrior, both you and your child have very specific roles, have a very specific calling for your relationship even. The warrior has the responsibility to carefully craft, to shape, to prepare the arrow to fly as straight and as accurately as possible.

But the arrow also has the responsibility that once it's released, it's to go hit the target And we see this illustration here. We see this imagery here. In fact, another familiar verse that comes to mind that we've all already alluded to several times

that encapsulates this discipleship calling is in Proverbs 22:6.

It says, "Train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Look, a- as a parent, as a discipler, you are called to carefully train up and prepare your child in the wisdom and knowledge of the Lord, teaching him, teaching her to love, to respect, to submit to, to obey God and His Word.

The purpose, in fact, of parenting is not simply to propagate your family lineage. I'm so thankful to come from a long lineage of people who share my last name, and you know a lot of them 'cause we never moved out of Alamance County. We love this place. I love this place. But the purpose of parenting's not simply to propagate your family lineage, to, to produce...

it's not simply to produce influential citizens, doctors, engineers, athletes, business owners. The purpose of parenting is not even just to raise them up to be a good person. I hear people say that all the time, "I just wanna raise them up to be a good person." That's the wrong target. That is the wrong target.

Malachi makes it clear that it's not that we're to raise them up to be good people. We're to raise our children up to be godly people, and there is a very big difference. Look at what Malachi 2:15 says. "Did he not make them one," talking about the marriage relationship, "with a portion of the Spirit in their union?"

And what was the one God seeking but godly offspring?" What was God seeking? Godly offspring. Your role as a parent is to pursue your child's holiness, not just their happiness. And sometimes the process of becoming more holy actually doesn't make us happy And so we have to change w- our aim. We have to shift the way we think about what's the target that we're aiming at?

Is the target that we're aiming at to be happy, healthy, wealthy, and just be a good person? Or is the target that we're aiming at to be a godly person, a holy person, someone who loves the Lord, who fears the Lord, who respects the Lord, who desires to make disciples? When that realization connects, it will transform the way that you interact with and relate to your kids.

Yes, we are to help our children discover their interests, to develop their skills and talents, to guide them to use those abilities to serve the Lord. Yes, we are to

provide every possible opportunity for them to succeed in life. Yes, it is a good thing for parents to help their children become doctors, engineers, athletes, business owners, fill in the blank.

But we must remember that God's purpose for parenting is not for you to train up your kids to fulfill your desires. It's not for you to train up your kids to fulfill their desires. It is for you to train up your kids to fulfill God's desires. That is the purpose. I am all for helping our children achieve their dreams, but if their dreams are leading them away from godliness, it's time to crush them lovingly-

gently, and with a big picture perspective to realize I care more about where you'll spend eternity than whether or not you're gonna get drafted in the fourth round maybe

Parenting is discipleship. Look at what Ephesians 6 says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord This word bring them up is the same Greek word as to nourish actually in Ephesians 5 when it talks about husbands nourishing wives as their own body.

It means to provide for, to nourish to bring up from childhood. It conveys the sense of bringing to maturity, right? Whi- which includes, but is not limited to providing for their physical and psychological needs. But also i- is leaning into bringing them up in a way that loves and trusts Jesus And look, two words are used there in Ephesians 6:4, right?

In the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We have often forgotten that following Jesus requires discipline. In fact, anything in life that, that, that means anything at all is gonna require discipline. It's gonna require discipline And God's desire is that you bring up your children to love Him and walk faithfully before Him.

Listen to me, that you teach them how to read the Bible. Not just reading it for knowledge, but for life transformation. That, that you instruct them in wisdom. What's wisdom? Wisdom is the practical application of God's Word. Not just teaching them how to read the Bible, but then even walking with them through situations of how do you apply this truth in God's Word?

How do you apply that to this situation in your life? That's wisdom. That you show them what it means to love and follow Jesus, that you help them to do the same. That is the definition of discipleship. That you prioritize their spiritual growth and development, even over their financial wellbeing or their career empowerment.

That you discipline them when they practice ungodly character traits. Don't discipline them just 'cause they get on your nerves. Discipline them because they are not exhibiting how God desires for them to live. There's a difference. Teach them that. Instruct them in that. God desires that you share your life stories with them of God's faithfulness in your own life.

How many times do we read through the Old Testament and we see in, in Deuteronomy, we see in Joshua, we see in other places, and God generally says something like, "Hey, when your kids ask you about blank, tell them about my faithfulness. Tell them..." W- when your kids ask you, to, to Joshua, "When your children ask you why you set up 12 stones right here, that's a great time for you to say that's 'cause God led us across the Jordan and into the promised land, and He is so faithful."

Tell Go- tell your kids the stories about how God has been faithful in your life. That God desires that you lovingly guide them and prepare them for adult life. God desires that you're intentional, listen to me, to look for the missional moments in life. The missional moments when you can connect a situation in life to the Gospel Jesus often used real-life illustrations.

That, that's what the parables were that He told. They were real-life illustrations that He connected to a truth of God's Word. And sometimes the reason why we have a difficult time understanding the parables of Jesus is because we don't live in a first century Jewish culture. So all the stuff He's talking about is very agrarian, it's very cultural.

So we gotta do some research, we gotta do some homework. What does He mean? What is He talking about? So now i- in our lives, maybe we can teach in the same way. W- we find a missional moment where we can connect something in life directly to a truth in God's Word or connect it directly to the Gospel of Jesus.

We need to capitalize on those moments, to have a missional mindset, to train them up to understand that the Gospel is relevant even in today. It's relevant and it's sufficient in every aspect of life. And yeah, it's certainly okay for us to help our kids pursue their dreams. I didn't mean to come off hard-handed that way.

I'm good with that. I- in dream- in business, in sports, academics, other things. We as parents must always remember that our purpose, once again is not to just pursue happiness, it's to pursue holiness. And as our lives are so busy right now, in the busyness of life, w- would we be so courageous as to reevaluate our schedule and assess whether or not the bulk of our time is actually in alignment with our family mission and our family values as to raise up our children unto holiness?

Or if our schedule tells a different story? And that's challenging. It's not me throwing stones. It's me saying, Jake's been here all week

If parenting is discipleship, we have to understand that discipleship is imitation. Do we understand? How many times did Paul write, imitate me"? In fact, the word disciple, it comes from a word that means apprentice, and the word apprentice means to, to watch someone do it, to have someone explain it, to try it yourself, and then to be coached as you perfect it.

To imitate someone. So as you think about that, and as we, we kinda reflect on this right now what will your children know about what it looks like to trust the Lord as they watch your life? What will they know about what it looks like to share the gospel and make disciples as they watch your life?

What will they know about what it looks like to be a faithful husband or a faithful wife as they watch your life? What will they grow up to think about the importance of reading the Bible, the importance of praying together as a family, the priority of gathering with their local church as they watch your life?

What will they grow up to think about how they should manage their money, how they should work with integrity, how they should love others like Jesus as they watch your life? What will they grow up to think about how they should honor you as their parents based on how you've modeled how you honor your parents?

Do they have a biblical model to follow? Parenting is discipleship How do the things that we spend our time doing support the mission and the core values of our family? If we say that Jesus comes first, does the rhythm of our life reflect that? Once again I'm not here standing up throwing stones at everybody.

I know this hits home real hard. You know why I know that? 'Cause it hits home real hard with me But nevertheless, I'm not doing us any favors if I don't stand up here and tell you what God's Word says and what God desires

Parenting is discipleship, and one day we will stand before the master and give an account for the way that we have stewarded the inheritance given to us for the glory of God. Now, before we move on from Proverbs 22:6, I do wanna make one final little comment here. So this is often misconfused. It is often misunderstood.

Miscon- often misunderstood. What you read in Proverbs, this is a principle, it's not a promise. Okay? We have to understand that. It's a principle, not a promise, meaning train up the chi- train up your child in the way he should go, when he's old, he will not depart from it. That's a principle truth that is teaching that children will tend to follow in the path that they have been shown when they are children.

It's not a promise that says that even if you do everything right as a parent, that your child will 100% still follow Jesus. Now, we pray that is the result. We desire for that to be the result. But we also come to the humble recognition that as our children grow, that they are also responsible for their own decisions.

They're responsible for their own actions, and even they must come to a point in their life when they make the decision to trust and follow Jesus on their own. And that brings us to the last focus statement this morning, which is this: your child is engulfed in a spiritual war and is in desperate need of the grace of Jesus.

Hear me. Hear me here. Your child is engulfed in a spiritual war and is in desperate need of the grace of Jesus. We see in Ephesians 6:12, Paul's writing about spiritual warfare here, and he says, "We, for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Listen, I wanna share with you something that if you don't, if you've not heard anything else that we talk about this morning, I want this one to stick. All right? All right? I've... we- we're getting the noodles just right. We're gonna throw them against the wall, and they're gonna stick this time. All right?

Your child has a sin nature

Let's go and throw that up on the board if we can. That one's important. Your child has a sin nature. I think it will. If not, just write it down in your Bibles Hey, there it is. Your child has a sin nature. This might be the most valuable thing that you hear. That's why I keep saying it over, and over again.

You know why? Boy, I don't like being the guy to have to say this

Most parents think that their child is perfect And unfortunately, I have to be the one to stand up here and tell you that your child is not perfect That's not true. In fact, your kid has a problem

You must not ignore this problem And the problem that your kid has is that he or she has a sin nature. And you wanna know what's so funny? Is they inherited that from you So it's not just their problem, it's your problem. In fact, it's all of our problems. I- it's hard to admit that out loud but despite your child's sweet, cute little feet, their adorable smile, their award-winning laugh If that child had the strength, they would smack you in the face And you need to understand that now.

We need to embrace that truth, 'cause this is what Paul says in Romans 5, "Therefore, just as sin came in the world through one man and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned." All people since the Fall have inherited the sin nature of Adam. And I'm not trying to get overly theological here, but this is really important that we grasp because it's gonna change the way that you relate to your children if you can understand this.

Most of the time, parents, and I'll speak for me, I won't superimpose this on y'all Most of the time parents are legitimately shocked when their kids disobey them. Legitimately shocked. Most of their parents can't, most parents can't understand why their child would tell them no, why their child would refuse to pick up his toy, why in the world the teacher would say that my kid bit someone at school.

They don't understand when you hear that your child said something not un- not nice to another kid on the playground. That's not my little Johnny. He would never do something like that. When you get a report that your child got in trouble at school, don't fall into this millennial generation trap of immediately thinking that there's something wrong with the teacher or the coach or the principal.

They're not the problem. Nine times out of 10, they're not the problem. I'll say something that's gonna hurt some feelings. Your kid's the problem. Your child is the problem. And we need to hear that, and we need to let that settle in, and then we need to address it biblically. Because now that we understand that our children are bent toward sin and rebellion, then it lets us understand that our children need the gospel.

This is what we see in Ephesians 2. "You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath."

You have children of wrath. "Like the rest of mankind," but look at this, but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved." Listen to me. Your child has a problem, but the only remedy for sin is the forgiveness offered by God through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross that is to be received by grace through faith alone.

Yes, we as parents are instructed to discipline our children. Yes, we are. We as parents are instructed to correct their behavior. But do not, I implore you, do not mistake corrective discipline for the role of the Holy Spirit in the heart of your child.

While discipline, and I believe firmly in, in corrective discipline, while intentional corrective discipline may change a child's behavior, it will never change a child's heart. We have to hear that clearly. We have to understand that. And the only thing that will change your child's heart is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that will indwell that child upon faith in Christ Jesus.

Th- that child will be indwelt with the Holy Spirit. That child will become a child of God

But something else we need to understand, just a word for the wise even after your child comes to faith in Christ She's not gonna be perfect from then on out. He's not gonna be perfect from then on out. You know how I know that? 'Cause you're not perfect from then on out. If so, I wouldn't be so busy during the week.

I'd have way more time to play golf and go fishing, but I work like 100 hours a week. You know why? 'Cause y'all are just like your kids, and I need you to understand that. Don't expect your kids to be perfect just after they come to faith in Christ. Now, what you can expect is that you can pray now for con- the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

You can walk alongside them. You can help shape them. You can come alongside the work of the Spirit in your child's life 'cause you're still their parent to guide them, to nurture them, to correct them, to put them on the right path, to say, "This is the way we're gonna go." But ultimately trust that it's the Holy Spirit in the life of a child that can change their heart, that can transform the way that they see life Please don't ever, please don't ever say out loud to your children something like, "I don't see how you can be a Christian and still do blank."

You wanna know why? Because we all do the same things Trust the Lord. Lean in to the fact that he is far more powerful than you are, that he's the one that will bring them, the work in their life, he will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. He has promised not only salvation, he has promised sa- sanctification, he has promised glorification.

We can trust him for that, though we must be intentional to walk alongside our kids. Being a Christian does not mean that you are sinless. Being a Christian means that you will not have to pay for your sin. Do we understand the difference there? And that you were given a helper to help you walk in victory over sin.

That's what being a Christian means. Fruit bearing takes time, so be the k- be the kind of parent that's gonna nourish and cultivate the fruit tree to bear fruit. All right? Fruit trees bear fruit in great environments, good sunlight, good water, keeping the weeds pulled out from around it, cutting off them volunteers that pop

up at the bottom, pruning it, correcting it, shaping it.

Those are the kind of trees that bear fruit. Be that kind of parent. Brings us to our very last sub-point. Sub-points of points, isn't that great? Your child needs you to pray. Your child needs you to pray

We see this as Paul kinda wraps up his conversation here on spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6. He says, "In all circumstances take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," look at this, "praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication.

To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints." Please don't forget that not only does your child need Jesus, but your child needs you to pray, because your child is engulfed in a spiritual war and is in desperate need of the grace of Jesus. Do not forget that, that by...

at the end of the day, don't forget that the culture that we live in, the culture is unfolding according to a beautiful scheme of the enemy. How can I say it's a beautiful scheme? Look at what's going on. He has intentionally and masterfully crafted a war on culture, a war on education, a war on society, a war on gender, a war on families, a war on identity.

We're talking about the core of a person now, and the enemy seeks to counterfeit God's truth, counterfeit God's love, counterfeit that which is truly good in order to draw the attention of your child away from Christ. Remember that the enemy does not have to get kids to bow down and worship him.

The enemy just has to get them not to worship Jesus. Do we understand? It's way easier for him than we sometimes give him credit for. He just has to distract them with humanism or Buddhism or Hinduism or Islam or some branch of Christianity that no longer even worships Jesus. He just gotta distract them.

Give them Netflix, give them Prime Video, give them YouTube, give them Snapchat. Parents can't even see what happens once it's deleted. He's just gotta distract them And more than anything, your kids need you to pray for them, believing that the Lord of Hosts, the God of angel armies, is actually able to do

something about what's going on in this world.

Pray for your children. Teach them to pray. Entrust them to the Lord, and trust Him to be faithful. And if I were a brand new parent who just dedicated my kid today, that's what I would want to hear. It's what I would need to hear. Maybe it's not what I wanna hear. It's what I need to hear. And for the other people who got the overflow of what I said to them, I pray that God will use that in your life too, to maybe remind us, encourage us, sharpen us a little bit for what we're doing in life, how we're doing it.

Will we be intentional to pursue biblical wisdom in parenting? Look, I'm gonna invite the band to come forward. Invite the band to come forward. I'm gonna invite also just anyone if something that... If something that we've talked about has just really piqued an interest in your mind or something that you have realized that you're interested in growing more, talking about this stuff more, look we wanna be a resource for you here at Westside.

We truly do. We've got a variety of ways to come in and do life with other families, right? We can talk about being in life groups together. We can talk about being in Westside Youth or Westside Kids. We are committed to generational investment, to come alongside you and your families.

You can join the discipleship movement of just what's going on here at Westside, teaching your kids to read the Bible, teaching them to, to pray the word. To actually get in and begin doing some of these things. We invite you to commit even at just a, an entry level here, commit to pray daily with and for your family.

Just five minutes. Five minutes. You'll start with five, it'll turn into 10. 10 will turn into 15. 15 will turn into 20. Before long, you're gonna have to set an alarm because it's actually time for you to get on and go to work. Commit to pray for your families daily. And trust that the Lord is faithful, that when we seek Him, we will find Him, when we search with all of our hearts.

Amen. Look, I love you guys. To all the ladies in here, Happy Mother's Day. In some way, shape or form, Happy Mother's Day. To the parents who just dedicated their children, I'm so proud of you. We're here to do life with you. Let's

walk together. To everybody else, would you come alongside somebody today?

Encourage them, pray with them, pray for them. Help them walk in a way that's honoring to the Lord. Let's pray. Heavenly Father God, thank you. Lord, thank you for your graciousness. Thank you for your loving kindness. Lord God we talked about a need of the gospel, but now let's just say it clearly, Lord.

We're so thankful. We're so thankful that we, each of us, deserve to be treated exactly how Jesus was treated, that we deserve to die for our sin. But Jesus left heaven and came to Earth. He lived the life that we're called to live. He died the death that we are condemned to die, and He did it as a substitute for each of us.

So that if any one of us would simply trust that what Jesus did on the cross was good enough, that it was sufficient, that we will receive the gift of life that you offer through faith in Christ, Lord, that we will be saved. We will become one of your children. We will be indwelled with your Spirit. We will be given a helper, a comforter, to walk with us through this life.

God, and you've placed us also in your genius design, you have placed us in a church, in a local church, filled with others who love you and who are indwelled by your Spirit for the purpose of walking alongside each and every one of us, to help us grow in knowledge and in wisdom, in the instruction of the Lord, to help us grow in the way that we follow you and in the way that we make disciples and continue passing the torch one generation to the next.

Lord, thank you for your gift of mothers, for your gift of children, for your gift of discipleship. Lord, we thank you. We ask that you allow us to honor you today in all things. We bring glory to your name and in Jesus' name. Amen.