

The Christian Family in Biblical Perspective
Seven Essentials in the Christian Family
Ten Practices for Parents
Ephesians 6:1-4, Deuteronomy 6:4-9
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It's easy to remember two of these passages, one is Ephesians 6 and the other is Deuteronomy 6. These are two foundational passages about parenting. The passage in Ephesians 6:1-4 says, **1** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* **2** *"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),* **3** *"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."* **4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

Let's just box this up for a moment. We want our children to do what's right, follow the commandment to honor their father and mother and be brought to Christ as Lord and Savior. In order to do that, fathers, don't exasperate with indifference or inconsistency. Utilize consistency, patience and focus. Fathers, do not exasperate but bring them up. Your children are born in the valley of the death of sin. Bring them up to Mount Calvary for eternal life. How? You do this by discipline and instruction.

Deuteronomy 6 is the Old Testament counterpart leading us to the Ephesians 6 text given to parents as the Lord rose up a nation by working through the family. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says, **4** *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

So here's the basic truth. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit is One. This Lord God who is One has given us His Word. It is to be upon our hearts and then to be given to the next generation. This is to be done by first of all being upon our hearts. Secondly it is to be coming out of our mouths, throughout our home and fully identified with it and then bring them into our life in order to see that Word, as we sit down, rise up and walk by the way side.

I want to do a couple of things here. We did an original sermon on this on Sunday morning and in an attempt to kind of review it I have outlined what we have covered by not going back over the sermon but by giving it to you in a different way. First of all here are three presuppositions for Christian parents.

Presupposition number one is our covenant children are born to us with a problem and a promise. What is the problem that they are born to us with? They are born with a sin record and a sin nature. They are born dead in their sins. They are born with original sin from Adam, a sin record and a sin nature and then they give themselves to a sin life. They are born with a bad heart, a bad record and that leads them to a bad life. But we also have a promise where God says, "I'll be a God to you and to your children after you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, you and your household. The

promise is for you and your children and for all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call to Himself. Do you not know that your children are holy, that is set apart?" So our children are born with a sin problem that renders them guilty and impotent spiritually and yet we are also given a promise so we don't parent well enough to get a promise from God, we parent based upon the promise God has already given to us. We are parenting from the promise to address the problem.

The second presupposition is the responsibility and privilege of bringing up our covenant children from that valley of sin to Mount Calvary belongs to parents. It's not for the grandparents. It's not for the church. It's not for the state. The extended family is there for assistance. The spiritual Godly family is there to encourage and come along side of and the state is certainly to provide an environment of peace and security for us to parent the next generation. But the responsibility and the privilege are given to parents. Fathers do not exasperate. Fathers lead, fathers bring up, fathers teach and of the parents the father is to give leadership in this matter.

The third presupposition is God works through parents and the covenant community that surrounds them in the lives of covenant children. What parents do, matters. That is why in the book of Proverbs there is this marvelous proverbial statement of wisdom. The book of Proverbs is not a collection of promises. It is a collection of divinely ordained common sense. Proverbs 22:6 says, *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.* In other words, what you do will show up later. Are there exceptions? Absolutely, by in large what you do shows up later. There is kind of a tight rope to walk here. When children grow up they make their choices. You're not responsible for their choices but by in large you have given them direction and you have given them a frame work in which they make those choices. What is interesting is that sometimes there will be choices by some of our children toward the Lord that we didn't expect and by those that we did expect they go the other direction. But in fact, the Lord has promised to bless what we put in. I call it GI, GO. It's not garbage in, garbage out but its good/Godly in, good/Godly out. What parents do counts.

If these presuppositions are Biblical and true then there are five objectives that guide us and again this is calling on what we have already studied. The first objective is we don't aim for behavior modification, we aim for life transformation. In other words, we are not trying to raise Pharisees who have white washed tombs. We are raising our children to come to the Lord. The goal is the conversion of our covenant children. We don't want them just to be manageable. We don't want them to not simply embarrass us. We don't want them as simply a source of significance in our life. We want them to come to Christ. Again, the goal is their conversion.

The second objective is we raise our covenant children to leave us not to cleave to us. It's interesting how in a couple of generations we have begun to raise emotional cripples – children that can't leave and cleave. I was thinking about this and I think it's two generations that this is happening, my generation. My generation was the boomers where everything is all about us and even our children were about us. We had our children for our self fulfillment instead of our children for the Lord. Therefore we didn't raise our children to leave us but we raised them to cleave to us because we raised them to be dependent upon us. I'm not sure how it goes today but I remember when I went to college that I was gone from home. There wasn't any coming back to home. That was it.

I remember when I got married and my wife's mother's comment. My mother in law wasn't all that excited about her daughter's choice and so her mother said to her, "Honey when you go out this door, that's it. I don't want to see you on the back doorstep." My wife said, "What if there's a problem?" Her mother said, "Work it out. Deal with it." So there is this matter that we're supposed to give our children spiritual, psychological, social and emotional tools to leave us. So they are to leave us and not cleave us.

The third objective is that when we raise our children our objective must not be to depend upon technique but on the power of the Gospel and the promises of God that are "yes" and amen in Jesus Christ.

The fourth objective is we are to prepare our children with a consistent world and life view. We want them to come to Christ, to get a heart for Christ and then we want to train them to have the mind of Christ and to take every thought captive unto the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5).

The fifth objective is we want to lead our children to embrace their purpose in creation and redemption. Why did God make them and why does God save them? It is that they might glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The more they enjoy Him the more they will glorify Him. The more they glorify Him the more they enjoy Him. They are not there to glorify us. They are there to glorify the Lord and enjoy Him forever. That's what we want them to embrace through Jesus Christ and His redeeming work.

Let's become very practical now. Having looked at those presuppositions and objectives let's be very practical with ten practices that I want to outline now. The first practice is we need to embrace the pattern in Deuteronomy 6 and therefore avoid a child centered home. Remember that. Your children are born spiritually dead in their sins and with an all-about-me perspective. If we have a child centered home all we are doing is reinforcing that self centered world and life view that they are born with. So we don't want a child centered home but we do want to have a home that addresses our children where they are, where they need to go and where they need to be, which means as parents we need to embrace the pattern in Deuteronomy 6.

There are a number of things in Deuteronomy 6 we need to see. The first one is in order to raise our children for Christ we must internalize the Word of Christ. In Deuteronomy 6 it said, "This word (parents) shall be on your heart." We need to internalize the Word of God in our life. We can't teach what we don't know. We must in our hearts know the Word of God. So we must be men and women of the Word if we are to parent our children through the Word to come to Christ and know Christ.

This also means that not only should we internalize the Word to be upon our heart but secondly it then needs to come out of our mouth. We need to teach. Fathers, teach your children. This word from your heart shall come out of your mouth. You shall be a teacher, a coach, a guide, an instructor, a pedagogue where you are to guide and teach your child. May I use school teachers? Absolutely. May I choose Sunday school teachers? Absolutely. Do I need other teachers in their lives? Yes. Can my wife be engaged in this? Absolutely. The book of Proverbs says about the wife, "The teaching of kindness is on her tongue" (Proverbs 31:26) for the children. She is to be a teacher and lover of her children as well. But fathers along with our wives, as mothers, we are to take the lead in teaching our children.

How do we teach our children? We teach them not only with words from our mouth, internalization, instruction but the third practice is with incarnation. Take them when you stand up, when you walk by the way side and when you go into life. I'd like to illustrate this. This was impressed upon me by my mom and dad. I appreciated my mom and dad so much. I used to play catch with my dad in the back yard. I can't hardly see the movie Field of Dreams because so many times that was true in my life where I'd say "Dad let's go play catch." We'd do that. My dad would come into my life and go watch my games. But I'll never forget what happened when I was in the fifth grade. I was sitting in class and remember the little girl who made all "As" and the teacher loved her? She was always the office assistant and usually had glasses with pig tails and freckles. She was the teacher's pet. That girl came into my classroom when I was in the fifth grade and said, "Is Ike Reeder here? He has to come to the office." I could tell there was a special delight in her voice when she said that.

My teacher, Miss Lamb, said, "Yes he is" and so my teacher and this girl marched me down to the office. I got there and said, "Oh no! What have I been caught at?" I knew I had done plenty but it was a matter of what I had been caught at. When I got to the office I had a glimpse inside Mrs. Mason's office door and I saw my dad. My heart sunk. I wasn't just going to the principal's office but they had called my dad. I was dead. I was going to get killed. I had thought my daddy probably has a bazooka in there and he's going to shoot me right then. My dad was not going to say "What did the teacher do against you?" That never came up at all. It was always the teacher's right, the principal's right and I was in trouble. When I walked around the corner just waiting to get whatever it was Mrs. Mason said, "Ike your father is here and I have given him permission to take you out of class. Here is your work for the next week."

I went out and got in the car with my dad and off we went. My dad was in baseball and off we went on a two week trip. We went from Chattanooga to Knoxville and I was able to see all these baseball games and meet all these baseball players. After the games we would go and sit in the Triangle Café and I can remember everything we did, staying at the hotel Patton and meeting everybody. I remember how important that was and I tried to emulate it somewhat in my parenting with my children. My dad didn't simply come into my life, my dad took me into his life and I was able to see him stand up, walk by the way side and see him in life. There was no greater joy for me when I would hear my dad say, "Son, why don't you come with me today." So we bring our children into our life and we teach them incarnationally how to live the Christian life.

People learn more by imitation than they do by instruction. Instruction is crucial because then you are teaching them how to imitate and conserve what they are imitating but we learn mostly by imitation. Watch what happens. My favorite example is all of your children that you now have. How many of your children can speak English? They speak English because usually a woman (a mom) by in large, taught the child a foreign language with no point of reference and she was never trained to do it. Your child was not born with an English gene. Your child was born in the image of God with the ability to communicate and a mom taught the child how to speak a foreign language with no point of reference. When I was learning Greek, Hebrew and Spanish I had a vocabulary card. It had the English word and then the Hebrew word, the English word and then the Latin word, etc. When I learned English I didn't have that point of reference. I just had a mom. We are born imitators. So get your children into your life so they can see you

because the world keeps putting celebrities in front of them to imitate. Keep giving them something to imitate.

I like heroes. Heroes make culture but celebrities are parasites. They live off cultures. I could state naming names of some of you here that are my heroes. If Alex Rodriguez doesn't show up to play baseball tomorrow I'm going to be okay. If some of you don't show up and teach that class or give that leadership then boy we're in trouble. Those are the kinds of people I want my son and my daughters to see and I want my grandchildren to see. That is incarnational.

The third practice is identification. Notice how this family in Deuteronomy is identified with the Word. It's in their house, it's on their gate, it's on their doorpost, and it's all around them. I love to go into Christian homes and see that needlepoint with that verse of Scripture or that wise statement from God's Word. That is a Deuteronomy 6 practice that you build into your life. Internalization of the Word, instruction of the Word, take them into your life so they can see the incarnation of the Word and fourthly your home is identified with the Word.

The fourth practice is parental unity and diversity. First of all, your children are not the reason for your unity. They are the result of it. It is Christ that gives you unity. You need to make sure you do not become primarily dads and moms. There is this young lady that I had the privilege to lead to Christ and disciple some. When I introduced her to her future husband they got married I remember one time she would spend a lot of time with Cindy and she wrote out something for me one day. It's a needlepoint you can see in our house. My wife keeps it around pretty available, accessible and visible. It says, "The greatest thing a father can do for his children is love their mother." In other words, you're a husband and wife first and that unity needs to be maintained. Children know if they can get you divided they will conquer. Do you remember how you did it? "Mom, if daddy says it's alright would it be okay if I go do such and such?" Mom says, "Well if your daddy says it's okay then yes." The child makes sure she is one room and then they go where dad is and says, "Mom says its okay for me to go but all you have to do is approve, is that okay?" This is divide and conquer. We all learn how to do it. Make sure that you are together as a husband and wife and you have embraced your objectives and practices with consistency.

Then there is diversity. A father brings certain dynamics to the parenting. A mother brings certain dynamics which is why the Bible says in the fifth commandment "honor your father and your mother." A father cannot give a mother's love to their child. A father cannot give a mother's guidance to their child. A wife cannot give a father's love and a father's guidance. That's why the church must be cognizant and everything within propriety to help single parents because God has designed the two for a reason. Therefore we need not only to address our unity but also embrace our diversity.

The fifth practice in parenting is that you and I need to have clear communication to our children of standards, expectations and consequences. Here are the standards in our home. This is the way we keep our home. Here are the values. This is the way our home functions. We have family worship here. We do this here. We go on the Lord's Day to worship. In our home this is the way we conduct ourselves. There is clarity in which the rules of the house have been established. There is also not only clarity of the values in the home and the values that we have toward one another in relationships but

there is also a commitment of standards, of expectations and what the consequences are when wrong happens.

Please supervise any and all means of communication and technology in your home. Please do this in whatever it is, facebook, twitter etc. It is an amazing new speak we are in today but the same thing is consistent whether it's the television or computer or whatever it is, as a parent do not abdicate your responsibility for supervision. There are all kinds of people with all kinds of design with their communication through those means to get to the heart of your child. It is my opinion that an unsupervised computer behind a closed door is not much different than a loaded 44 magnum with a hair trigger underneath the pillow of our child when they go to sleep. So when we disobey here is what happens. It needs to be clear.

What is this matter of discipline? Ephesians 6 says "Fathers do not exasperate your children" and so how do I not exasperate them? It is by bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Hebrews 12 deals with the issue of discipline. Hebrews 12:5, 6 says, **5** *And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary **when** reprov'd by him. **6** For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."* Notice in this passage that it doesn't say "if" the Lord reprov's you it says "when." There will be discipline. It also says the Lord disciplines the one He loves so if you don't discipline you don't love, you don't care. The true sons and daughters of God that know Him, He disciplines even to the point of chastisement.

He goes on to say in Hebrews 12:7, *It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?* Do you know who the father is who doesn't discipline his son? It is the drive by father and the father that doesn't love his son is the one that doesn't discipline his son.

Hebrews 12:8-11 says, **8** *If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. **11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.* Now, there's an insight into discipline. It's painful and it hurts but this is no warrant for abuse of children. But it is a call for parameters. It is a call for the reinforcement of expectations and standards.

It is an earthly father's attempt to show your children that they're about to leave our home and when they get out there behavior that is sinful and evil will have consequences and I don't want to visit you in a homeless shelter. I don't want to visit you in a prison. So I'm going to teach you now with measured discipline that you will not be disciplined out there and by the way son, there's coming a day in which there is the discipline of eternity for all that don't know Christ. I want to remind you here that sin costs and that you might seek the Savior to walk with Him in obedience. I want to do it now in a thoughtful and measured way for your good because out there it will be done for your destruction. In eternity it will be done with no recourse. It is forever when the judgment of God falls. Therefore I want to be consistent and appropriate in my discipline of your life.

How should we do that in discipline? What does this passage in Hebrews teach us? Number one, there needs to be clarity. Why we discipline should not be a surprise. It should be clarification. Clarity should be the hallmark. Here is what should be expected. Here are the consequences when and if we do not walk in obedience. Secondly, all discipline should be done out of love not out of personal anger. That doesn't mean we are not angry at the sin of our child but ultimately our desire out of love is the correction of our child, the training of our child, the bringing up of our child. It is not simply a matter of vengeance. Therefore number three, it is corrective not vengeful. It may require punishment which may be the removal of things or it may be the rod.

Let me stop here for a minute. The rod should be used carefully. Did you know that God has made a wonderful place for that to be applied? There is a wonderful piece of the body that is absolutely wonderfully sensitive and there are no major organs there whatsoever. There was a reason that we used to talk about rearing our children. The rod should never be your hand, your personal body and I don't think it should be anything that belongs to you.

We had a guy in our church who made orthopedic braces in Chattanooga. Have you ever seen the clear plastic that they use in orthopedic braces? This man carved for us a rod in the form of the one used in the board of education idea. Over the top of this Cindy's fingernail polish said, "the rod" and underneath it was the names of our children. It was their rod. It wasn't mine, it's yours. We placed it on the wall. I started to bring it tonight because we still have it. The names have been worn off from use but they are there. We certainly would not want to use it for personal vengeance and never out of unrestrained anger. It was always to be used appropriately but it was clear. It's your rod. It's on that wall and only you take it off of the wall by your choice of behavior. I don't take it off. In fact they would actually have to go get and bring it to us. It's theirs. It's only used with measure at those appropriate times. It is used that in order with measure they can understand that there are consequences. When used at the appropriate times, in the appropriate way many times all that is needed after that is its presence and it has to be used very seldom afterwards.

All discipline of your children should be private. I had a man confront me on this. He said, "Harry why would you say discipline in private?" Some of you may remember when I told my son I was going to have to discipline him when we got home, when I shared about the incident of him throwing rocks at the church window, some have said why not right then, right there. The man also said, "When you love your child you kiss them in public why don't you discipline them in public?" It is because discipline and part of its teaching is it brings shame and I don't believe you should shame your children in public. I think it should be done in private with a period of time for your sake between the offense but not too much of a period of time so they lose the association of why the discipline and the offense.

It should never be administered without prayer together first. So we would sit down with our children and pray. Then when administered it should immediately be followed up by personal expressed affection, affirmed and displayed. Your arms need to go around them. Why? It is because it is corrective and restorative and once it's done it's handled. That's it. Son or daughter, now I want you to learn from this and let's move forward. Those are some modifying statements about the proper use of discipline in the

lives of our children. That should also always be accompanied by the practice of affirming our children when they do what's right.

I'm going to get in trouble with this one but when you affirm your children I do not believe you thank them. If they pick up their clothes I don't think you should thank them because that's what they are supposed to do. When they have done their chores which is apart of being in that house you don't thank them. You affirm it by saying something like, "Good job, well done." When they become a dad or mom they don't get thanked. They are supposed to do it whether they are thanked or not. Now if they go beyond it then you can say, "Thank you son. Thank you daughter." If they go beyond expectations or add to it then certainly thank them but when we are doing what it means to be a family we should be appreciative, affirming but don't act as if that is something out of the ordinary. This is the way we are going to live as a family. We are going to respect each other and do what we are responsible to do.

This is what God has called us to be and to do which is why I don't think you should give money for what it means to be apart of the house. I think allowances can be an allowance but I don't think you need to pay people for doing what it means to be a member of the family. We don't get paid for that. That's what it means to be a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister.

So we clarify privileges, rights and responsibilities and one right is to say, "Son (or daughter) you have this right to expect this." There is nothing that you will do that will every stop me from loving you. Now that does not mean I am under obligation to accept whatever you do. There will be consequences if you do what is wrong but there is nothing that will stop me from loving you. You are my son (or daughter), you have my name and you have my love. Part of that love will be I will not accept behavior that is wrong but you have a right to know that you're my son. You may renounce but I will not renounce you.

The sixth practice of a parent is in your home you should never be guilty of undermining Biblical authority and a critical spirit. Certainly there are times we have to analyze things and teach our children but we want to refrain from any critical spirit and the undermining of authority. I can assure you that if you do as a parent it's just a matter of time until your authority will come under their critical spirit and you will be undermined.

The seventh practice has to do with family worship and Sabbath keeping. I would love to do a whole series of sermons on this. I have referred to some family worship earlier in this study but here are a couple of thought about family worship. Pick a good time and have your family worship regularly. It may be at a meal time. Because of our children's involvement in athletics we had to do ours just before bed time. Have it regular and have it brief. Be flexible. Sometimes I would be away and Cindy would lead it. Sometimes Cindy wouldn't be there so I would lead it by myself. Sometimes we would let one of our children at a certain time takeover the leadership of it. Sometimes you may have to go to another time because you just won't be able to get together then. Be flexible. Be regular. Be brief and be directed. What do you mean by be directed? We read the Scripture, we pray together, we would sing together, we would memorize Scripture together. I laugh because my singing was never the highlight of our family worship.

It was so fun to memorize things. I'd like to share this one little story with you. One time we had some folks visiting us. By the way, if people were visiting our home, before our children were older we always did our family worship at the evening meal and so if these people were believers or not we did our devotions and they were exposed to our family worship and also to our children's memorization. One time we had this family in and I have to confess that pride took hold. My oldest daughter had just learned the Greek alphabet because I was learning it in Seminary. So I said, "Jennifer give us the Greek alphabet." So she said the Greek alphabet and then I said, "Jennifer what's our memory verse?" We had also just memorized the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and so we were doing the catechism. We also did the Apostles Creed. Our last memory verse was Hebrews 12 and Jennifer said, "Therefore since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surround us let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us and let us also run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus..." She was going and I was so excited as a dad and everybody was watching. She continued, "...fixing our eyes on Jesus the Author and perfecter of our faith who for the joy set before me endured the cross, despising the shame and has sat down at the right hand of the Father, from then He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, I believe in the Holy Catholic church..." She went immediately from Hebrews 12 right over to the Apostles Creed.

So rote memory is not the only objective in this. Direct your worship to the youngest child in the family. Everybody else will be blessed. Be brief, flexible, focused, have prayer, read the Word, sing a song but always direct it to the youngest. Use the shorter Catechism, use the Children's catechism, later on use the larger Catechism and use helpful story books on the Bible. Talk about the Bible stories. Those are so much fun. Learn the blessing of keeping the Sabbath. A man said to me one time, "Harry. I'm so tired, I'm out of time, I don't have time for God, I don't have time for my family and I'm just tired all the time." I said, "Brother, let's start with the Sabbath. Everything you said about rest, time with your family and time with God, God has already provided it. He didn't make you for the Sabbath. He made the Sabbath for you, for you to rest, focus upon Him and spend this time with your family." As I said earlier you ought to sit together as a family to worship on the Lord's Day morning. Make it a family enterprise afterwards and talk about what you heard and learned. Prize those moments together as a family and learn to keep the Lord's Day together as a family with the family of God.

The eighth practice has to do with the full use and the embrace of the extended family. Now I understand that sometimes because of sinful patterns in grand parents, uncles and aunts that you can't always do this but wherever possible make use of grand parents. I love grand parenting. It's God's reward for not killing your children and just raising them in the Lord. Make full use of grand parents but remember they are not supposed to raise your children. You are supposed to raise your children. Make use of uncles and aunts.

Make use of your extended family as well as the ninth practice is have a meaningful connection and engagement with the body of Christ, the family of God, His church.

Finally the tenth practice is to take the time to introduce to your sons and daughters models and mentors for their life beyond you. We have already said that you're supposed to be a model, incarnational. You are supposed to be a mentor by

teaching but introduce them to some other models and mentors in life. I encourage you to introduce your children to models from the Bible or from history. Models from the Bible are honest. We get to see who they are and how they are saved by grace and grace not only saves but changes. Models from history can include great missionaries, great preachers, great men and women of God, great Christian Presidents, great Christian combat leaders and military leaders. There are great Christian models that you can expose your children to. Your children are either going to be drawn to heroes or they are going to be drawn to celebrities. Introduce them to some great heroes. Challenge them to get 3, 5 or even up to 7 models for their life to learn from.

Then introduce your children to the principle not only from their parents but outside of their parents in the body of Christ. Find some good mentors, some life coaches, some people you can go to and ask them questions, some people that you can learn from, people that you can call upon. I am at the age now where my mentors are rapidly going on to heaven. Of course my dad was a mentor for me, a life coach. A man by the name of Harold Jones was a spiritual father to me and he's with the Lord now also. I had Jim Baird, I had Frank Barker, I had Henry Cravendam, I had Al Martin, I've had R.C. Sproul, I had Jim Boyce and those are people I had the privilege to give them a call or spend a little bit of time with them a couple of times a year and ask them questions.

Some say I need a mentor and the church hasn't provided a mentor and we probably won't. You just can't put that together. That is something you have to go get. A mentor is not going to come to you. In my generation we just sit around and whine "Nobody wants to be my mentor." The guy that would show up to be your mentor you probably wouldn't want as your mentor. How obnoxious can you get? Hi, would you like for me to be your mentor for life? No, you need to find them and go to them. Make it easy on them and learn to draw from them. Ask them questions. Bring your children to get life coaches.

Harry, did you know all ten of these practices? Cindy and I were somewhere between zero and 100 percent effective in every one of these. Do not ask my children the grade. I am at least this old and not old enough to know this but not only do you have to give up being a friend to your children to become their parent, but if you will parent while they are young, later they will count you as dear. They will honor you and respect you. At those moments when you are raising them they will think you are stupid, you're not with it, you have no idea, and that you probably deep down dislike them. But later, when they are about 25 or 30 you will be sitting around the dinner table and they will say, "Do you remember when dad and mom wouldn't let us do that, boy I sure am glad." That's when it comes back. But whether it does or doesn't do what's right.

This next generation is in your hands. Now in the church we want to equip you but I have this heart desire deep down inside of me that there will come a time where sermons like this will not be that noticeable. I don't remember having this kind of sermon growing up. I remember discussions in Sunday school class but I don't remember this. I think it was because all of this was already taught in families. My heart's desire is that your children will be so impacted by your parenting as you bring them up, giving them a Christian world and life view that they will have learned from you what to do with the generation that's given to them. This world worships children and hates children. They will even kill them in the womb if they are inconvenient. They will kill them in the nursery if they are not perfect but it's not that way with God's

people. We don't worship our children. Our life is not our children. We don't let our children become the center of our home and we do not despise them. We love them enough to speak the truth in love and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for time we have had to spend in Your Word. Thank You for the opportunity to walk through some of these basic issues. Father, we pray that You would take this and multiply it and grow it through the great wisdom of the parents that are reading this now. For I'm sure many are thinking "We love our preacher but boy he sure is talking about some pretty obvious stuff" and I thank You that for so many who are reading this that it is obvious. Father, there are some that are just growing because perhaps they didn't have those models in their home or they are new to Christ and this matter of being a Christian family is something new or the world has somehow grabbed hold of their heart and mind and has conformed them to the worldly concept of parenting. Father would You help those who are learning and applying to grow patiently and persistently by Your grace as Christian parents? Then Father, for our children I thank You and for our children's children I thank You. Oh Lord, may we with great joy see our children walking in the Truth. I ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.