

Mother's Day 2018 | Mark Minnella

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[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. We're thinking a lot about the family lately.

Lots going on with the family. The family's been taking a lot of hits lately. There are people say the family is obsolete. It's out of date. It's irrelevant. We should forget the whole idea of family. Or that the family can be redefined in any way that people want it to. But I would say to you today, the family's not finished. It might be fragmented and it's very fragile, but it needs to be strengthened. And I thought today, being Mother's Day, we would look at this idea of what's a family for. What's the big deal? Why are moms so important? And dads too. What's important about a family? To get the answer to the question, you have to go to the owner's manual. Way back in the beginning, God said in Genesis chapter 2, it's not good for the man to be alone.

[1:10] I will make a helper suitable for him. That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife and they become one flesh. Let's pray. Father, this morning as we look into your word, as we consider just your design for a family, God, I pray that all the outside influences of culture and evil and wrong thinking would be stripped away, Lord.

We would look at your plan for what you want each member of a family to do to glorify you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Notice what it says in Genesis 2. The family was God's idea. God thought up the family, so it's not outdated. It's not obsolete. This book is current. It's just being challenged.

You know, culture may change, but God does not. When God made Adam, he put Adam in a perfect environment. Adam had it made. No work, no job, no problems, no stress, no worries. So God made him a wife. Okay, you can laugh. God said it's not good for man to be alone, so he made him a helper, a companion, a lover, a wife, someone to complete him.

[2:29] That's what it says. And this morning I would say, before those of you that aren't married decide you're going to nod off, if you're not married, the Bible says it's not good for you to be alone either.

We were made for relationships. Human beings were made for relationships. So whether you're married or not, you need companionship. You need friendship. You need people who are important in your life. You need people to relate to.

That's why really the worst kind of punishment you can have is called solitary confinement. This morning I thought we'd look at four purposes that God intends for a family.

And as a special treat, I have some moms who will be helping me out today. So number one, the family is a shelter from storms. We had a lot of storms this spring. Some were pretty severe.

A lot of people think that the family is just a bed and breakfast or kids are just a big tax deduction. But the Bible says it's much more than that. And first I would say that a family is a shelter from the storms of life.

[3:31] Everyone goes through hard times. Everybody gets rained on, dumped on. We go through bad weather and things just don't work out right all the time. We need a place of protection, a place of peace, refuge where we can take shelter from the storms of life.

A place where we can go and find protection and love and encouragement. It says in Proverbs 14, 26, There are many kinds of storms in life.

Emotional, physical, relational, financial. I just picked three. Three storms that blow into your life that you need a family to help make it through.

Number one is change. Change. We live in an area of rapid change today. And any change for good or bad, positive or negative, it can cause stress.

They even have a home stress scale that says the more change you have in your life, the more stress that you have. And the higher your rate on the stress scale. Lots of people don't like change.

[4:39] Maybe you've had to have a job change or a move or maybe changing schools. Change can be scary. And we need a place of stability. A home. Some place that's predictable that we can count on when changes come.

Secondly, failure. Failure. Nobody wins all the time. We all make mistakes. We all stumble and fall. Failure. Sometimes you fail the test or you get fired or you have unexpected bills.

Sometimes you have unexpected health problems. Nobody wins all the time. If you're in sales like I am, you learn that on a daily basis. Nobody wins all the time.

The best major leaguers, they make outs about seven out of ten times. Nobody wins all the time. Failure is a lot easier to handle when you can come home and you have somebody there to put their arms around you and say, I love you.

We're going to make it. We'll get through this. And third, rejection. Probably one of the most difficult of all is rejection. The storm of rejection is tough to handle.

[5:43] It hurts to be criticized. It hurts to be attacked. And some of the most damaging attacks occur when you're a little child. Maybe some of you can still remember it. I do. I skipped a grade.

And it was hard. I had to make new friends. And I was smaller than the guys, so I wasn't as competitive in sports. And it was hard. It was really tough. I had a loving, supportive family to help me through that.

And so I fought through it. Literally, I fought through it. I probably had 15 fights in grade school. But it was nice to be able to come home to a stable family environment.

And I could tell my mom and I could tell my dad and I could say, you know, here's what happened at school today. And I'm trying to make friends and I don't fit in. It was hard. And little kids can be really, really cruel.

Ask one of the grade school teachers that's here. Kids can be really, really cruel. They can say the worst things to each other. And, you know, sometimes what happens is you begin to believe those things about yourself.

[6:45] If you don't have any positive reinforcement at home, you can begin to believe that. And you can grow up thinking, wow, what they said about me must be true, even if it's not.

And there's wounds and there's scars that some people today still carry around from childhood. And, you know, when you become a teenager, it can be even worse.

Teens go through difficult stages of physical and emotional development. And what other people think and say about them is very important to them. We had little books that we wrote in.

And you'd write things about people. They called them slam books. I don't know if you remember that. I'm dating myself, right? Now there's cyberbullying. Oh, my gosh. How sad is that? And we see the results of that.

People make fun of other people. And then the world sees it. And some of these kids commit suicide or pick up a gun and do something stupid. Ecclesiastes 4 says this.

[7:41] Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them. Also, if two lie down together, they'll keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. We need shelters from storms. And two can handle what one cannot. You know, the goal of most games is to get home.

When you're home, you're safe. I've asked Bev Vineyard to share a little bit about how she as a mother and now a grandmother has been able to make her home a shelter from the storms of life. How do you do that? Come on. Yes, ma'am. You have your own or you want mine? You can do that one?

Yeah, that's better. I don't know if I completely answered or will be able to fulfill as Mark wants. [8:53] But he's asked me to reflect upon 27 years of being a parent and having my kids at home and come break it down to how we were a refuge.

I'll try. I'm a baby boomer who joined the sandwich generation years ago and recently became a grandmother. Here I've had many reflective moments.

One thing is for sure, I wish I had the wisdom, prayer life, and confidence in the Lord when I was a younger woman, younger mother than I have today. The beauty is now I have the opportunity to teach my grandchildren and encourage my children as they raise their families.

Gary and I were on the road of discovery like every parent, trying to fulfill Ephesians 4, which instructs us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

But we didn't know exactly what that looked like. Thankfully, we attended a local church where we observed and learned from other young parents.

[10:15] And I'm thankful we were fully persuaded about the things of God and committed to biblical principles. Our goal was that our children would understand the gospel to be saved, first and foremost, and that they would be equipped to process the life around them.

We sought to build their life in Christ so that they would not seek their identity from the things of the world. We knew that only salvation, wisdom, and understanding with a full heart would save, shelter, and keep them.

So what steps did we take? We implanted the word of God at an early age. Isaiah 28 says, Whom shall we teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?

Them that are weaned from milk and drawn from the breast, for precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little. Teaching God's word.

We've shared this before. David's Walter story gives evidence that indeed young children, thank you, can understand the gospel, even doctrine.

[11:26] At three and a half, David was able to share the gospel with our neighbor, who was in his backyard barbecuing. David wanted to be sure Walter was not going to get burned by the fire and die from the flaming pit and go to hell.

It's a true story. He responded to each of Walter's statements from a biblical standpoint. He knew being good and going to church would not save him. Only believing in Jesus was the only way.

Two, we talked about the things of God as part of everyday life to establish a biblical worldview.

Deuteronomy 11:19 commands us to teach our children, when they sit in the house, and when they walk by the way, and when they lie down, and when they rise up.

For us, that meant having Bible studies at home, talking about the things of God when we were driving to soccer games, when we were on our way to Lowe's, as we were eating dinner, when difficult things happened at school, and the world was celebrating Halloween, and we were not. Sometimes I would take the kids on a drive, away from the clamor of home, when I wanted to discuss certain things. David was 16 at the time, and we recently provided him with a cell phone when his friend Craig called.

[12:52] And he said, hey, Dave, what are you doing? He goes, hey, I'm taking a drive with my mom. And you could hear Craig say, what? David says, don't you take drives with your mom? He goes, no. But the drives always included food and a malt or something.

It's, you know, reaching his heart one-on-one. But to make good decisions, children need truth and then a reason for the truth. Providing a biblical worldview helped establish their identity in Christ and God's purposes.

Gary clearly conveyed that God created, God created them, and created them with a purpose. And he conveyed what was right in God's eyes, in contrast to the eyes of the world.

He often brought up current events for discussion, asking the children questions, and always demonstrating through the scripture how God's words and truth were right and relevant for today.

This enabled our children to stand securely when challenged and be able to survive in the public school system. I don't know if this is the same verse you read, Mark, but, In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and his children shall have a place of refuge.

[14:09] The fear of the Lord is a foundation of life to depart from the snares of death. Our children have thanked us for teaching them the truth of the scriptures, for teaching them how to use good judgment.

It's hard to go against the grain of society, neighbors, school, curriculum, but having a father who led our family by conviction, based on the word of God, brought our children security.

Three, we spent lots of quality time together. For what if there was only Bible teaching and not much relationship? As a father, Gary was very present.

Sorry. Days gone by. He filled our, let me see, he filled our children's need for adventure with his love for sports and the outdoors.

He taught the boys how to play soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, golf, archery, and best of all, how to ride a dirt bike. Camping, biking, and hiking, and rollerblading were activities that our family enjoyed regularly.

[15:23] Through it all, our values were transferred, and their identities were fashioned. Our boys were taught how to be boys, and our daughter how to be feminine. Without a doubt, being a close family provided shelter and security.

We also established a regular dinner hour of 6 o'clock. This helped Gary get home on time, and it gave us the opportunity to talk about our day, showing interest in our children so we could encourage them together.

Oh, I'm sorry. While Gary's convictions and passions and interests set the tone and course for our family, Oh, boy. I'm sorry. I just pulled my nose.

I wanted our children to be well loved. What do I mean by that? We are spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social beings.

It was my goal to nurture my children in each of these areas. So naturally, I did a lot of cooking, laundry, a lot of organizing, and a lot of driving to and fro. But what if I didn't?

[16:35] What if I said I don't like to cook? Dinner's in the freezer. Just pick out what you want and warm it up. Or what if I was not concerned with cleanliness or neatness? What if the kids had to wear the same jeans for two weeks, and their shirts were all wrinkled because I didn't make it my concern to promptly remove them from the dryer?

What if I failed to be an involved parent and my child had a violin performance, but no tuxedo shirt to wear? What if I wasn't willing to be organized enough to have dinner ready before we left for the game so there'd be dinner when we came home?

What if I never took time to learn the five love languages so I could appropriate them and understand how my child gives and receives love? Parenting is not for the weak or cowardly.

It's a work of God that takes all of our energy. But by meeting their needs, we convey love and thereby provide a shelter from the storms of life. Because sometimes storms rant on the outside, but sometimes they rage from within.

Whatever the cost, I work to communicate love to my children. Love covers, love fills, love satisfies. But to keep pouring out at a rapid pace, I had to refuel.

[17:45] I did that by staying in Bible study and gaining godly perspectives from other women wherever I could. This gave me the tools I needed to help my children through their teenage years.

As I was learning about the sovereignty of God, I had immediate need to apply it as each of them learned how to drive. And as soon as I realized I needed to be praying about all things, I had to choose to apply it instead of being overcome by worry and fear.

These things enabled me to give up the yoke of control and the burden of making sure that I had been doing all the years before. And not only that, now I was able to pass things on to my children. And now with confidence and wisdom, we will love and lead our grandchildren in the same way. Teaching them biblical principles, how to pray, how to trust in God's sovereignty, and so much more.

I'm confident that doing these things will enable them to live securely, despite the storms of life.

Thank you.

[19:03] A little bit of practicality there. So here's what I said. How do you turn your home into a shelter? And I wrote four words. You hear, you

hug, you hope, and you help.

We didn't collaborate, by the way. First, you hear. You need a listening ear. If you're going to build a shelter from the storms of life, you've got to listen when your family hurts.

And I said mostly moms are better at this. Now, maybe that's just because I'm so bad. But really, I think moms are inherently better at this. My example would be this.

If you watched my family when my boys were little, and we would take a walk, and we would be walking in Fenton Park at the time, and one of the boys would fall down and skin his knee, and look at the difference in the reaction between the woman and the man, right?

The woman picks up the boy and kisses him and hugs him, and the more she does that, the more they cry. And I say, put him down. He'll grow up to be a sissy. Right? Right? Because, you know, you want your boys to be tough.

[20:06] I didn't have any little girls, so I don't know. I probably would have been kind of a sucker. But I'll tell you, it's just a different thing. Moms are just better at that stuff inherently, I think. And so when my kids would fall down, I'd just pick them up by the arm, check for broken bones.

Come on. It doesn't hurt. Let's go. And my wife was just different, you know. She was better at caressing and holding. And so I just think, you know, for a child, I would say this.

For a small child especially, but for a child, there's no safer place than in the arms of a loving parent. You would agree with that? Amen. And so you hug. You need to give physical affection in a family.

You need a pat on the back. You need hugs. You need kisses. You need physical affection. It really matters. A friend of ours recently told us this. He said he never hugged his kids, and he never told them he loved them.

And Denise was shocked. And we just looked at this fellow. And you know today, his two older kids don't have much to do with him.

[21:07] Surprise. Surprise. And he's twice divorced. I wonder why. And then help. You need to give help when you can. You don't fix everything, especially if they get in a lot of jams on their own.

You don't fix everything, but you help when you can, and you help them fix it. That's what families are for. We help each other. And then you need to give hope. We build each other up. We don't tear each other down.

We lift people up. We don't criticize all the time. We compliment. We encourage. Be a cheerleader for your family. Many of us have sat on the sidelines of sporting events, right?

Come on. Let's go. Yeah. The family's to be a learning center for life. Number two, the family's to be a learning center for life. You learn things in your family you'd never learn anywhere else.

In the family, you learn the most basic skills of life. You learn to walk and how to talk and how to eat, how to use a television remote. But the basic skills you need in life, you learn those things with your family.

[22:11] God wants your family to be a learning center in a good way. Psalm 144, verse 12. Then our sons and their youth will be like well-nurtured plants. And our daughters will be like pillars carved to adorn a palace.

Here the Bible calls the family a garden. It's like a garden for growing people. And, you know, I would tell you if you looked out my back, I used to have a really nice garden.

I had all kinds of different plants and flowers. And they were really, really nice to look at. But over the last few years, three or four years, I haven't had time to really stay with it. But now when you look out, as my son said yesterday, Dad, you've got a great crop of weeds there.

And so it is with the family. You neglect your family, you're going to get a crop of weeds. A lot of early training. I said, if you look at Ephesians chapter 6, you see a little bit of that.

In verse 4 it says this, Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. So I said a lot of early training is knowing which end of the child to pat.

[23:18] The head or the back side. But you want to move your kids through three stages. You want to move them from parent control to self-control

to God's control.

That's really the goal. You move them from parent control, where when they're little you have to tell them everything to do. And you have to enforce the rules. And then you want to move them as they grow older to self-control. And then gradually you shift from being this person who has to tell them everything to do.

To now you're an instructor, more like a coach. And then God control. And hopefully they're asking the question, Father God, what do you want me to do with my life? And if you do things right, they probably still come back and ask you for advice even after they leave the nest.

That's what training is all about. Luke 2.52 says, Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. This is an important verse.

Not only for parenting, but also for personal growth. In this passage, it says that you grow and you develop as a person in four ways. It says that Jesus grew in wisdom, so it means he grew intellectually.

[24:30] He grew in stature. That's physical development. He grew in favor with God, and that would be spiritual development. And he grew in favor with man, and that would be social development.

And as a parent, you want to help your child develop balanced growth in all four of these areas. As a person, you want to individually develop growth in these four areas of life.

We need to grow physically. We need to grow spiritually. We need to grow intellectually. And we need to grow socially. Develop in these four areas is very, very important. And if you have that, you'll have a balanced life.

I hope at this point some of you are thinking about the church here. You see, in a church family, a person gets training in these four areas. And many, many other benefits.

Being part of a local body of believers. Young people can look around at older people as good examples. There are three areas in life that you shouldn't leave home without.

[25:30] And parents need to be especially concerned about teaching these three areas. Number one, we learn relationships from our family. Right or wrong, good or bad, people learn how to relate to other people from their family.

Some people had to relearn certain things later on in life because they learn how to relate in a dysfunctional way. My mother grew up in a very dysfunctional family. And she would, as we got older, she would share some stories with us.

She said she would do something wrong and her parents would give her the silent treatment. And they wouldn't talk to her. So she'd come home from school and they wouldn't talk to her. Sometimes two or three weeks, they wouldn't talk to her. So then she shared some stories with us later on about how she tried to do that to my father.

Now my father grew up in an Italian home where you yell and scream, you get it all out on the table, and then five minutes later, everybody's okay. You can imagine that early on, I didn't get to witness any of that.

I came along later, but early on, it made for some interesting times. And so my dad told me one time that mom was giving him the silent treatment. And I said, what did you do?

[26:39] He said, I just kept yelling and screaming and yelling and screaming until she finally yelled back. And I said, okay, now we're getting somewhere. And one time she said she was pounding out the round steak and he kept yelling.

And she said, I took the steak and I hit him in the face with it. But I'll tell you, you know, by the time we came along, mom was a good communicator.

You know, she realized that, hey, that stuff's wrong and this is the way we need to be. And so my dad still yelled and screamed a bit. But, you know, mom could hold her own by the time I came along. I'll tell you that if you don't learn the right way of relating, you're going to learn the wrong way of relating from your family.

Your happiness and your success in life, to a large degree, I believe, is determined by how you get along with people. Would you agree with that? Yeah. And, you know, if you can't get along with people, you're going to have a tough time in life.

I learned a lot of how to get along with different kinds of people from my dad. But it's Mother's Day, so I won't go into that. But, you know, my dad really was everybody's buddy.

[27:43] He still is. And he never said anything bad about anybody. I learned that from him. One of the things we as parents must be interested in doing is teaching our kids how to relate.

We need to model for them what good relationships look like. That it takes honesty to make a relationship work. It takes transparency. It takes vulnerability to make a relationship work. Relationships don't just happen. It takes energy and effort and a lot of forgiveness if you're going to make a relationship work. Are we teaching those things to our kids?

Are we teaching them how to respond to other people? Are we teaching them how to get along with people that are different than them? Are we modeling for them how to resolve conflict? Or do we carry grudges?

Do we talk bad about other people? You know, if you're carrying a grudge, guess who the weight is on? Right? Sometimes the other person doesn't even know.

[28:47] I see family members all the time who don't talk to other family members for years. Very, very sad. But we learn relationships in the family. Secondly, we learn character in the family.

People wiser than me have said character is better caught than taught. The older I get, the more I see how much like their parents some kids are. I was blessed to know Tom Vineyard.

What a great guy, huh? And then Gary. And then David. They're all different. They're all different people. But I can see that there are things that were passed down in that family.

Work ethic. Strength of character. Things like that. You know, the old phrase, like father, like son. You can't help but be influenced by your parents whether you want to be or not. Kids are going to pick up good character or they're going to pick up bad character.

And parents make a lot of the difference. Third, we learn values. We learn what's really important in life. Growing up in a family, for right or wrong or good or bad, you're going to learn about the value of things.

[29:56] The value of money, the value of relationships, the value of how to handle failures and successes. You learn how to tackle problems or you learn how to run from them.

It's important that we teach the right values. I would say you're teaching values whether intentionally or unintentionally in your family. How to win and lose.

That's why I don't like these participation trophies. You don't get a participation trophy in life.

There's winners and there's losers. There's people that excel. Socialism is a lie.

Not to be political. Isaiah 38, verse 19. Parents, tell your children about your faithfulness. Beverly shared very well about how we need to share that with our family, with our kids.

Your family is a relay of values from one generation to the next. You're just a link in a long chain.

The person that you are was influenced by your parents and their parents.

[31:00] Now, God can intervene. God can intervene. In the case of my family, my mother grew up in a dysfunctional family, but we didn't see that. God intervened. God intervened.

And many families have been changed for the better, especially when parents come to Christ and are forgiven of their sin. In a minute, we're going to hear from someone like that. We need to remember that when we're training our kids, we're not just raising our own kids, but we're influencing future generations.

The way I train my kids is going to influence the way they train their kids and the way they train theirs and on and on. Training in your family isn't just affecting your own family.

It's affecting generations down the line, especially in the area of faith. And so I've asked Teresa if she would just share for this little bit about the influences her family had on her and now how she is raising her children with Jeffrey.

Good morning and happy Mother's Day. Mark asked me to share some thoughts from the perspective of being a daughter raised by a godly mom and now having my own kids to pass down these things that I have learned from her.

[32:19] So it's a privilege this Mother's Day to stop and consider the godly influence my own mom had on my life and continues to have on my

life and to know that I have been entrusted with young children with whom I can do the same.

So two main points kind of came to my mind when I was trying to think of what to share that I thought were probably the most important things, especially pertaining to my role as a mom. So the first thing that immediately came to my mind is that my mom shared the gospel with me. Just this past week, my mom watched my kids for the day, and that evening we came over and had dinner with my parents.

We were all sitting in the living room afterwards and my dad popped in an old VHS video, a home video, which is always fun to watch. It brings back a lot of memories of what childhood was like, things you forget.

But this year was 1987, so I was only a year old, so I don't really remember the time. But we have Brad and Nate, who are five and three years old, arguing about standing too close to each other.

[33:32] And I'm just wandering around the yard being chased by our little puppy beagle knocking me over. But the interesting thing about this video that is kind of fun to think back to is my parents are in the same stage that I'm in currently, just a few years younger, have kids the same age.

And the only difference, though, is they were not saved at this time in their life. And it's not something that I remember because I was so young. It was only a year or two later that they came to know the Lord.

And after that point in their lives, it changed their whole purpose. And they were very intentional with sharing the gospel and teaching all of us scripture. And it impacted my own life because I remember probably a time when I was four or five years old going to bed one night, being afraid of dying because I knew that I was a sinner and that I would go to hell if I had died that night.

And my mom was able to just share the gospel with me. And a verse that has always stuck out in my mind, I don't know if it was from that time or just knowing what I have believed, it says in John 5, 24, it says, And I remember from a very young age having that assurance of salvation, of passing from death.

I knew that I would die. But after I had placed my faith in what Jesus Christ had done on the cross for me, I came into life. And that is just such a huge benefit of having grown up with parents that taught me that.

[35:20] And now it's something that I strive to teach our own kids, continually sharing the gospel with them. And every time we have to go to the bathroom to get another spanking, it's a reminder of we're sinners.

We need the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, I also, another, one other verse that came to mind was in 2 Timothy 3, 14 and 15.

It says, But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them. And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

And that verse is just so impactful to know that our kids can understand the Holy Scripture. And that it can make them wise for salvation. We know that it's the work of the Lord. And so, moving on from there, the main, the other main thing that I consider when I think of my mom is just how she took her role as being a mom very seriously.

Knowing that this is from the Lord, that he created the family, he created mothers, and he created fathers. And there's a very important role that moms play in the lives of their children. And she sacrificed and served our family very faithfully.

[36:36] And as a child, you don't really realize all that your mom does for you until you can relate and have kids of your own. And you don't sleep at night.

And you fold a lot of laundry. And you cook a lot of meals. And you clean up a lot of messes. And you have disobedient children. And life is hard. It's not all sunshine and roses.

It's really hard. There's a lot of tears shed and yelling and sin in the family. But there's the grace of God. And we're thankful for that. But my mom just did such an amazing job of serving our family so well.

It's all I ever wanted to do when I grew up was to be a mom and to stay home and raise kids. And so I feel like that was a result of my own mom just being such an influence on our lives.

And even with my brothers, I feel like each of us, the three older ones have kids. Jordan's about to get married. But I feel like each of us knew it was important to be a part of our kids' lives and to be there for them and to raise them.

[37:47] So we're still in the young years of doing this. But I feel like my mom definitely demonstrated in Titus Chapter 2 the role of an older woman admonishing a younger woman to love their husbands, to love their children, to be homemakers.

And so I just want to encourage, you know, all the other young moms out there to be intentional in our roles as a mom because it does have such a big impact on our kids' lives.

Thank you. So what kind of legacy are we leaving our kids?

I feel that many people are leaving the legacy of television, video games, junk food, and no discipline as a legacy to their children. Parents choose the legacy they're going to leave for their kids and their kids and future generations.

And if you aren't thinking about it, you're leaving it up to chance. I've heard people over the years say something like this. It always irritates me now. I'm not going to impose my spiritual values on my kids.

[39:04] I'm going to just let them make their own decision. Have you ever heard anything like that? Wow. So what they're saying, here's the translation, I'm abdicating my role as a parent to other people.

Because our kids are going to pick up values, either good ones or bad ones, from the world. And it's our choice. It's our choice as parents. When a person says, I'm not going to force my kids to go to church or I'm not going to impose my spiritual values on my children, children, what they're saying basically is that God is an option.

God is not an option. He's not an option. The Bible says that one day parents will be judged by how well they did at transmitting these values to their children.

Listen to Deuteronomy chapter 6. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you get up.

Teaching values is part of our job description as parents. What's being taught in your home? What are you intentionally or unintentionally teaching about money, about relationships, especially with the opposite sex?

[40:19] What are you unintentionally teaching about what's important in life and the priorities of life? What values do you want your children to catch? Make a list. Number three, God created the family as a place to have fun.

I'm glad that Bev shared some of that. It's a place of happiness, a place of fun, a place to be yourself, accepted for who you are. God meant for the family to be a place where you could let your hair down, kick back, relax, and enjoy life.

You find things that you like doing together, right? Dirt bikes. Dirt bikes were a lot of fun. We all got in on that. Boating and jet skiing and, you know, I didn't force my kids to play sports, but I said you have to pick one at least.

You're going to play sports, so you pick. My dad picked my sports for me. That was the way it was back then. You're going to play soccer and you're going to play baseball, but I don't like it. So I played soccer and baseball for my dad.

I swam for me. I actually like swimming better. He thought that was kind of a sissy thing, I think. So he didn't come to my swimming meets, but it's okay. My boys got to pick their sports, and we supported them.

[41:31] Whatever sport they picked, we supported that. Yes, shuttling back and forth. Yes, going to games, cheering for the team even when they weren't very good. Right. And you find things that you like doing together.

A place of happiness, a place for fun, a place to be yourself. It says in Proverbs 5.18, may your fountain be blessed and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. Some of the homes in the older days, when I grew up, ancient history, way back, before they had cell phones, everybody got their news from the newspaper.

No, I'm kidding. Kids were afraid of their dad. A lot of people on my block, that's where I grew up. Kids were afraid of their dad. Some people took this principle about discipline so seriously, you know, kids are to be seen and not heard and that kind of thing, that they turned their home into a boot camp.

And I think, as I look back on it, probably because many of these dads of my generation, they were military guys. That's where they got, they were drafted into the military, and that's where they learned how to do things.

They were really raised in that way. And so they had these kids that, you know, kind of like the sound of music, if you ever saw that, where the guy blows a little whistle and they all come marching out like little soldiers, you know.

[42:43] There was a lot of that in my neighborhood. And there was, you know, wait till your father gets home and everybody was afraid of the dad. I don't know. I'm glad my dad wasn't like that. But, you know, you need to have fun with your kids.

You need to play games. You need to take vacations. Go camping. There's an idea. Yeah. Do things together. If you don't have a reputation for fun in your home, don't be surprised.

When the kids get out on their own, they don't want to come back very often. If it's not an enjoyable place to be, nobody wants to come back there. We need to have fun with our families. Many families here do a really good job at that.

Doing things with other families can be a good thing. We did dirt biking together. We did boating together. We did a lot of things with other families here at Bethel. And I think we encourage that. We need that. Psalm 127 says, Children are a heritage from the Lord. Offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth.

[43:48] Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. You know, you only have your kids for a short time. Those of us on the other side can say, man, it went by quick, right? Oh, my goodness. They're not going to be around very long.

It's just time. The older I get, the shorter time gets, the faster it goes by. I'm increasingly aware of the fact that time is very short.

And you know, I want to make my time count. And so I want to encourage you to make your home a fun place to be. My parents were really good at that. My mom loved to play games, board games. And she would never let me win. And so when I won, I knew I really won, right? See, my brother didn't believe in that. Everybody participates, you know. No, you beat me, you learn how to beat me.

And so I got really good at games. And then nobody wanted to play with me. Growing up, we had a corner lot. We lived on a corner lot. My dad put up a swing set.

[44:46] So many kids came from all over the neighborhood to play on the swing set that we bent the swing set. Instead of getting angry, my dad went out and got a steel pole and reinforced the swing set.

Yeah, so that it lasted. Our grass was worn out from that swing set. And I remember my dad commenting about old Charlie down the street.

He's got a perfect lawn because he don't let any kids in his lawn. And he said, I can always grow grass after the kids leave. That's the right attitude, folks. That's the right attitude. Who cares about the lawn?

I care about those kids. So all the kids played at my house. Parents, do you enjoy your kids, really? Or do you just endure them? Have fun with your kids, right? Have fun.

Don't just put up with them. Celebrate your family. Plan something fun. Go camping. Number four. A family is to teach ministry.

[45:43] Your family can become partners in ministry. If you really want a strong family, you want a family that's knit together. Nothing binds a family together when they serve the Lord.

When you're serving the Lord together, there's a glue that's going to last into eternity. A good example of this would be 1 Corinthians 16, 15.

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia. And they've devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to submit to such

people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it.

There are a lot of families here at Bethany who have opened up their homes for small group meetings, Bible studies. You know, almost anybody can do that. We have people here who serve in Sunday school, teaching in other areas.

We have others who've started ministries with other families, helping people in their neighborhood, praying for people, going to camps together. If you want to build a strong family, you need to know the Lord.

[46:48] And then you need to help everyone in your family come to know the Lord. And then you need to share the Lord. Kind of like knowing Jesus and making Jesus known. Acts 16, 34.

The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them. He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God, he and his whole household. The greatest gift that we can give our children, if you're a parent, is not a will or a living trust or a bunch of money.

The greatest gift that we can leave our children is a godly influence. A mom or dad who knows Jesus Christ and shares that with them. We should be praying for the salvation of everyone in our families.

And I know that many of you do that. Romans 12, 13. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Here's a ministry that everybody can do. Every family can practice hospitality. Your family can have this ministry. The ministry of giving. Not just money, but time and help when people need it.

[47:53] The fragmentation of the family is causing enormous problems in our society today. I saw a report that says the current generation of children is the first in our nation's history to be less well off psychologically, socially, economically, and morally than their parents were at the same age.

This is what the report said. I've been saying that for 20 years. I raised my children telling them you're going to be the first generation in this country to have it worse off than your parents. Our country is following a path away from God as a nation.

It's sad. And so I would say the church and the family are those things that could stand in the gap, that could stem the tide.

You know, any dead fish can swim downstream. I want to challenge you this morning to be like Joshua. When in Joshua 24 he said, as for me and my house, we're going to serve the Lord. I don't care what the rest of the world does. But my family, we're going to serve the Lord in this family. What about those who are single? I would say several things to you today. Don't forget you have relatives.

[49:03] Brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles, especially if they know the Lord. Secondly, realize the Bible says the church is a family. For all of us, but especially for those who don't have a nuclear family.

We're all family. We're all family. Amen? Bethel is to do these same four things. Bethel is to be a shelter from the storms of life.

Bethel is to be a learning center for life. Bethel is to be a place to play. And Bethel is to be a place that teaches ministry. Get involved in God's family.

Don't just sit on the sidelines. You've heard me say, I'm sure, that God doesn't have any bench players. Everybody's supposed to be involved. Nobody sits on the bench. Get involved in Bethel's family.

It will make a difference in your life. It will make a difference in our lives. And it will make a difference in the lives of others. As we close, let me just ask you this.

[50:04] What kind of shelter is your family? Does it offer protection? Does it offer learning? What are we intentionally and unintentionally teaching our children?

Are we modeling good relational skills like honesty and vulnerability and forgiveness? We have the manual.

We have the instruction manual, folks. This book gives us all the skills we need for life. It really does. Let's pray. Father God, thank you so much for your word.

Thanks for all the instruction in your word. Thanks most of all for the message of salvation. The payment for sin that Jesus Christ came and conquered and rose again. The fact that we can have confidence that we are eternal beings who will spend forever with you because of what you've done for us.

[51:04] ■■■■ bootstrapped The end of the book is called produced by The Online Assisting guidance