

Panel Discussion - 2023 Ohio Grace Family Conference

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[0 : 00] We're going to start with just some starter questions, some that I was thinking about and some that I got from some others. And then we have a mic runner out there who's going to be bringing a mic around.

So maybe after a couple of questions, we'll look for raised hands. The first one I want to ask is, oh, by the way, does everybody know who's here? Why don't we just do a quick introduction?

So who are you? We'll start with Paul. It's on. Oh, yeah. My name is Paul Turner. I was a pastor in Oshkosh, Wisconsin for 18 years. In March, we joined Bible Doctrines to Live By and are traveling and doing the family Bible schools.

We did that this summer for 75 days. We were on the road looking to do some writing with that, challenging men to manhood and leadership, among other things.

So that's who I am. All right. I'm Bernardo Chris Meyer. I was born in Brazil, raised there, came to know the Lord there through the ministry of my father-in-law.

[1 : 11] Then I accepted the Lord and married her daughter. And we became missionaries with Word of Grace Mission in 1986. And we have been serving the Lord, planting churches in Brazil, training leaders, and many other different ministries there.

All right. yeah timothy board uh laurie and i hail from the greater chicagoland area and uh we've been married 21 years and our kids timothy luke elijah bethany grace and noah that was good a little slow been born all over the country because after having served in four different grace current uh churches from denver dayton dc dells past four and a half years we've been serving uh with things to commission as our u.s development director and we are uh moving forward shifting gears like i shared at supper as far as grace family ministries and everything a lot of exciting things on the docket and we cover your prayers and it's just an honor to be here this weekend joel fink and i've pastored various churches in south dakota in colorado in wisconsin for the last 45 years and we're back in south dakota where i was born and raised and do a little bit of writing and jack of all trades do a little cabinet work make a few hay bales just kind of jack of all trades master none and tell us real quick i should have said this before about your families how many kids what's their age six children i can't remember their names 26 grandchildren and i won't even begin there linda can tell you their birthdays and all that and uh what else just their just their yeah ages and numbers yeah that's good okay our oldest is what 42 now 41 jessica 41 down to 26 yeah five of them married from i understand five are married one's not married yet okay and oh the grandchildren range from 17 down to like newborn basically yeah three weeks old i think and where's the other grandma over there mrs michael and i was bragging to our our daughter-in-law that makes 26 for us we said oh i think it's 39 or 40 for my folks okay quick joke uh male female brain issues this morning that was that was well done joel that was uh um you know the classic you've been there or it's oh she had a baby it was a girl height weight length and everything anyway um humorous thing about about our kids is especially in this season of our life it's an honor to travel and do ministry far and wide and uh we were um on our way home from a you know like a two-week trip this spring uh and it was funny because one of the things that my wife was doing is she was writing down notes basically kind of like the matchmaker game and just as far as like the amount of like uh grace singles that we know uh disproportionately as far as single women uh and say hey we need men but uh but she mentioned to me just as far as um uh i'm sure some of you older women have already been doing similarly this weekend as you're observing just the young people enjoying each other's company my my wife said it's like how many wedding proposals around the country do you think our boys could get you know sounds bad to put it that way but anyway you you get the point but i remember one thing our kids names jessica jason julie joshua jared you saw him somewhere yeah and jacob how about their birthdays we had the lord blessed us with seven boys all boys and george the oldest he is a pastor in streamwood illinois and then paul our second he is a missionary also in brazil serving in sao paulo big city sao paulo and then we have terry terry is living in germany with five kids there and his wife

with one another one coming it's going to be a girl first girl for them and then we have uh dennis dennis dennis is in florida oops jason we have jason yeah we have jason and he has two boys living in in the same city we are in brazil and helps helping us with the camp there and then we have dennis dennis dennis is uh living in florida he had three three kids one boy and two girls and he is also being prepared for the being prepared for the ministry he is under the wing of pastor ken lawson now and then we have kevin kevin is a pastor in new jersey and prickness wayne wayne new jersey prickness bible church and and he has three girls and a boy and total and then we have joseph that he married but he doesn't have kids yet and we have uh eight eighteen grandkids and another one coming up wow back to paul sorry we have eight eight children ranging in age from 23 down to six uh six girls two boys elise is our oldest we have one grandbaby she is one year old jasmine uh elise may 7th ethan may 23rd elizabeth and lydia oh 2000 2002 elizabeth and lydia are september 20th 2005 they just turned 18 molly is december 21st 2000 and i'm doing the math backwards 2010 2010 there we go all right so molly is december 21st 2010 evelyn is december 26th 2012 uh ethan joseph is a december 15th 2014 and poppy is june 17th 2017 uh uh 17. that's right all right 16.

all right what yeah i'd like to see you do the length and birth nine yeah yeah they were all in the seven pound range so yeah yeah those yeah i think there's some good good dad points right there yeah uh nine out of ten anyway yeah um so as we as we went around a question entered my mind um some people might be asking um you guys have a lot of kids uh don't you guys know what causes that uh why why so why so many kids paul i'd start with an easy one i'm just sitting here thinking i know what's going through tim's brain uh uh nothing nothing uh you know when we were what i'll i'll be brief but i'll i'll try to be that's impossible for a pastor uh but when we were dating we had that discussion how many kids do you think we would like to have and we both said you know it was kind of like one two three say it and we both had had thought in our minds eight oh wow okay so uh elise came along and my wife ended up in uh the hospital for three days severe dehydration you know just terribly sick uh had a horrible pregnancy and we decided after that that one was good we were good with one wow um and then uh then two years later you know obviously we decided that well let's have one more and we got a boy so you have the all-american family one boy one girl life is good and then uh a few years later we thought well let's try for one more you had quadruplets no we had twins okay and you know it was one of those things our our mentality toward children evolved as time went on we we didn't really start with you know we love kids and let's just have a whole pile of them it started off really as this is just what you do i mean you have a couple kids you know you get a job you work you you retire and um you know god really worked in our hearts just to recognize that children truly are a blessing and so we just came to a point where you know if we love children and we're just going to leave this in the lord's hands and that's how we got to eight great well very similar kira and i when we were still dating we and thinking about getting married we we were planning on seven kids wow and the lord blessed with seven kids oh wow speaking of 12 uh that's that was on our laurie and i's radar uh i suppose partly because that was uh her family jersey number and you know in sports when they're kids and uh you know and you know this type of thing and glad it wasn't 99 huh yeah yeah but you know honestly we're we're all products of of our generation and the in the culture uh even a christianized subculture that we're brought up in uh affects us uh for good or for ill uh and there's so many things that were part of laurie and i's life and when we um first started going together and got married and it was just like this is just what you do uh you know i mean for example like it was just standard operating procedure like okay you know in the circles that she grew up in is like okay you know gearing up for uh for your wedding uh you go to the doctor and you you know get on the pill as far as oral contraception uh and that's that's what we did

in we really didn't know any better and we we weren't uh we didn't have any understanding of that okay that uh as far as you know as far as the medical profession and everything they define uh conception a different way than the word of god defines it as far as otherwise known as fertilization and psalm 139 and these types of things in other words so long as uh you know uh you know a baby is aborted prior to implantation you know that type of stuff anyway some of that you're very familiar with that others just maybe clarify with my wife later uh but anyway uh so we we didn't understand all these those things and so our you know we don't know whether or not our first miscarriage was you know due to you know oral contraception uh and everything but uh you know it came to a point where uh as we were you know having you know training for ministry uh you know the turners and us we were in bible college at the same time together and yeah you forgot to mention that when you were expecting twins you were in bible college at the time yeah just wow uh but uh we're hey just proverbs 3 5 and 6 trust in the lord with all your heart and lean not in your own understanding and all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths and so it's like and and this is our heart and our passion and just humble before the lord and it's like hey can we trust god in every area of life and so uh the lord did a work in our hearts and uh you know in contrast to the conventional wisdom that she had been brought up uh and it's just god gave you a brain you know this type of thing and it's like okay and the lord you know did a work in our hearts and just like uh and eventually it came to the point of lord give us more children praying deliberately and and once again uh being in pastoral ministry we've never been wealthy i mean we've lived in parsonages you know in different parts of the country and everything and it's just uh or similar arrangements and it's just one of those things where uh the lord is faithful to provide and of course that gets into a host of other things too whereas our and i'll just i'll throw this out there uh our first miscarriage you know we basically badger care uh you know in wisconsin and wick and all that and they gave me all these these food stamp type of stuff and and as i was maturing in in manhood and leadership leading providing protecting my wife as christ loved the church and gave himself for it i just remember distinctly we were married 21 years old and so i was what 24 at the time walking or driving back to the county you know government place and if you ever have been in places like that you just feel like scum uh you know a chump as a man i remember going back to that government building and returning those wick vouchers because you know laurie was just five weeks along we miscarried it six weeks or or so but it was one of those things where it's like like this is not encouraging me to man up as a leader husband you know father and everything and so uh we've had five miscarriages uh you know as in life can hurt real bad and so uh but we're thankful for in fact one of the one of this is this is beautiful stuff especially in light of uh the scripture where david says you know as far as when the baby uh that he had with basheba uh perished you know you know died uh you know he says he will not return to me but i will return to him one of the last things that my wife uh mentioned to my mom when she was in hospice before the lord took her home was uh say hi to our children yeah she has five grandchildren uh there yeah so uh precious wonderful uh i don't remember linda and i talking about how many children i have but after we had six i said wow this is great let's have six more and she said go ahead and have him i had the first six

[16 : 21] knock yourself out all right i've often said if men had the babies they'd there'd only be one that'd be it our wives are amazing aren't they uh next question and then we'll take one from the audience here uh we'll start with you joel and we'll we don't have to go through everybody but so we'll kind of maybe uh do one or two and then if somebody you know if you really want to um chime in that that's great so what kind of approach do you take to leading your own children to faith okay we um have had a real conviction about identifying the gospel clearly from scripture because that is just such a problem in evangelical and you know christianity give your life to christ ask jesus in your heart all of this stuff and i remember the first time i ever before i got into grace message i was going to an acts 2 style bible institute and we had a speaker i'll never forget it i hope we had a speaker in chapel that said the gospel is defined for us in scripture in first corinthians chapter 15 one through four i mean it was just as as clear as could be christ died for our sins he was buried and rose again the third day according the scriptures and so we always from from before birth i would i would whisper that into the womb you know uh here's here's the gospel here's what christ did and you have to be careful with that uh because um one of our kids one time and we would we would quiz them okay uh how do you get to heaven how do you get saved you know we just when they're very young and i remember one time he's not here there i don't have pay him uh jason said believe those three things believe those three things i said okay wait wait wait wait wait let's slow down here yeah okay and you know we can make our gospel kind of a mantra right that people think okay i just i repeated the right three things here for for mom and dad so i guess i'm saved and so that's the thing i think that as grace believers and especially defining the gospel that we felt we really needed to work through with the kids and we did we we go over and over it with them and make sure okay but what does that mean what does that mean that christ died for your sins you know so um that's that's how we handle it how how young i know uh linda shared that uh i think our first one she was like four i think when you were working with her um you always kind of wonder but you keep you keep keep it before them yeah and um i'd say anywhere from you know three years old to seven you got to really be in there and make sure you know start young start young but then make sure it doesn't just become a vain repetition of things so they really understand yeah any yeah yeah funny story one of the churches we served in in the dc area uh and once again standard operating procedure for much of the modern church and uh you know whereas you know i'm not you know totally opposed to okay the traditional uh you know sunday school class and everything i'll be it should be supplementary not primary uh in this church and many churches do that as far as kids go to uh sunday school and then they they go immediately across the hall or wherever uh to the junior church and never are they in the corporate worship service uh and that's i have a real issue with and so timothy was you know uh you know what five years old or so uh and so he you know he you know went across the hall uh after class with all the other uh you know boys and girls uh there and i don't know if i was preaching or what have you but it was it was the type of situation where it's like hey where's by the end of the service like where's timothy uh you know what have you uh and everything but after the the the service i just remember you you want some funny stories just ask him it was like every sunday dad i put my face and trust in jesus and uh so he's getting saved every week type of thing but what the funny story this situation was uh the teacher was actually the the the senior pastor's uh daughter uh and she was like yeah

i don't know maybe teary-eyed but just like just overjoyed and just like uh and she she talked to laurie after the service uh and said uh uh what she said like i think timothy trusted christ or something or it was or i shared but it was but what we do distinctly remember her asking laurie is like have you ever talked with your son about the gospel and and laurie's just like you know just jaw drop conk you know type of thing like like you you got to be kidding like you you she must have no clue as far as deuteronomy 6 you know psalm 78 first step only it's 2 11 and 12 these types of things as far as uh every day throughout the day hello and it's just one of those things that we take so many things for granted uh one of the things i do appreciate by the lead pastor there he taught me this is that yeah the old adage you can lead a horse to water but you can't make them drink he said but you can salt the oats though you can salt the oats anything the very interesting when we are involved in ministry since i came to know the lord the message of the gospel became the central message of my speaking every day i was talking to people everywhere so as our kids raised they were always together with us in church and together in the bible most of the bible studies we were so and not only that carol every night put them to bed they'll talk about many spiritual things and many other stories and also the other books but it's important for us to realize that like you said because you're talking every day that doesn't mean you know if they are saved or not but most of them came to a point in their life when they they understood and from that point on we could see the change and their behavior they because they understood even though they knew you know they could repeat the words you know but many many of our kids they were they came to realize salvation in a personal conversation among us or among my my grand grand uh my father-in-law because we really interact a lot as a family so that's very precious anything dad i like their answers yeah i would just say you know it's a constant conversation that doesn't end with salvation either it's just that's just the beginning of the of training your children spiritually yeah great and i'll add but uh raise hands anybody have any uh any questions they want to uh bring all right right up front here and while we're bringing the mic up so one thing i'll i'll add you know i've always one of my concerns is parents or kids love their parents and they want to please them right and so there's a risk if you ask your child to pray prayer you know do something that they're going to do it why not because they have a real belief or trust but because they want to please you and so we've been careful of that but another thing that's neat that i've seen in my family is uh kids who have received the lord and have become excited about it they start evangelizing their little brother and sister that just warms my heart to no end so all right up here in the front um what are some practical ways that you could shepherd your children's hearts to know and love the lord throughout the day

uh i i would say first of all um you need to be living it you know the shepherd lives among a sheep uh if you're not if you're not there if you're not present and and let me define present um when when your face is is stuck in a phone or or a computer screen or a television or your ears are stuck on a talk radio show um you're not present your body may be there but you're not present those those those little people that god has entrusted you with uh and they get they get older they get bigger but they're still looking to you and so i i think uh first of all you you demonstrate it um you know if if they don't see you spending time in the word of god if they don't hear you listening to uh songs that are uplifting to the lord if if they don't hear you maybe you're not a singer but singing and lifting your voice to the lord um shepherding really begins with being present who said that was that joel this morning you know quality and quantity of time you know it's not an either or it's a both uh and and so um every one of us myself included have room for improvement in that area so um you know we need to be purposeful about making sure that that when our children are talking to us i think one of the greatest skills that that moms and dads could have in shepherding their children is learning how to listen and sometimes that involves shutting up yeah it's great and just listening so good you know uh if you're looking at the comparison to a shepherd we used to have sheep and you protect them you you keep them in a pen you give them shelter you provide all those things but one of the greatest things about raising sheep was you learn to listen to them if you listened it could be completely dark outside you knew if something was wrong because you could hear them and so with children if you're if you're paying attention to and having just conversations just talking to them and don't talk down to your children your children are capable of understanding far more uh the verse that comes to my mind is in the gospels wise as serpents innocent as doves um you know we talk with our kids about things we don't we might not cover all the gory details but we talk about things my kids my kids know what's going on in the world and it leads to great conversations so i don't know that's that's a lot of things thrown out there but i if i boil it down to one thing which is something that i had to learn to do when i got married was just shut up and listen so learn to listen to your kids and that begins before you have kids you know if you happen to be married to some guy sitting to your right you know and he's sitting to a girl and sitting next to him on the left learn to listen to each other because when you have kids that will make a big difference well one thing that joe's think said this morning uh to know that your children are each one of them are different

and they understand things differently and that while he said that i keep thinking about this wonderful principle we learn from growing kids god's way the the course of parenting that we took in 95 from 95 on and it's based on the book of uh gary gary shepman the five love languages and because the way you love your kids the the way because they are different you you have to love them and understand the way they they understand to be loved yeah and that is one of the most important things that happened to our the changing that happened into our family after we came to know those principles that we didn't know before so i i think how to love your children you know thinking about the five love languages many times you are really loving them actually we do all the time but they may not be they they may not be so they may not feel that you are loving them because you are using a general lot yeah you got to be a specific three things we take this for granted but homeschooling that's i mean do not pass go do not collect 200 they don't get that right get back to the bed having said that not everybody who homeschools has a a vision for what i would describe as parent-led home-based family discipleship it's a different ball game uh but but when the lord has indeed ignited a zeal and a passion for that deliberate transmission of truth to the next generation in your heart and soul and that's at the forefront of your of your mind therefore your life it's just like the men have already shared you're going to be uh hey you you know as far as homeschooling one two would be the biblical world view homeschooling is just a vehicle to intentionally transmit the to cultivate the comprehensive nature of the christian world be rooted in holy scripture in the hearts and lives of our kids and so therefore uh one of the things that that laurie and i mentioned regularly to our kids is that our oldest is 17 youngest is eight so many of the conversations that we have uh literally every day uh not altogether different from some of the conversations that we've we've been having you know right now or this afternoon uh we virtually have these kind of conversations with our kids every day uh and one of the things i'm apt to remind our kids is that hey just to help you understand our background and others in your generation dad and mom very seldom if ever had conversations like this with our parents when we were your age and and that's a challenge for them to understand many of their peers that hey they even some you know you sometimes you wonder like okay some homeschool families whether or not like you know parents are uh yes protect moral innocence and everything engaging on the you know the age of your kids but uh we we talk with our kids about i mean we read you know missionary prayer letters we read ministry letters from afa and you know american family association answers in genesis and you know tcm missionary letters and so they're in the know as far as i mean besides current events uh stuff that we do with them through world magazine and so uh so yes and so in other words taking every thought captive the obedience of the lord jesus christ and therefore demolishing strongholds uh you know for the glory of god so one homeschooling uh biblical worldview

and three would be uh basically what the the saints of old called uh family worship you know in other words being deliberate and usually for us it's in tandem with our evening meal supper time uh where we sing together as a family every day either through the hymn book or you know gearing up for events like this and ministry okay you know singing and i mean it's what was it paul that you said one of the things that you're going to miss is is when you man it's just and that's one of the things that in my end-of-lory late■■■■■ and my upbringing similar lori's we never we never we didn't do that and uh i you know i played baseball when i was a kid i mean that was the the greatest aspiration of my life.

[33 : 30] But like I said, homeschooling, biblical worldview, and family worship, where you sing, read the Bible, and pray. And yes, and we memorize large portions of Scripture, too, and everything.

So it takes work. The days are long, but the years are short. And anyway, brother. Yeah, when I think of that question, I think of Isaiah 28, starting in verse 9.

And whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine, them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast? So, you know, it can start very early.

And don't underestimate a very young child's ability to grasp things, even when you think they're looking all over. And I learned this one time when I was preaching a sermon.

I preached a three-point, you know, homiletical sermon. And there was one kid in the church, wasn't our kid, but that was just kind of known for just being unable to sit still, just always making a ruckus.

[34 : 28] You know, you've seen, you know the kid, right? And at the end, he came up to me. And I mean, he must have been, what do you think he was? Do you remember that? He was maybe six or seven, maybe eight. And he recited the three-point sermon with supporting material back to me as he left that day.

They can, you know, so don't think they're not picking anything up. And we did that. We read with the kids, you know, at the table when we ate. And tie it to something, you know. If you're going to have a time, everybody eats.

And so tie it to that table time. And we had the kids pray, each one of them, at night before they went to bed. So they learned to pray. And here's the method.

For precept must be upon precept. Precept upon precept. Line upon line. Line upon line. Here a little and there a little. So don't give up on it.

It looks like you're not accomplishing anything, but you really are. Any more? No, no, no. Are there raised hands? Okay, up here.

[35 : 41] So my question is, and you touched a little bit on it, Tim, but when I think the greatest aspiration of any godly couple is that their children would walk with the Lord, that you would raise godly children who go further than you did in your faith, how much of family life in raising your children to be godly is deliberate?

And how much is organic? Meaning like? Like rituals and habits. rituals, habits, disciplines, daily Bible times, you know, Bible reading. How much of that contributes to raising godly sons and daughters?

And how much of it is just mom and dad love each other? Maybe you're a more spontaneous person. My wife hates that. But like how much is deliberate and how much just happens?

I don't know if that makes sense. Sure. Yeah. And I think they've touched on it already up here. The idea that I think when Paul started answering about how do you do that?

How do you do this in the home? And first it's you, you know? And so, yes, our values are not only taught, they're caught. And I don't know if you can put a percentage on which, you know, which is more.

[37 : 00] But it's just a constant vigilance. You know, that's the eternal vigilance. And I guess to me it's the mindset that parenting these children is my calling right now in life.

Beyond my ministry work, beyond, you know, wife, you know, husband-wife relationship, Lord first, husband and wife. But my calling, that's my job now.

And I don't know how people get that mindset. But we have to do that. I like that intentionality stuff. That's good. I ministered out in Rapid City area in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

And I was a tent-making ministry, okay? That means you work alongside because they can't pay you enough, right? And so I did cabinet work. And my shop was right behind our house.

We built it there. We moved the house in and added on to it and built it ourselves. And people would bring me the lumber and I'd build it right there. And one guy came by. We called him his, what was it?

[38 : 10] Some kind of diamond builders. But we called him, his name was Harley. We called him Harley R. Us because he would walk in there. He used to be a patrolman. And he'd say, well, you sure got it good.

You're just like, you're like the Waltons here. You sure lucky to have this. And it's like, this was not luck that got us set up this way so that I was home and around the kids and available all the time.

We made a conscious decision. We're going to do it that way, okay? And so, yeah, there's a lot of decisions that need to be made if you want to have that kind of constant interaction with the kids and shepherding them, mentoring them, however you want to say it.

So go ahead. Yeah, that's a real good question, Luke, as far as asking about, okay, you know, how much is, you know, formal, informal, organic, non-organic. And a part of it, too, is remember it has to keep in mind season of life as far as age of the kids.

As far as obviously when they're younger, as far as, okay, whether it's nursing, napping and everything. It's like out of necessity, much of, you know, as far as mealtime is going to be much more regimented and everything.

[39 : 25] But that's where more of the heavy lifting and the formative years of life because basically parents reap in the teen years what they have sown in the formative years. In other words, and so you're right, it's not luck.

Oh, you're lucky. You just wait until you get to be teenagers, you know, that type of thing. It's like, okay, you know, I'm not holding my breath, but it's, you know, it's, yeah.

But once again, there's formal and informal, but, you know, of course, in the formative years, it's like, yeah, that's where most of the heavy lifting as far as child training and, you know, obedience and all these things.

But what's beautiful is, yes, there are formal and informal, but what's a huge blessing is when much of the heavy work and the lifting and all that is done in the formative years, when they become teenagers, that, yes, there still is formal times as far as, hey, when you rise up, when you walk, you know, walk by the way and everything, family worship and everything.

But also it's, there is, as they're growing cognitively in their growth and, you know, of understanding of the world and biblical worldview and everything, that's where there is greater opportunity for informal, organic conversations in the teen years.

[40 : 49] For example, like, it's like, oh, it's 1130 at night, son, or it's pushing midnight. Great stuff.

I'd love to keep on going with you, but, yeah, you know, we got to land the plane, you know, it's just, and that's a challenge. But, you know, sometimes it's not always that late as they're whispering back and forth, they're loving this.

But what's, it's the informal, being able to converse about doctrine, theology, worldview, current events, everything, and that's also one of the challenges that my kids honestly have with their peers, you know, in different venues where they're, much of their peers aren't able to talk about anything much more than TikTok or whatever and, you know, this type of thing.

And my boys are just kind of like, you know, dad, I'm frustrated. It's like, all right, I get it. And so, but if and when they, you know, at a venue like this, this weekend or elsewhere, it's like they can virtually converse to, you know, unlimited hours on stuff of substance and everything.

And that's as a result of because, hey, they're cognitively and they're familiar and well adept at conversing about all these things on the grassroots level at home and everything.

[42 : 15] Would you like to say one? Sure. I'd like to, two things before I answer your question. I want to, just one thing, I feel like I need to go back to something I said right at the beginning.

We started by saying how many kids we have. And I want to be very careful to say this. You know, it's not about number.

I didn't want to give that impression that, you know, if you don't have as many as me. Right. Or if you don't have a whole pile of them, then you're out of the will of God. Right. I'm far more concerned with your attitude toward children.

Right. And the blessing of children than the number you put on how many are in your house. Yeah. I mean, I've seen people with a dozen kids who do not see children as a blessing from the Lord.

And that's far more concerning to me than the mother and father of one or the mother and father who can't, or the parents, or the parent, the husband and wife who can't have children, but have an absolute love for an understanding of God's blessing of the family.

[43 : 25] So I just want to say that first. Second of all, to your question, and I'll be brief, you can put all kinds of structure in place.

And to some extent, you certainly should order and structure. As the head of your house, husband and wife, you should put order and structure in place.

But to your question of the organic side of things, Rebecca and I are working on starting a ministry under Bible doctrines called Raised in Grace.

And the whole point of it is there's going to be online articles to read, but it's about parenting in the dispensation of grace.

And there's going, eventually there's going to be a podcast to go with that, I think. But really, what we've come to understand in raising our kids is God is raising us in grace.

[44 : 31] And He's raising me as an individual. He's raising us as a couple. He's raising our family in grace. And so often, we get caught up almost in an inconsistent view with raising our children.

We become very legalistic and militant at times. I'm not saying raising grace doesn't involve correction and spanking and things like that. But I think we need to look at in Scripture at how God is, in many ways, dealing with us in the dispensation of grace.

How He's raising me. Listen, when I got saved, there was a lot of transformation that needed to take place. And in our kids' lives, there is a lot of transformation that needs to take place.

And, you know, the principle of Titus 2.11 and 12 is true. The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us how to live. That's the message of Titus 2.11 and 12.

And, you know, and again, it's not that there's not, you know, when dealing with children, there's not consequences for actions. I'm not, please don't hear that one.

[45 : 51] Grace is not a license to sin. But at the same time, and you can verify that with my children, but God is raising us in grace.

And God has given us those children. And I believe He has given us those children to raise them in grace because what they know about God, what they know about their heavenly Father is what they learn from watching their earthly Father in many ways.

And so I would just like to say that to the organic side of things, they need to see that God is raising me in grace. And we can have all the things in place and we can talk about it, but they need to see our lives being transformed.

And my kids can, I'm sure, tell you stories about times when, you know, I was humbled. I was wrong. And, you know, God working in my heart and changing my attitude and, you know, having to go to my children and ask their forgiveness for the way I treated them because I knew I was out of line, you know.

And so, you know, just going back to the whole idea of raised in grace, and that is in many ways an organic thing. It's not, well, I did this check, I did that check, I did that check.

[47 : 11] It's a totally surrendered life to the Lord Jesus Christ and allowing Him to raise me up, allowing my wife for God to raise her up in grace, and for us then to emulate how God has raised us up to our children.

Awesome. Love it. Love it. Next question, and I'd love to add to that while we kind of look for the next hand. You know, I think it depends on personality, really, you know, partly. You know, if you're the fly by the seat of your pants type person, you know, it might be like 10% structure and 90%, you know, ad hoc.

Whereas if you're that engineer who puts everything on a spreadsheet, you know, 90% structured and 10%. And I've seen it work both ways. But I do think building habits and routines is important.

It's been important in my life because sometimes those things just won't happen. But I think the number one thing is our duties that can really lead to that kind of regular shepherding is enjoying our children.

God intends for us to enjoy our children and for our children to enjoy us. Right. And be around. We enjoy each other's company. And that's one of the, if a family is disordered, you'll see parents that don't really like their kids and kids that don't really like their parents.

[48 : 32] And that's the, you know, number one sign of a disordered family. Do you enjoy your kids? If you don't, there's a big problem. You need to figure it out. Yeah. We're glad you're here. Any other raised hands?

Okay. Back here. Back here. What's your advice on your children that might want to go to college?

We see a lot these days that go to college and almost never see them again in church. Wow. Great. You're holding the mic, so.

I know. This is hard to be brief on. I think this gets to the last question on there, which deals with finding a spouse.

I think a lot of, when you get to the point of picking a spouse or you get to the point of a child going off to get an education in that way, you're well past the formative years.

[50 : 08] You've laid a foundation. Good, bad, or indifferent, you've laid a foundation. It's important in raising your children to have those conversations.

Talking about who you're going to marry, talking about whether or not you're going to college needs to be a conversation that takes place, going back to the previous question, organically long before the idea of girls are cute or that boy's handsome comes along, or long before they're even thinking about, you know, beyond, you know, I want to be a fireman.

You know, you begin to have those conversations, you're building those relationships, and in that, you know, we were sharing earlier today, you know, my kids, my kids have had struggles, and those struggles sometimes can, in some relationships, in some families, they can be very destructive, but what we found was we had, and I, not saying we're perfect, but we've, in this particular instance, we feel like we had laid enough of a solid foundation that when it came to the struggle, which lasted for probably several years, as we were working through that, the one thing I can honestly say is the conversation never stopped.

We were able to have mature adult conversations about whatever it was, and so when it comes to something like college, now, the short answer to that question, kids go, it's changing, the view of it is changing now somewhat, but the view for a long time was, you know, you get out of high school, you go to college, because it's just a rite of passage, it's just the next thing that you do, and we have a lot of kids that bought telescopes who never wanted to be, you know, who never wanted to study the stars.

They spent an absolute fortune on a degree, or mom and dad spent an absolute fortune on a degree that is never going to be used, but they got the college experience and all of that.

[52 : 41] I don't push my kids, I don't encourage my kids to go to college, but at the same time, if there is something that they're truly passionate about, you know, and I don't push them, you're 18, you know, you need to go to college, but if one of my kids came to me and said, you know, dad, I'd really, I really feel called to a medical field, and this is what it requires.

I'm going to, several things are going to happen in that moment. You know, if they say that to me, I'm going to probably have an inkling before that conversation comes up. You know, it isn't going to be like, you know, on a whim, I want to be a doctor.

Oh, okay. You know, this is already on the radar. But beyond that, we will already have had conversations, because it's already taken place at our house, because we've talked about, well, where do you go to get that education?

You know, let's find a school that's going to educate you, not indoctrinate you. I don't need to, I don't think we're into specifics about, I mean, public universities are, places of indoctrination.

Now, and I think there's always options out there that need to be weighed, that need to be weighed in the balance and figure out what's going to work. So, there's a number of things that are going to weigh on that.

[54 : 14] And the other thing about that is, not encouraging my 18-year-old, because listen, I don't know of a whole lot of 18-year-olds that when they're 18-year-old, they know what they want to do with the rest of their lives.

You know, so say they're 20 or 21. You know, at that age, I have put everything into that child, and that child is no longer a child.

It's an adult. And he or she, I'm going to, at that point, I'm going to entrust her or him that God will continue to guide and direct.

And I've seen that in my kids. Now, I haven't had a kid that's gone to college yet. I have four that are graduated now. I don't know if that will happen.

But again, I think the principle is, we got to step way back from that event to how we're raising our children, coming up to that.

[55 : 16] And again, encouraging getting that education in a school of education, not a school of indoctrination. So, interesting, when we think about college, I always like to think that most of the people that go to college, they are going to get jobs up on top of the pyramid.

Pyramid. Pyramid. Pyramid. Pyramid. Pyramid. Pyramid. Pyramid. And the other guys that will study to, like, a technical level, they will get much more jobs available for them.

And then you have those guys that work in the lower part of it. And we understand that each one of us have different capacities and different gifts and we we may be able to develop and reach up there or not.

And we should be able to see in our children their gifts and their capacities. And of course, the way when you train your child to put God in first place and the spiritual things above everything, then you're going to consider that the PhD level is not as good as the PhD, because nowadays we see society always talking about the PhD, the higher level.

And that ambition to get there, it's vanity. We know that. But it's not vanity to reach a higher level of spiritual education when it comes to the battles that we face down here.

[57 : 13] So in our life as a family, I always told my boys, if you can reach any level that can give you a profession to work in and reach a level to be able to supply for a family, it's fine.

And I never pushed them into the ministry. You've got to be a minister like your dad or anything like that. But I noticed that most of my kids that did were able to go to college and reach that level.

Today, they're going to the spiritual life. They are interested in serving the Lord. They are interested in being missionaries here or there. So it's interesting to see you have to have that freedom and discernment to talk to your children and explain things so they will be able to see what the Lord are guiding them to go.

Yeah, great question, Seth, on college. And of course, that's a very pressing issue in our day and age. And honestly, Lori and I, our background, we met in college.

And a lot of funny stories to go along with that and everything because I was a real piece of work back then, not to say that I'm out of the woods yet. So we're both college graduates.

[58 : 47] I've earned a master's degree as well. And it's been a challenge. But as far as our kids are concerned, I would say there's three main things that we need to keep in mind.

Our one would be issues of masculinity and femininity. One, and I'll unpack each of these shortly. Two would be vocation.

And three would be time and money. You know, for example, to tell the truth, I mean, we're being very deliberate as far as raising masculine sons and feminine daughters.

Call it misogynistic, patriarchal, sexist, you name it. Well, I'm more concerned about what the word of God has to say about raising our sons to be leaders, providers, and protectors.

And a part of that, in a work-a-day world, that oftentimes means training. You know, of course, we put a lion's share of our emphasis in our kids' education on history, literature, worldview.

[59 : 51] And yes, we do a heavy-duty math and science. I mean, Timothy was explaining to me the rocket science of jet propulsion in a Smithsonian museum in D.C. area. And I was absolutely astounded.

But his real heart is theology, family discipleship, you know, doctrine, worldview, and these things. And so I would love to see each one of my sons be called into ministry as, you know, pastors, missionaries.

But once again, just like Joel was emphasizing, Proverbs 22, 6, train a child in the way he should go, not the way we think he should go. And so each of our kids have different bents, have different, you know, temperaments, inherent gifts, talents, and abilities and things.

And so, for example, you know, our daughters, you know, they're both very different from each other. Not wrong, just different. But honestly, we're being very deliberate in raising our sons to champion the spirit of Titus 2 womanhood.

We do know what a woman is, and the Lord places a very high premium on being a wife and a mother. But having said that, you know, young ladies need to, you know, hey, love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

[61 : 08] You know, as far as, especially the Lord gives our daughters sons and be able to help them with, you know, their education and everything. Lori still balances a checkbook.

I mean, she's the CFO of Board Family Enterprises. She manages my vast hordes of wealth. So she's a numbers gal. I had calculus in high school, but that was a long time ago. But, and so, like I said, masculine and feminine.

And so whether or not the Lord calls our sons to, you know, pastoral ministry, by virtue of them being men, they're well aware that they can anticipate in some way, shape, or form, you know, teaching and preaching the word of God and ministry leadership, whether or not they're the pastor of their local church.

That's the kind of ethos of culture of manliness we need in more churches. Two, like I said, would be vocation. For example, like Paul had alluded to already, you know, if they say, hey, Dad, I think I'm going to be the next Ben Carson, a pediatric neurosurgeon.

Well, that means some higher education. And, of course, we're going to be well aware of those things, but chances are, you know, you're going to be closer to a chip off the old block more so than otherwise, as far as what is our heart and our passion.

[62 : 25] Hey, we love math and science. I mean, I'm a creation apologetics guy and everything, and everything. But it's like, once again, to be an astrophysicist, you know, is not my forte.

But it's like, hey, that being on the radar or in the telescope, hey, yeah, I get it. But once again, vocation, as far as what is, you know, like, okay, we have a son that is an amazing artist.

You know, he's a naturalist. I mean, he's a bug guy. I mean, he can tell you what, you know, he's a bird guy. He can, so basically, perhaps a creation scientist, you know, these types of things. But regardless, the old-fashioned virtues of the classical philosophy of education, as far as the trivium, grammar, logic, and rhetoric, basically, in other words, how to read and how to think and how to communicate, need to be at the forefront of our hearts and our minds.

But regardless, time and money is a huge issue. Because one of the things that we want to be very deliberate with our kids is that they don't waste their time, but redeem the time, and don't waste money, but invest it.

In other words, because one of the things that we're seeing with so many young people in America going the traditional college route, wasting tons of time, you know, just, you know, the brick-and-mortar college experience and getting nothing degrees, and they're indoctrinated into woke neo-Marxism, and, you know, they've blown tons of money.

[63 : 48] In fact, just recently, World Magazine featured a, basically, a lead article on, you know, it was called IOU. Basically, they were saying, yeah, most 18-year-olds have no clue how massive student loan debt will affect the rest of their lives.

And, of course, it directly ties into fertility issues. And, actually, honestly, the more education that a woman gets, the less kids she has. I mean, it's social science research.

It's readily evident in there. And so, one of the things that's encouraging, though, is a group of men and I, we were at Christmas time, we were talking, and one of the guys said, yeah, this is an amazing time to be a man, you know, a young man.

He says, the world is open before you. Talk to anybody that's in HVAC, skilled trades, you know, any of those arenas. They said, the men that are retiring out, I mean, it's like five to one replacement rate.

And you can make decent living and everything. Basically, on-the-job training. I know a homeschool grad. He is in diesel mechanic school right now. And he asked, basically, one of the people there, he said, how soon can we learn or use what we're learning?

[64 : 55] And he's like, well, like, the next day? I mean, and so, diesel mechanic. You can live anywhere in the country. But, anyway, like I said, masculine, feminine, you know, vocation, basically, you know, calling, but also understanding wherever the Lord directs you, you can honor the Lord in that arena.

But also, maximizing time and money and not wasting it. So, you want to wrap it up? I just had a couple of little... Yeah, no, go ahead. Yeah, let's go maybe another eight minutes or so. I got one question I want to get in.

Yeah, just a brief thing on college. I'm probably more negative towards college than anybody. But I've heard credible statistics that something like 95% of college grads don't use their course of study to make a living.

So, why did they spend, you know, \$100,000, \$200,000? What did they do that for? That's just not good economics, you know, aside from all of the wokeness and all that stuff.

And I think the days are long gone where you just are expected you're going to go to college. I mean, like, we've already talked about that. So, that would be one thing. And, again, the idea that there are so many trades that are very, very doable for almost anybody that can just really bring in.

[66 : 21] And everybody needs them, you know. Everybody needs the trades to survive. So, you know, find something to do that way. But, yeah, if you're going to be a brain surgeon, I guess I would want you to have a little bit of training on that first.

But, yeah, there are not very many of those. And so, that's kind of the short version. Cool. I have a question for you guys that have married off some kids.

So, for those that are looking to the future and looking to their kids find a spouse, what has your involvement been?

You know, there's everything from arranged marriages to, you know, creating a profile for your child on whatever the things are or just, you know, telling your kid, hey, find somebody good.

Figure it out. You know, all on your own. What should or what has parental involvement been in helping find a good spouse?

[67 : 25] Because it's not like there's a lot to choose from out there. Yeah. Start a family conference. I'm sorry. But I don't make any bones about it.

That's why we started the family conference. And the Lord has really blessed in that way. And it's not too long ago, Paul Turner called me up and said, hey, there's some guy interested in my daughter.

What do I do? What do I do? And, you know, what we did, starting out with Peter and Jessica, when, of course, he was coming to our Bible Institute.

So, that's kind of a natural occurrence. Yeah, you can kind of see what's coming, you know. But it's, again, that ability to get to know somebody.

And I know you can't always, the circumstances don't always allow you to really get to know the potential spouses. But, and I'm not saying arranged marriages, although the countries and the societies where they do that apparently have a much lower divorce rate than we do here.

[68 : 34] So, I don't know. Something's obviously not working here. And I don't think, I don't say that's the solution to it. But it's just interesting that that's the way it is, you know.

And, and so, when young men have approached us about our daughters, you know, I just kind of go through the drill and I can hear your testimony.

And, but as far as, yeah. Oh, no, I'm just cleaning this gun. You know, what's that country song? I'll be cleaning my gun when you come back. That's kind of cute. But, but how do you, how do you find that one?

We started when they were very, very, very young. You marry within the faith. You know, then there's great freedom. Paul says to the widows, you can marry whosoever you will.

And, you know, I don't, I don't agree with this. There's one person that God has picked out for you. And it's got to be that one. But I have told our children this. If you find someone that has all the values that you really believe are important, it will seem like that's the only person in the world.

[69 : 39] Right. And that's just the way it turns out, typically. But what was Paul's only requirement? Only in the Lord. And I just have to get on my hobby horse for, if you're a grace believer, you marry a grace believer.

Okay. You wait. You don't jump the gun. You just, that's just got to be part of it. I remember a question and answer time like this at, I think it was at Cedar Lake.

And it was, who was up in Northern, you know, Jetty and Wilson, Rollin, Rollin, I couldn't remember his name.

Rollin Wilson. He's been with the Lord a long time now. And he was taking the question, we talk about being not unequally yoked, but why do we hear this from grace believers?

You have to marry a grace believer. You need to marry a grace believer. And I loved his answer. He said, you know, when Paul said, don't be unequally yoked. Of course, he wasn't really talking about marriage there, but the principle applies.

[70 : 40] But the point he made was, and I really love this, he said, among the believers, I mean, this was a new thing. The body of Christ had just begun.

All believers were grace believers. If they were true believers, under the dispensation of grace, I mean, he wasn't getting into the kingdom saints versus all that. But everybody was a grace believer when this started out.

Okay. So, of course, he would say, marry a believer. That's right. Right? That's all you'd have to say. And we know that, you know, because of denominationalism and so forth, it's really gotten complicated.

But just hold that conviction. And I've seen it through the years where they have, you know, young people, a young man that we had at our conference this year, we did the music.

And he didn't marry until he was 35 because he had that conviction that he wanted to find a grace believer. And we had in our church in Wisconsin, one young lady, she was kind of the bell of the ball or whatever, and just a very lovely young lady.

[71 : 49] Okay. But there was really not a lot of options for young men in our church right at that time. And it wasn't as small. It was about a 200-member church. I mean, it was a good-sized congregation. And she was waiting for a grace believer.

And one guy started attending, and he was actually shorter than her, bald, just an average-looking guy. And, but he believed the word right, divided, and he was going to stand for it.

And she married him. Okay. And they've been happily married. I performed their wedding, and they've been happily married ever since. But, you know, young people, just don't lower those standards.

Oh, I just can't find a grace believer. We've got to keep coming to the family conference. Okay? And the movement's spreading now. So, that's good news for you.

All right? Don't give up. Yeah, of course, you know, our oldest is just 17. But, you know, all of our kids have friends. You know, I mean, the difference in your life a year from now will be due to four things, two of which are the places you go and the people you meet.

[72 : 54] You've got to go places if you're going to meet people. And the other two are the books you read and the challenges you face. In fact, one of the books that I read was written by Dr. Votie Bauckham. You know, in this venue, I'm sure you're very familiar with him.

He wrote in his book what he must be if he wants to marry my daughter. And I actually, you know, put together a top ten list of, you know, myself as far as what he must be. But also, I'm still working on the flip side of the coin.

You know, what a godly young man is looking for and a godly young woman. But one of the things that Dr. Bauckham, he mentioned in there is that, you know, as far as, you know, of course, there's a balance as far as, like, what Nathan was talking about as far as arranged versus, you know, and even, you know, I share with people about, you know, this event.

It's not like it's a meat market type of situation. This sounds bad, you know. But he did say in that book, he said, you know, he will most likely come or she will most likely come from the circles in which you run.

You know, as far as your arena of influence. And that's why, hey, dad and mom need friends too and everything. And also, one of the things that we've been very deliberate on in the spirit of Proverbs 3, 5, and 6 is trusting the Lord and deliberately being in prayer for their future spouses and the families in which they're being raised.

[74 : 11] As far as their dads, their moms, and their siblings, but especially their dads, especially from a man's perspective. And raising boys, we really concentrate and prepare them to be God's servant.

We have that prayer, not the project, but the prayer. We pray to the Lord that the Lord will help us to raise them in the way that they become man, responsible, and toward the things of the Lord, and inclined to be servants of the Lord.

And we, when we look back now, all of our boys are married, and they are married with girls, 100% from the congregations we established.

So, the Lord provided from the, as of the work that we did, the girls for them.

So, I see if you, it's very good to evangelize. Very good. We'll provide you many blessings, more than you think.

[75 : 43] I believe it was the Apostle Paul who said, because of the current state, present distress to remain single.

So, I, and I'll build on that in just a second, but I think much of what marriage has become today, the, the, the seeking the spouse, we can, we can, I can see the parallels between, was it Genesis 6, before the flood?

You know, it was, it was based on looks, and, and you can look at the description of how they were picking their spouses, and it's very similar, eerily parallel to the way we're finding spouses today.

But, but having said that, I do think there's something to be, to the, the idea of, we should not be afraid to talk about singleness.

You know, it's, it's, it's not a curse. You know, God can, God can use, you know, single men and, and single women.

[76 : 54] And, listen, we have a current distress today. But having said that, piggybacking off of that idea, when our kids understand that, that it's okay to be single.

There, there's, I don't know, maybe I'm, I'm just getting old and crotchety. But the one thing that just doesn't set well with me as, as, as, as a man, as a dad, is when guys and girls, and I've seen it, guys and girls, they get all consumed with, who are you going to marry?

Who are you going to be with? And what about that guy? What about him? What about her? And, and, and again, going back to what I said earlier, it's so important that as a father, and as a mother, you start those conversations a long time ago.

You're, you're, you're instilling in them, these are the principles by which you live your life. And, and, and by education of your children, because they see how your brother's being raised, they know that when I go and look for a man, I want to find a man like my father.

I want to find a man like my brothers. And the girls, or the, the, which one did I just do? The, you know, and the, the, the, the, the guys can look at how, how mom is, and how their sisters are being raised, and see those principles, and say, I need to find a spouse like that.

[78 : 27] So when it, when you come to that point, as a dad, you know, my, my, my daughter, I, I didn't have to sit there and say, now Elise, I don't think that so-and-so is a good option.

I don't care how cute you think he is. You know, because she was already doing the, the mental checklist. She was approaching it methodically, not all, you know, I, I can't wait.

She was approaching it with, he doesn't meet the qualifications. He doesn't meet the qualifications. You know, and this, this young man does.

And, and so, you know, I, I think, again, it goes back to educating our children. And, and, and I would just say, with, with my, my limited experience in this area, I, I would say the one thing is, I, I, I've told my kids this.

Don't be out there looking for who you're going to marry. Right. You focus on the Lord and pursuing Him, and you look around and see who's running beside you. Amen.

[79 : 38] And, and, and, you know, that's, that's a much healthier way to, to find a spouse. You know, you, you're either going to remain single because there ain't, ain't anybody around.

Or, or, or you're going to find that one who is going the same direction you are, not because they're pursuing you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.