

Titus 1:6

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[0 : 00] One more announcement I wanted to make sure, I don't know, maybe I missed it, but for, I think it's this Wednesday, Jamie, is that right? There's a rehearsal for the cantata. So there's a bunch of you who have signed up, you've got your music and your CDs, and hopefully you've been practicing, hopefully you've been practicing more than I have.

I'm going to have to work on that. But this coming Wednesday is our next rehearsal here at the church, and I think that's in the bulletin as well. So we had a great time this weekend with our family.

As many of you know, Jamie does a theater group for the homeschool community. It's down in Wilmington, so it's a little bit of a drive from here. But we had productions on Thursday night and then two yesterday.

And so if the kids look a little tired, that may be why. But I got to see four of the kids doing, they actually did three different plays. So Jamie's an overachiever, so she thought, well, if one's good, three's even better, right?

But thankfully, she's got a lot of help. There's lots of ladies who help out with all that. Two of the plays were written by students, which is really neat getting to see them use their gifts and talents for that.

[1 : 14] But I think my favorite was Isabella and Caleb dressed up as, you guys were rabbits, right? Yeah. Yeah, it was pretty awesome.

And you know, one of the things, I just could not stop smiling watching them in this play that they did. It was about 20 minutes long. I just, the smile on my face just would not go away.

And I was thinking this morning, you know, this is one of the benefits and the primary benefits of children. They bring you so much joy.

And so if, you know, if you have children, learn to enjoy them. That's why God gave them to us, for us to enjoy. Let's see if there was anything else before we get into the scriptures here.

Well, one of the things I wanted to mention, and this is kind of related, was this song that we sang at the cross. I love that song. And it ends with that chorus, And now I'm happy all the day.

[2 : 20] And, you know, we're not always happy every single moment. There's times of grief. There's times of frustration. All those kinds of things. But shouldn't that be part of, a big part of the Christian life?

As Christians are happy people. We have a lot to be happy about. And if you find in your Christian life that your life is not marked by joy and happiness, get into the Bible.

Remind yourself every day of what God has done for you. And if you do, you'll find yourself smiling a lot. Amen? All right.

We're going to jump back into the book of Titus here. So open your Bibles. If you've got one. Or your phones. Or whatever it is that you might be using. And we're going to jump into the book of Titus here.

We're, I don't know, six verses in. Taking our time. And Titus is a book written, we'll just do a quick recap, to Titus. Titus was a Greek.

[3 : 21] He was not a Jew. And that actually was a pivotal kind of thing in the whole history of the New Testament. And as we've taught for many years here, there's an important plot point that happens in the New Testament period of the Bible, in which God transitioned from working exclusively with this people called the Jews, to transitioning to working with Gentiles.

This was a new thing. For many Jews, it was somewhat shocking, actually, that this would happen. We know the story of Peter. He was called through a vision to go to the house of Cornelius and went there and told him about this Messiah that had come, Jesus.

And he saw the Holy Spirit fall on them, and he was shocked. What in the world is going on? And then later on, God calls Paul to a ministry.

And what was Paul called to? When he was called on that road to Damascus, God told him, you will be a light to the Gentiles. That's what I'm calling you to do, to be a light to the Gentiles.

And it took a lot of years of preparation for Paul's ministry, but eventually he was sent out on his first missionary journey, starting from Antioch, which is kind of his home base.

[4 : 44] And after he came back after that first missionary journey, he gave a testimony about all that had happened. And one of the things that it says there... I'm sorry.

We're going to have to use this? Okay. That's okay. One of the things that he said there is that God had opened up the door of faith to the Gentiles through his ministry.

And so it was through Paul, God called Paul, to bring light, the light of faith, to the Gentiles. But this was a new thing. For thousands of years, God had worked with his people called the Jews.

And so there was a little bit of controversy. And a controversy came up there in Antioch and other parts of the Gentile world where there were Jews. There were Christian believers, Jewish believers, who were starting to tell these new Gentiles coming to the faith, you need to become circumcised and follow the law of Moses because that's what a good Christian would do.

And it caused quite a little bit of a stir. And Paul decided he needed to go down to the hub, the home base for the Jewish Christian church.

[6 : 01] And that was in Jerusalem. And they had a big meeting, a council. And he brought with him this young man. Well, we're not sure exactly how old he was, but it seems like a young man named Titus.

Titus was a Greek and he was not circumcised. It wasn't common. It was a very Jewish thing. Nobody else did that kind of a practice. It was something that made the Jews distinct.

And I think that's one of the reasons why God had them do it. It made them very different from the rest of the nations. But his whole goal in going down there was to let them know what this gospel was that he was bringing to the Gentiles and that there was no law in it.

There was no requirement to keep the law, to put these Gentiles under the law. And it was his job to convince them of that. And he brought Titus with him. And he said, I'm going to make Titus a test case.

And so he bragged and said, after we left that meeting, Titus left, continuing to be uncircumcised.

[7 : 04] And so they had agreed, those Jewish Christian believers agreed, that these new Jewish believers who are coming to faith, they don't need to be circumcised.

And so we're actually going to, I don't know if today, but talk a little bit more about this because this is continuing to be a problem. It wasn't as if this Jerusalem council, as we call it in Acts chapter 15, just completely settled the matter for everybody.

It settled it for the leadership, thankfully, but there continued to be problems going on throughout the Gentile world with these new churches.

Well, we started getting into verse 6 and 7 here. Paul is giving Titus instruction for setting things in order in these new churches.

There's these new Christian churches. It's kind of a new thing. The Jews had the temple. They had temple worship. And then during the intertestamental period, we call, there's this period of about 400 years between when the history of the Old Testament ends and the New Testament begins with the Gospels.

[8 : 22] And it was during that time, many believe, that this whole concept of the synagogue, the Jewish synagogue, began. And that wasn't something that's part of the Old Testament law, but was something that especially grew up around the dispersion, we called them.

The Jews, they were exiled to Gentile parts of the world, and they didn't have a temple. But they built these learning centers, really, and places also of prayer called synagogues, and they would get together once a week to meet.

But this whole concept of a church for us New Testament Christians or grace Christians was kind of a new idea.

So Paul is setting things in order. We have this thing called the church, this global church. Anybody who is a believer in Jesus Christ is part of this global church.

But in each locality, and here, Titus is in the island of Crete, and there are actually multiple cities in Crete, Paul's giving instructions, I need you to set up order for these churches.

[9 : 35] And part of that is setting up leadership. So here he's talking about qualifications for elders. And we just started getting into that last week. And it's important that elders be qualified.

And as we pointed out last week, the qualifications tend to be around your character. You don't necessarily have to be a well-spoken person, though that's helpful, especially if you're teaching, right?

It makes it easier for the congregation if you have some practice speaking. And if you are somebody who is a teacher, it is good to practice. And it is something that you have to practice.

Some people think, well, I'm just not any good at that. I'll never do that. But if you practice those kinds of things, and some of those things are things you can just practice at home with your family teaching, and you can get better.

But that's not the primary qualification. You should be able to teach, but really the primary qualifications are around character. So let's read, and then we'll jump into some of the specifics here.

[10 : 43] Verse 5, For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you. If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or insubordination, for a bishop must be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

So we talked a little bit last week about this whole concept of being the husband of one wife. And what does that mean? And we talked a little bit about what it doesn't mean, but I think the primary focus here is the husband of one wife is you're a faithful man.

God created marriage, and he created human sexuality, and this really, I think, is something focused on being faithful in your sexual fidelity.

God created sex for marriage only, this romantic part of life that is so wonderful and beautiful, but for only between one man and one woman in a lifetime commitment.

And anything outside of that tends to lead towards destruction. And I'm sure many of us have seen this, sometimes experienced it in our own lives, the destruction that comes with sexual immorality.

[12 : 29] But when Paul says, the husband of one wife, the Greek there more literally reads a one woman man. So you're the kind of man that is faithful to one woman.

It's not necessarily saying that, well, you have to be married, because we know that there's many people in the scriptures. Paul, the author here, is one of them.

He's said in other places that he's not married. Some people say, well, maybe he used to be married. You know, we don't know that. But elsewhere in the scriptures, he mentions that he's not married.

And so it's not required that you be married, but if you are, then you need to be faithful to your wife. And if you're not married, you need to be faithful and chaste in your life.

And so I think that's what Paul is getting at here when he talks about being a one woman man. You know, there are, this whole concept of sexual fidelity, we live in a culture that is just a wash in sexual morality.

[13 : 45] We see it everywhere. You see it on billboards. It's advertised in commercials. You know, you put on the television or go to the movie theater and there's just all kinds of sexual immorality being promoted.

And it's easy when you live in that kind of a culture to become somewhat hardened to those types of things and for it to somewhat become normal, just a way of life.

But it shouldn't be for us Christians. We ought to give ourselves to the word of God and have our minds renewed by the word to know better than to kind of follow the ways of the world.

I had an experience years ago. I was part of a church and with the leadership of the church, the pastor of the church got caught in an act of sexual immorality.

And it caused a lot of uproar in the church. And you can imagine why, right? This is somebody who, from the pulpit, preached fidelity, but in his private life was caught not being faithful.

[14 : 57] And this was actually someone who was single. He was not married, but still caught in sexual morality. And so another pastor was brought in and he talked to the congregation and basically told them what was going on because they needed to know.

But then different leaders in the church decided, this isn't going the way that we want. There was certain, I think, power struggles that were going on.

And he asked the pastor, of course, to step down. And he asked, there was actually a family member who was also one of the, in leadership at this church, asked them to step down too because it was hard to be, you know, when it's a family member, right, it's hard to be judicious.

Well, there was a resistance and they said, we're not going to do those things. As the pastor who just committed sexual morality and got caught, I'm not going to step down. And of course, that's exactly the wrong thing to do.

But I was, I remember going to a church service later, this pastor who came in and tried to restore some order in the church, he left. Well, if you're not going to follow these instructions, I can't do anything.

[16 : 11] Another pastor came in from out of town. And I went and heard him. He came in to speak to the church. And he said, you know, what this other pastor did was wrong.

He said, if they would have called me first, then I would have tried to take care of this whole thing without any of you knowing what happened.

And I remember listening to that and being shocked out of my mind that if he would have been the one to come in, that he would have just basically covered up the whole thing. You know, maybe help the pastor along, but we don't want the church to know.

And I remember right then and there, I said, I can't come back to this place. This is a dangerous place. And that is true. Churches that allow for sexual immorality in their church, and especially among their leadership, are not trustworthy.

Any church where that kind of thing happens or where things are covered over instead of addressed is a dangerous place for your spiritual life.

[17 : 19] Amen? The next thing that he gets into is he says here in the next verse, so he's talking about marriage, and then he talks about family.

The husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or insubordination. So he goes from talking about really marriage, right, to talking about children.

And so this one verse, he's kind of encapsulating the family. Is your family in order? If you're going to lead a church, is your family in order? Do you have things right between you and your wife?

And are things good? Are you being faithful as a father? Now, this doesn't necessarily mean that you have to have children to be a pastor or an elder or a leader in a church, but if you do, if you do, then your family ought to be in order.

Your children ought to be, ought to also trust, be faithful. And I think that may be what this means. He's talking about children who are faithful.

[18 : 26] They also follow you in the faith. And you can imagine if you have a father who is a believer, but none of his children follow him in the faith. There's something wrong there.

And how, as a pastor or an elder or a leader in a church, could you lead others to trust in Christ when you're not able to even just bring your children along, right? And then he talks about your children.

And when he says here, not accused of dissipation or insubordination, he's referring to the children there, not the elder. But you have faithful children, and they're not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

This word dissipation is, I'm reading out of the New King James. I think the King James may use the word riotous. But it's the same word, I think it's only used twice in the Bible, if I remember correctly.

It's the same word used for the prodigal son. And most of us are familiar with that story. The prodigal son who wanted his inheritance, why? So that he could build a business?

[19 : 39] No, so that he could use it to fulfill all the desires of his flesh, to go gambling and eat fine food and maybe pursue women. And so that's the kind of word being used here.

The prodigal son and those kinds, the way that he lived his life before he came back to his father is that same word used here, dissipation or riotous living.

And then insubordination is just, we're familiar with that word. Usually it's the kind of a word that's used in the military when you are under authority, but you're being insubordinate. You could also use the word unruly or rebellious, and that's a term we use more commonly with children, isn't it?

Children in the home. Rebellious children. You know, in our modern culture, it seems to me, and I don't know if the rest of you have seen this, that there's actually an expectation that when a child becomes a teenager, that they'll become rebellious.

That's what they all do, right? And that's what we should expect. Is that right? Absolutely not. You know, we've had, we have seven children, if you don't know, and I got the full range from one-year-old up to 19.

[21 : 03] And I remember when the kids were younger, the kids were so cute. And they're still cute when they're older, but not as cute as they used to be. And we'd have people come up to us, like in a grocery store, people that, you know, we didn't know, and they'd say, oh, your children are so cute.

And then so many times, I just laughed thinking about it, so many times, how many times this happens, they say, they'll follow it up with, but wait until they become teenagers.

And it's this foreboding warning. They're cute now, but someday, when they turn that magical age of 13, they're going to become little demons. We just had a 13th birthday celebration for David, and kind of gave him a charge towards becoming a young man.

But one of the things that we have tried to have expectations for ourselves as parents, but also for our children, is that's not a normal way to live.

It might be a typical thing that happens in the culture, but that is not how things ought to be. In fact, in other cultures, even non-Christian cultures, for some of the things that you see here in this country, where children, let's say a 14-year-old, talks back to a father, that's shocking.

[22 : 32] Let's say a place like Asia. I was a missionary for a while in Vietnam, in Cambodia, in the Philippines, and in Asian culture especially, it's, and I think this is changing, unfortunately.

I think America tends to export a lot of bad culture. But for a child to talk back to or disrespect any elder, much less a parent, would be shocking.

And no child would do that. But in the culture in which we live, unfortunately, it's become fairly common. So one of the things that we found is that expectations, what you expect as a parent, is half the battle.

Because if you expect your children to become rebellious, to talk back to you, what's going to be the outcome of that? It's certainly going to happen.

Almost certainly, isn't it? So if you just have the right expectations, and you expect, and you look to the scriptures, and well, what does the scriptures expect from a child, whether they're 5 years old, or 10 years old, or 15 years old, or even 25 years old, or 30 years old?

[23 : 46] The Bible also speaks to adult children, how they ought to treat their parents. And so we ought to renew our minds again with the word of God. Know what really ought to be expected.

Not take cues from the culture, but what does God expect from us? When you see outward rebellion from a child, especially towards their parents, that isn't just, or even primarily, a failure of the child.

It's a failure of who? It's the parents. And even more so, the father. God has set families in order with a dad having the leadership responsibility.

And when children are out of control in a home and rebellious, it's primarily, usually, almost always, the fault of the father.

Fathers are the ones who need to supply discipline in the household and make sure that children grow up not being rebellious. And is that just for the sake of the parents?

[24 : 55] We might think, well, you know, parents just discipline their children because that's good for the parents, right? It makes their lives a little bit easier. But is that the primary reason that parents ought to discipline their children?

Absolutely not. Because it's best for children. Just like with our Heavenly Father as believers, you know, God wants what's best for us.

He wants us to live godly lives, righteous lives, lives set apart to Him, not just because, not for His own sake only, but for our sake because that's what's best for us.

Because when children, whether children of God or children of biological parents, rebel, are unruly, are insubordinate, their lives tend towards self-destruction.

And haven't we all seen that? Children who have no respect for their parents? And do they tend up being successful and well-rounded in their life? No, they tend towards lives of destruction.

[26 : 01] Now, doing this, having children that are compliant, that respect their parents, that are faithful, is that something that just comes about naturally?

If you just kind of hope that things turned out for the best? Not at all. It actually takes work. And sometimes I wonder if people actually realize this.

I see a lot of parents just kind of hoping for the best. And just hoping for the best is not going to produce the kind of results that you want. It takes work and it takes intentionality.

You have to have a plan. If there are certain expectations that you want for your children, you might have a two-year plan. Well, you might have a two-month plan. You know, you have a child who's, you know, maybe it's the terrible twos or, I never experienced the terrible twos.

For us, it was always the threes. Threes and fours. But, you know, you want to get out of that phase as quickly as you can. And so you might have a short-term plan.

[27 : 11] But then we have long-term plans. You have a two-year plan and a three-year plan and a five-year plan and a ten-year plan. And really, right, where do we want to see our kids in 50 years?

Where do we want to see them? And then you have to execute on that plan. But so many parents don't have a plan. One of the things that I've found is that if you have a plan early on and you implement a lot of these things, discipline and training and spiritual instruction, if you do it early on, then it's much easier later on.

Because later on, does it become easier? No, it just becomes more difficult, right? And I have a friend who their family, they came to the faith later on as adults after they had a few of their kids.

And he was telling me a few weeks ago, he said, you know, I look at my older few kids and they really struggle in life. And I attribute to that to early on, when they were younger, we didn't provide a good example to them.

And we didn't provide the kind of instruction that we should have and that we have for the younger kids. But you can see, you can see that kind of playing out. It's harder to play catch up. And so it's so important when children are young to provide that kind of instruction and training.

[28 : 40] It's not that it's impossible, you know, and there may be some who are listening to this saying, well, maybe it's too late, I'm just going to give up. And no, you should never do that. You know, if you haven't been faithful, whether as a Christian or maybe you became a Christian later on in life and you have children who are older, there's still opportunity, it's still time to try to inculcate the things that you ought to and do the things that maybe you should have done earlier.

It's never too late. But, if we have the opportunity, now, take that opportunity when our children are young. another thing, you know, it's easy to just focus on the externals when it comes to your children.

And I've seen over the years, and I've tried to be an observer of other families because raising kids is not easy, is it? There's a lot that goes into it.

It's a full-time job. In fact, it makes me think there's a book out there, the title of it, I'm trying to remember the guy's name, but it's called Full-Time Parenting.

And I just love the title. I actually haven't read the book. It's on my reading list. Full-Time Parenting. Parenting isn't just something you do every once in a while. It's a full-time job.

[30 : 02] And we need to treat it as a full-time job. But I've tried to take notice of families who are successful. They have children who are well-behaved and obedient and spiritually astute.

And what are the kinds of things that they're doing? Because I want to have the same kind of results. I remember even as a kid noticing, I was in the church youth group and I noticed a lot of my friends were kind of, eh, not the greatest.

But then there were these other kids who really had it all together and who were respectful and who I had a lot more respect for. And I took notice of how they did things as a family and noticed certain things like, you know, they always seem to have dinner together as a family every night.

That seems to make a really big difference. So that's something that I want to do when I get older. And there are things that you can pick up from others. And that's a part of being part of the body of Christ, right?

so we can learn from one another, encourage one another. But one of the things I also noticed was that there were certain families who looked really good on the outside.

[31 : 17] When they came to church, they were all, you know, everybody was on their best behavior. But then when, you know, not, at least they didn't think people were watching, things were very different.

And we call that hypocrisy. And so we should not be satisfied as parents that our children would just be well-behaved on the outside, well-behaved when others are watching.

But we want God to change their hearts. And what we have found over the years is that training is important, especially when they're young.

But teaching our kids to love the Lord and to know Him goes a long, long way. And it really is the thing that ultimately makes the most difference.

And I've seen a lot of people put on, you know, they do the training, they're very strict, they have lots of rules, and rules are good and important. Children need rules. But that love for the Lord was missing.

[32 : 24] And ultimately, when we've seen this so many times, the kids leave the home and the rules are no longer there, they don't have that self-governing capacity, which comes from a love for the Lord and a love to serve Him and please the Lord.

And that's really where the long-term impact is going to come in. Open up the Scriptures, teach your children to love the Scriptures, and to love the Lord, to know Him, to want to know Him more.

And you'll find that even though we can fail in many ways as parents, and I'm sure you have as well as I, have failed in so many ways, made so many mistakes, but if you just constantly point your children to the Lord, you'll find that that makes so much more of a difference.

I wanted to read something that my brother put together. My brother is actually a twin brother, so if you ever see somebody out there that looks like me, there's two of me out there.

And he lives in Illinois. They have eight children. And so we've been in this competition for years. And he's winning right now.

[33 : 44] No, it's not a competition. But we love their families so much and are so close to them. And we have been an encouragement to one another.

He's been such an encouragement to me over the years as a father and a man of God. And he put up a website and he posts things every once in a while. But there was something as I was studying this that I thought about.

I thought, this is really worth sharing. What does he call this? So he titled this, More Than Just Winging It, Developing a Plan for Spiritual Development in the Home. He says, as years ago, the Barna Research Group put together a report based on polling data among Christian families called Parents Accept Responsibility for Their Children's Spiritual Development but Struggle with Effectiveness.

That was the title. He said, the biggest takeaway was the following. And here's a quote. The survey data indicate that parents generally rely upon their church to do all of the religious training that their children will receive.

Parents are not so much unwilling to provide more substantive training to their children as they are ill-equipped to do such work. According to the research, parents typically have no plan for the spiritual development of their children.

[35 : 03] They do not consider it a priority, have little or no training on how to nurture a child's faith, and they have no related standards or goals that they are seeking to satisfy and experience no accountability for their efforts.

So that was from that Barna research piece. So he continues on, the responsibility of the spiritual development of the family falls squarely on the pastor?

No. On the parents and primarily the father. The research by Barna suggests that most families, 85%, 85% already believe this.

However, the fact that, quote, a majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious material with their children, end quote, reveals a major gap in desire versus action.

And, you know, we all want our kids to be spiritually nurtured and well-behaved and all these things. But it's not just the desire that's going to do it, is it?

[36 : 10] It's having a plan and executing on it. And he writes to fathers, fathers, God will hold us responsible for the duty of teaching and training our children or the lack thereof.

The responsibility for the vision, the plan, and the execution belongs to us. We need to take it seriously. We can delegate instruction to children educators or to Christian educators and pastors, but it must be under our supervision and be an addition to our instruction and not the overwhelming majority of it.

You know, we have sermons, you know, each week. You know, I'm delivering a sermon and this is a 30 or 45 minutes or if I get really long-winded, an hour. Hopefully not.

But one hour a week of spiritual instruction, is that enough for raising children? No. We have wonderful ladies here that provide spiritual instruction to the kids and they do that every week and they do an incredible job.

But is that sufficient for raising a child in the faith? It's not. It's a support. It's an assist. But it is not the primary means to raise children in the faith.

[37 : 31] So we can delegate some things, but we can't delegate the whole thing. We have to continue to lead and be the primary source of spiritual nourishment for our children.

Outsource culture, he says, our modern American culture is big on sending our children away to be taught by others. We send our children to schools to receive their academic instruction in things like reading, writing, arithmetic, and history.

We send them to sports groups to be coached in football, volleyball, or soccer. And finally, we send them to children's church, youth group, and Bible camps to be instructed in the Bible and spiritual matters.

Then he lists a few examples of some things. He mentions a sports coach. He says, my coach in high school was a womanizer who taught us how to take advantage of women.

And is that uncommon today for a coach to be like that? I wouldn't say it's uncommon. He says, my school teacher, and I know who he's talking about, was godless and worshiped evolution.

[38 : 42] We had a biology teacher. He would, every year for Darwin's birthday, would set up an altar to Darwin as a biology teacher in high school. My youth pastor went to jail.

And then he also talks about this pastor that I was talking about earlier who he didn't go to jail. He probably should have, but he didn't. He says, even if these outside roles are solid and wholesome like many are, even if they are, even if you find good people, which we ought to do, we shouldn't try to never expose our children to other people.

We need the body of Christ to help us in this effort of raising children. We need the community, the body of Christ to help us. We shouldn't take this thing on just by ourselves. But he says this, even if those outside roles are solid and wholesome like many are, they still should not replace or even outpace the role of mom and dad.

The sobering fact is research shows that a majority of parents do not spend any time, a majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week discussing religious matters or studying religious materials with their children.

Christian parents are not engaging their God-given role of teaching and training their children, not realizing that this role cannot be replaced or delegated. God told Israel to diligently teach his statutes to their children day and night.

[40 : 18] This is from Deuteronomy 6, verse 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

All the time, constantly be talking about the things of the Lord, talking about the scriptures, taking all the goings-on in the world.

Is there any lack of things to talk about? You open up a newspaper or pull up something online and see the things that are going on in the world. Does the Bible say anything about this?

What would God have us do here? How would God have us to think about this? God instituted Sabbaths and feasts that were intended to be a tool for parents to teach their children about the things God has done and the promises he has made.

[41 : 21] Parents should be the primary source of biblical and spiritual instruction to their children, and fathers should be leading this effort with diligence and fortitude. And he writes this, write down your plan.

If you're running a business, you have a business, let's say you just have a plumbing business. It's a pretty simple business, right? I mean, there's lots of things to know, but you want people to call you and then you go and you fix their problem and you charge them some money, but you have to have a plan, right?

If you don't have a plan, you'll never get your business off the ground. And if you already have a business, it will fail. Just like any other area of your life, failure to plan is planning to fail.

A lack of goals will result in achieving very little. Only through diligent goal setting and disciplined execution can we achieve worthwhile things. Just a little planning goes a long way.

When it comes to developing your family spiritually, here are the kinds of things we should be planning and preparing for. He says this, plan your daily, weekly, and monthly routines.

[42 : 38] Bible reading times, discussion times, family worship times, prayer times. You know, these are things that we ought to be doing and a lot of times we just, like he says, wing it.

You know, we shoot from the hip. And you can do those things and those, and when you, when you do have a prayer time just kind of shooting from the hip or a time where you read the Bible, when it comes to mind, that is good.

But if you, if you establish habits in your home of doing things on a regular basis, making it a regular pattern from your life, then you, in your life, then you ensure that these things will happen as they ought to.

Biblical concepts and doctrines you want to teach this month or year. What are the kinds of things you want your children to know? You know, this is a grace church. We love the teachings of grace, that God has saved us by his grace, that we're not under the law.

But I've heard from so many people, adults, who grew up in Christian households and they go to Bible school or receive some kind of instruction and they're just amazed.

[43 : 56] How come I never knew any of this? And it's been my goal that my kids, when they become adults, will never, won't have those, obviously will always be learning new things, right?

You know, when I'm 80 years old that I'll continue to be learning new things, even on into eternity, right? constantly be learning and growing. But there are things that are fundamentals of our Christian faith that we want our children to know and understand clearly before they leave our home.

If you don't have a plan, it's not going to happen. People in your circles and community that you want to be an influence to your family and how you can be intentional to make that happen.

we have the body of Christ, we have the church, we have other, and we have the local church like this one. One of the things that we have found is a good community for our family is our church, our local church, like this one, but then also other communities of like faith.

Maybe they don't have the same theological commitments or doctrinal commitments that we have here, which we think is so important, but people who love the Lord and who are committed to the scriptures and the Christian way of life and have tried to surround ourselves with those kinds of people because they can be a help along the way.

[45 : 25] You know, as a father or as a mother, there are strengths and weaknesses that we have and there are weaknesses that I have in my life where other men have strengths in those areas.

And if we surround ourselves with other mothers and fathers who are being faithful and even other children who can be good examples because that's a big part of it, right? In fact, you know, it's easy to think that, well, my kids, if we just live the Christian life as parents, then they'll just see, right, and observe and then that'll be enough.

And it is important that as parents we do provide a good example because if we don't, the things that we say will not be taken seriously. But it's not enough just to be a good example.

We have to provide instruction. So I've seen, you know, getting into the ditch on both sides, providing an example and no instruction and then providing instruction.

You're always providing some kind of example, right? It's really whether it's a good example or a bad example. So finding support among the body of Christ to help us in that regard.

[46 : 46] Finding children in our community who will be good friends, who won't lead our children astray or lead them towards rebellion, but those who are also faithful, who will be an example if they see one of our kids doing something that they ought to aren't going to be the ones who are going to join in but who are going to say, you know, you really shouldn't be doing that.

And what a blessing that is to any family, right? So, just to kind of summarize here, and I really didn't expect this to take our whole time, but when it comes to leaders in a Christian church, having order in your family is a prerequisite.

prerequisite, you know, if you do have a family, is a prerequisite to leading a church. Because if your family is out of order, if your children are rebellious and not spiritually nurtured, how can you provide order and spiritual nurturing in the church of God?

The Bible says, and I didn't look up this verse, that one who is faithful over a little will be faithful over much. That's from one of Jesus' parables.

It talks about being faithful over little, God will make you faithful over much. I think that's what this is getting to. If you're going to lead a church, a pastor, an elder, some kind of position of leadership, let's look to your family.

[48 : 20] And if your family is not in order, hey, let's get it in order. This isn't something, well, that can't be undone. But we can work to get our families in order, and then we can also be a spiritual leader in the church.

Wow, I've got a lot more material here, but I think I just have to quit. And I also want to save some time for some questions. So if we can get out the mic, I'd like to open up the floor and see if anybody has questions or comments or something they'd like to add in.

And we already have a volunteer, our first volunteer. So Joe, right up here. I have the New International Translation, or a version, translation, yeah.

And in verse, verses six, it mentions an elder must be blameless, and he repeats that in verse seven, an overseer, not quick-tempered, but given, I mean, household, he must be blameless.

Since an overseer manages a household, he must be blameless. That word blameless, you kind of get an idea of what it means, but then I don't know what it means.

[49 : 38] Could you help along that line? Yeah, blameless, because it sounds like perfect, right? And if we required that you had to be perfect to be a leader of a church, you know, we wouldn't have any leaders of churches, would we?

And so, I think the word, and that word actually is used many times here in Titus, but also many times throughout the whole scriptures, Old Testament and New Testament.

In fact, the Bible talks about Noah was blameless in his generation, and there are other people that the Bible talks about and describes as blameless. And so, you know, if you even read about Noah's life, was he perfect?

He certainly wasn't. And so, blameless, I think, has to do with really your public reputation. Is there opportunity in your life for somebody to bring a credible accusation against you in your life?

Is there somebody who could say, you know, this person cheated me or did some kind of wrong to me? And none of us expect anybody to be perfect, do we?

[50 : 46] Right? Because, you know, we all realize that people are going to fail and make mistakes, and, you know, one of the things in here is, you know, not being given to wrath, right?

But, you know, especially for men, you know, that's something that most men struggle with, is that you can get angry. And so it's not that you're never, ever going to get angry, but are you typified as an angry type of person, a wrathful type of person?

No, this is somebody who just blows up at any small thing. No, so blameless, I think, has to do with your public credibility. Are you the kind of person that people can credibly provide some kind of accusation against you that is legitimate?

And, you know, sometimes people might accuse somebody who is a righteous person of something, and it's not credible, so it's certainly not talking about that, but a credible accusation.

You're blameless when it comes to your public life, especially. Anything else? Nothing, huh?

[52 : 02] All right, I guess that either means I did a great job, or nobody was listening. All right, well, let's close with a word of prayer, then.

Father, for me, especially, this kind of thing, this topic, weighs heavily on my mind constantly. Of these seven children that you've given me to lead and to guide and to point them in the right direction, to train them, to nourish them, and so many here, too, that are in that position.

We even have grandparents here, maybe their children are not at home anymore, but still have opportunities to speak into the lives of their children, and also grandchildren, and sometimes great-grandchildren. I ask that you would take these words, Father, and cause them to enrich our hearts, to have the wisdom to know how we ought to make the plans and execute on them, raise children to be faithful, to love you, to avoid rebellion and sin in their lives, and to leave lives that our families would be lights in a dark world where parents and children would leave lives that are honoring to you, that are a great testimony to you in the world that we live in.

We ask that you would strengthen us in our weaknesses and all of these things. In Jesus' name, amen.