

Christ and Fathers

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[0 : 00] Good morning. How are we doing on this Great Father's Day? Outstanding. Alright, it is a great privilege to be here this morning and to be able to share with you.

First of all, I want to thank Nathan and Chris for teeing the ball up way high for me, putting the biggest driver they could find in my hand, and standing me in front of the straightest fairway there ever was by asking me to preach on this particular day.

Because as he said, for the last five months or so, I've been working diligently with the guy in the back of the room in creating a website especially for dads.

And it's actually called DadsTheKey.com. DadsTheKey.com. And for the past 26 years, I've been working many times with the Lord's help at being a parent, being a dad.

And it's been quite a challenge, but quite an awesome privilege as well. Alright, dads. They made it easy for you to leave you away because the kids came out to you.

[1 : 07] I'm asking you to come down here to the front and stand to start off here this morning. All fathers, get on down here. Get on down here and stand. And stand down here until I tell you otherwise.

Now, just make your way across here. My goodness. It's awesome. Stand right here. That's good. You can look out at the crowd. You can look out at the crowd. That's fine. Now, just to get an idea of who all I have to actually preach to this morning, I want to also ask a few other people to stand. That is, would the wives of all these men up here please stand and remain standing? Okay.

Excellent. Wives of all those. And next, I would like to ask if we have any single young men who have the slightest inkling of desire to be a husband and perhaps father one day, would you please stand?

Alright, we've got some bold men here this morning. And last, but certainly by no means least, if we have any single young women with the slightest inkling of desire to be married to a great husband and father one day to their children, would you please stand?

[2 : 26] Alright, great. Congratulations for being bold this morning and standing. Alright, thank you for standing. That looks like I've got a great audience to preach to this morning because what I have to share applies to each and every one of you.

Okay? Everyone but the dads can be seated. Alright? Alright? And, um, now dads, it is a known fact, okay, that our day will never equal, much less exceed, the glitter, the glamour, and the attention of our counterpart's special day.

Right? Okay? We just, we just have to accept that fact. Okay? As they are indeed the glue that holds the family together.

Alright? Alright? But even that great philosopher and spokesman for the family himself, Jim Carrey, said that behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes.

Okay? Okay? Okay? Okay? Yes, we can look to Jim Carrey for a lot of great wisdom. But, men, I do want you to know that I come bearing gifts.

[3 : 41] You've already received some gifts this morning, but I have another special gift for you. And that is, my favorite daily devotional. It's called The Word for You Today.

And it's put together by Bob Gass Ministries. Bob Gass and his ministry is located in Alpharetta, Georgia. So I want you to have a complimentary copy. And you can order those if you want to continue to get those.

You can, I've been using this with my family for the last few years and have thoroughly loved it. It's a great in-the-car, on-the-way daily devotional that Grant and I are using on a regular basis.

But I love this and I want to give that to you as well. And in case, you know, you still would like to have another gift, I've got one more gift for you at the end of the service.

As you go out, look for Joel Whetstone. He's going to be handed out to you as we go. It's going to kind of be a summary of the message. Okay? Let's give them a round of applause here.

[4 : 47] Thank you, dads. Thank you. All right. All right.

We're working with a clicker that hopefully is going to work for us. And if not, as it's not right now, my trustee, John.

Okay. Okay. Charles Steinmetz. I'm sure you're all familiar with Charles Steinmetz. Charles Steinmetz was an electrical engineer with an enormous intellect. Okay?

At the time of his death, he held over 200 patents. I don't know about y'all, but I'm still working on my first, and I'm not doing very well at it. Okay? Okay. After retiring, Steinmetz was asked by a major appliance manufacturer to locate a malfunction in their electrical equipment, something that none of their experts had been able to do.

So Steinmetz agreed to do that, and he spent some time walking around and testing the various parts of the machine complex. And finally, after a period of time, he took a piece of chalk out of his pocket, and he marked an X on a specific part of one machine.

[6 : 02] The manufacturer's people disassembled the machine, and to their utter amazement, found that the defect lay precisely where Steinmetz had placed the X.

Several days later, the company received a bill for \$10,000. Now, mind you, this was back in the early 1900s. Okay? So that had to be probably equivalent to about \$100,000 or more today.

Okay? Received a bill for \$10,000. Well, they protested the amount and asked him to itemize it. So Steinmetz sent back an itemized bill, which said, making one chalk mark, \$1.

Knowing where to place that chalk mark, \$9,999. Now, I love that illustration. Okay? Almost any time I preach, I'm able to find a way to use it.

Okay? Absolutely love it. But it never hurts to be highly skilled at what you do, does it? Never does.

[7 : 05] Steinmetz knew that he knew where to place that X. And you may think this is rather arrogant for me to say today, but I declare to you today that I know exactly where the problem and the solution lies with our country today.

I know exactly where it is. And so if you have a direct line to the White House and President Obama or to the Congress, you may want to give them a call and let them know that contrary to all the polls and the sound bites, pardon the English, it ain't about the economy, stupid.

Okay? No, but rather the problem and the solution in our country lies with the most important person within the most vital of the three institutions that God has ordained here on earth, and that is fathers in the home.

And that's where I want to focus my attention for the next few hours, I mean minutes, that we have on this special Father's Day. But I want to talk about what makes a great father.

A father that is honored and revered for being the leader that genuinely loves, encourages, directs, and fights for each member on his family team.

[8 : 21] And I believe the ingredients that make up what a great father is are found in a model that I created while putting together my website that I call the five core values for dads.

And, you know, I don't know how many of you saw the great movie recently, Act of Valor, about the Navy SEALs. How many of you saw that movie? Fantastic movie. My son and I, we've only seen it about three or four times now.

All right, but early in that movie, one of the Navy SEALs, he said, we all need a code, an ethos to live by. And I couldn't agree more.

And the five core values are my code to live by as a man of God, as a husband, and as a father, and are what I want to present to the fathers of this country, beginning with the fathers here at Christ Family Church, in hopes that in some small or great way, God might use them to revive and restore the heart of the home.

So let's look first. The first core value that I want to share with you is that a great father establishes his life and his family on the sure and trusted foundation of the Word of God, the Holy Bible, which will endure forever.

[9 : 39] Now, dads, you don't have to take perfect notes on this because at the end, you're going to have a compilation of these five core values as a final gift from me here this morning.

But Webster, Noah Webster in his 1828 dictionary, he defined foundation as the basis or groundwork of anything, that on which anything stands and by which it is supported.

Now, you know, think about this. Whatever facet of life that we're talking about, whether we're talking about a physical home, a tall skyscraper building, or a sports team, or a church, or even an individual life, of all the particular individual parts and pieces that it takes to put those together, foundation is the absolute most important thing.

Everything else hangs or falls on it. Okay? And we're talking here today about who or what we look to as our source of authority for life.

And I've got to tell you, folks, I mean, I could talk the entire rest of the morning on this one point. I mean, to me, there are so many great truths and rich principles to mine from just this one point right here about the foundation.

[10:56] So important. But for the sake of time, I don't have that time. But one of the greatest illustrations that Jesus ever gave, and probably the best He gave, as far as the importance of the foundation that we build our lives upon, is in Matthew 7, 24 through 27.

And let's read this together. I love it. It is, Jesus said, and this was at the very end of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, Now, I see a cause and effect relationship in that passage right there.

And let's look at that. Okay? The first cause is Jesus is talking about the person who hears and does the Word of God. And He likens that person to a wise man who builds his house upon a rock. What is the effect of that person's life and decisions? Well, his house and his life stands firm amidst rough weather and the hard times.

Now, conversely, the person who hears and ignores the Word of God, they hear it, but then they just go on about their way, as though there's no relatively little, if any, importance to it.

[12:48] That man is like a foolish man who builds his house upon the sand. And the effect of that is that his house and his life falls flat amidst the rough weather and the hard times.

You know, I've walked on sand as early as yesterday. We came back from a week in Panama City. And I was walking on sand as early as yesterday. And two things I know relative to sand that you know as well.

Number one, it's a horrible thing to build a house upon. Okay? And in comparison, Jesus is saying the person who builds his house on the sand, that is, who hears but does not do his Word, is equally as foolish.

And you can't build a life upon that as well, hearing and ignoring the Word of God. You know, according to Jesus, there are only two foundations in life that we as human beings can build our lives upon.

We can build our lives upon man and his foolish reason, or we can build it upon God and his infinite wisdom. Now, think about it with me.

[14:02] Where do we see or where can we see these two foundations lived out today? And the effect and the result of those. You know, occasionally we hear about people who are basing their lives and living their lives on the Word of God.

And we rejoice in that. We get excited about that. But more frequently, we hear and read every day of people who built their lives upon the sand of man's foolish reason.

Of what I call the four Ps, the things of the world. So, popularity, pleasure, possessions, and power and position. Okay? And, you know, we are hearing and ignoring the Word of God.

And you know what? The result of those that we see are either their lives collapse, as we saw in the last couple of months. One, a former pro bowler in the NFL, Junior Seau, that probably you guys in particular remember.

He committed suicide. You know, as early as a couple of months ago. His lives collapsed before the public. But for those whose lives don't just collapse, you know, they end up, they're revealed to just be more or less empty.

[15:12] Okay? And, you know, there's one comparison here, you know, today in this day and age in which we live, that's being played out, no pun intended, on the football field.

And that is between Tim Tebow and Tom Brady. Last year they met together shaking hands for the very first time at, you know, at the 50-yard line.

Okay? Many of you guys in here, you know, I know are football fans. And we all know about Tim Tebow's life, or at least all that we know about it. Tim Tebow is a shining example of a young man who has based his entire life, thanks to his parents and others around him, who based his life on hearing and doing the Word of God.

Okay? His life is built upon the rock. But Tom Brady, okay, as much as I love Tom Brady, okay, and he is one of my favorites, Tom Brady, let me tell you a little bit about Tom Brady.

All before the age of 30, he had three Super Bowl rings, two Super Bowl MVP trophies, named to the Pro Bowl several times, even a bulleted summary list of his accomplishments can go on for pages.

[16:27] He's married to a supermodel, has a contract in the millions. And the things that you would expect from a man that many are saying may be the greatest in NFL history.

Okay? Tom Brady embodies the lifestyle of what I call the four Ps. Okay? Pleasure, popularity, possession, power, and position.

Tom Brady has it all, guys. He has it all. And yet, what I want you to hear and see is, in a 60 Minutes interview back in December of 2007, Tom Brady expressed the following.

He said, why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, hey man, this is what it is. I reached my goal, my dream, my life.

I think, God, it's got to be more than this. Can you believe this? I mean, this can't be what it's all cracked up to be. I love playing football and I love being quarterback for this team.

[17:28] But at the same time, I think there are a lot of other parts about me that I'm trying to find. And the narrator asked him at the end, what is the answer? And Tom Brady says, I wish I knew.

I wish I knew. You know, I just, I read that and I just, I just say a big wow. Is that not amazing? Guys, we have right before us and in an interview five years ago from a man's own lips who has everything the world could ever give him.

And always will probably. And that's what he expressed. There's quite a difference between the foundation that Tim Tebow has built his life upon, wouldn't you say? Dads, there is nothing more important than making the Word of God the foundation of your life.

Okay? And as my good friend, Robert Andrews, and I'm going to refer to him several times here through his book, The Family. Okay? Great book that I've had the privilege of reading through and learning a lot from him.

He says there is a big difference between saying that you believe the Bible and actually living it out and putting it into practice. And I want to show you one other thing here, guys.

[18:47] And this to me is what it means to make the Word of God the foundation of your life.

Every thought, fathers, every thought, plan, and decision about yourself, your marriage, your family, your finances, your vocation, your recreation is run through the filter of the Word of God.

And it comes out that you have a commitment that you're going to do exactly what the Word of God says and exactly how it says to do it. And you're going to avoid exactly what the Word of God says to avoid.

That to me is what it means to make the Word of God the foundation of your life. Not just saying it, but actually living it out. And one last thing I would say on this point is keep in mind, fathers, it is not just your life and eternity at stake.

It's the lives and eternities of multiple generations that will be following in your footsteps. Okay? Very important. Now, now that we've laid the proper foundation for you dads, we need to put the framing and the walls in place.

Okay? And that's the second core value. And that second core value is that a great father embraces his God-ordained role as head of the home.

[20:08] And the delegated authority God has given him to carry out that responsibility with firm and compassionate leadership. You know, there are many things that husbands and wives can base their view of family and their roles in it on.

And Robert Andrews mentions in his book several. Our original family upbringing, which is the number one influence. Also, movies and TV, i.e. Hollywood, pop psychology, peers around us, trial and error.

And lastly, the church. But don't be deceived because the church can be very unhelpful and confusing here. Okay? But did you know that God has clearly laid out a divine authority structure for the family?

He has. He has laid out a divine authority structure and is found in 1 Corinthians 11.3. And that passage says, Paul says, But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.

It's all in there. It's amazing. And there's the divine authority structure. We have God the Father, Jesus Christ, man. I changed woman to wife because, men, you know, God obviously doesn't intend that we be the head of every woman, nor can we be, right?

[21 : 40] I mean, it's a big enough job to be the head of one, right? And I added children because of the obvious passages in the New Testament about children being under the rule and the authority of their parents.

But there is our divine authority structure. And I do want to say, like in the divine family, the authority structure in the earthly family, it relates to function and not to value or worth, not to the value or the worth of the individual.

And how wonderful that is, but the world doesn't seem to get that, do they? Whenever we start talking about the men being the heads and the authorities in the home, what do the women and others in the world start saying?

They start crying out, you know, suppression, and that sort of thing, okay? It's a misunderstanding of God's ideal in this whole authority structure that we have.

But there can be some challenges, dads, to fulfilling this divine authority structure. First of all, there could be a lack of leadership on your part. There is a syndrome that I refer to as strong at work, weak at home.

[22 : 56] Okay? That jumps on a lot of men. I mean, man, they can go to work and they can have the mentality, it's get her done.

And then once they pull up to the house and walk in, it's let her do it. A big difference. Big difference. Get her done at work, let her do it at home.

Alright? And that can easily lead to a second challenge, and that is a strong-willed wife who has natural take-charge abilities that maybe has had to take that responsibility in the past, and guess what?

They don't want to give up power in the home. Okay? Something very serious to think about. And the other one is just within our entire society and culture is the whole feminist movement which hates God's divine authority structure for the family.

they're all about destroying it and doing away with it. But you know what? Whatever it is, whatever it takes, dads, we must assume our role of leadership and authority in the home.

[24 : 02] And to not do so simply means that we are outside the will of God in that area of our lives. And we need to repent, and that we need to sit down, and we need to have a powwow with our wife, maybe even our kids, because guys, we can give over power to our kids in the home as well.

We may have to sit down and have a meeting about that. But dads, where do we get our example of leadership from? You know, if we're the head of the home, where do we get our example of leadership from?

Who's up above us? Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. The supreme example of love and servanthood.

Just as Jesus completely yielded to the will of His Father in the divine family, we are to yield our will to our head, which is Jesus Christ.

How awesome. And just imagine that. If that were being played out, you know, in every home, even in every home of professing believers throughout this country, what a difference that would make.

[25 : 08] There's no one between us and Jesus Christ. There's no church. There's no elder. No pastor. No one or no thing that's in between us.

And if we're getting our lead from Him, our lead and our inspiration from Jesus Christ, I believe there's going to be much fewer problems and headaches for us to have to deal with in that regard. So, dads, if you want your home to be a place of harmony and great vision, we need to follow God's blueprint, which is His divine authority structure.

Now, next, we move on to relationships in the kitchen and in the master bedroom to continue with the home analogy. Okay? And that is, thirdly, what makes a great father is that he cherishes his wife by treating her in words, actions, and attitudes with the highest of respect, value, and honor following the example of Christ.

Now, you know what? In my work, I'm in insurance and I work with people on Medicare. So, day in and day out for the last six years, I've been visiting in the homes of many 65-year-old and up individuals and couples.

[26 : 27] And I can tell you this, I've been in several homes that the tension between husband and wife, you can cut with a knife. Now, that's not just a problem for 65-year-olds and up, okay?

It can jump on even young couples, okay? Very soon after that wonderful honeymoon, if you're not careful. And after six years of being in that line of work and almost 30 years of being married, I can tell you this for sure, cherishing our wives, man, does not come naturally.

Wives, can I get an amen on that? A soft one. Not too loud. Don't rub it in. Don't make it too hard. But you know, our human nature works to the contrary.

The longer we are together, it tends to be that the less we cherish one another and the more we tend to argue and fight and bicker with one another, right?

That's the way human nature tends to be. And why is that? Well, it's because anyone that you live with for any length of time, particularly for years, you know, years on end, you come to see them for who they really are.

[27 : 41] Their imperfections, their weaknesses, their anxieties, and that causes you to tend to be more critical than, you know, and less cherishing towards them.

But praise the Lord, it's not at all about relying on our human nature, is it, Dad? Instead, this is about cooperating with the divine nature that resides within us.

Cooperating with the Spirit of God. And that's what we have to do, men. I mean, this is a spiritual issue. And it's all about us allowing the Spirit of God who lives within us to control us by faith in our very words, actions, and attitudes.

You know, God's really convicted me of that even going back several months as I started putting together the website of just the way that I treat Gail. And he's doing the work on it.

Now, he's still working on me, okay? And he'll continue to be working on me for the rest of my life. But thank the Lord, I've got a very patient wife. But anyway, the bottom line is here, you know, if you're not doing too well at this, Dad's, you're either trying too hard yourself or you're not trying at all.

[28 : 59] Okay? The bottom line, it's about that we cannot do this. We cannot accomplish this in our own strength. Now, one of the verses I really love about this is 1 Peter 3.7.

And Peter says in there, you husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way as with a weaker vessel since she is a woman and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life so that your prayers may not be hindered.

I'm going over here to grab something this morning that I all but had to fight my wife to get it out of the house this morning. And I will quote her.

She said, honey, that is \$150 right there. You cannot take that out of the house. But here it is this morning. Okay? If I drop it, guys, please come protect me because I'm dead mean.

Okay? You know what? Very fragile, fine piece of china glassware here. Okay? Moving these, this set last year, we wrapped them in four to five times the normal paper.

[30 : 15] Okay? Why did we do that? Because they were made with TLC, tender loving care, that's exactly how we have to treat them or else they'll break.

Okay? You know, a hundred pieces of your board. And I'll come swiftly behind you as far as being broken. But you know what? That is exactly what Peter is, I believe, is getting across here.

That is exactly the same way that he's saying, man, that we need to treat our lives. We need to treat them like they are a prized possession. We don't use these glasses every day.

We only use them on special occasions like you do in your home. Treat them like they're a prized possession like this glass. Okay? Treat them with tender, loving care.

yeah, that's why I brought that this morning. I think I better put it right back over here. Okay.

[31 : 19] But anyway, let me share with you a couple of practical ways to apply this. First of all, guys, I encourage you to thank God every day for your wife's unique qualities and abilities.

And I want you to, and a great thing to do is to treat her like you did when you first met her and you started dating her and you were trying to win her over.

You were in that conquering phase. Okay? There's a guy sitting on the back row back there in a black shirt by the name of John Overton. John has recently just completed that conquering phase.

Okay? So we can have John come up and give us a great dissertation on that conquering phase. He's just gone through that.

He has won that girl back there, that wonderful girl Mallory, and they're soon to be married. But that's one thing, guys, I want to encourage you to do. Treat her like you did when you were trying to win her over.

[32 : 23] And the second thing is whether you've been married six weeks, six months, six years, or 16 years, is guys, pick out a pen and paper and write down and make a list of all the things that you loved about your wife when you were dating her that made you want to marry her.

Okay? I think that's one of the most important and significant things to do for any young guy engaged, recently married, or whatever. Write those things down because, trust me, you will tend to forget them over time.

Okay? The busyness of life, the challenges of life will cause you to easily forget those things and you can begin to look at her as an adversary if you're not careful.

Okay? Now, guys, if there's only one thing you remember today, I want you to remember this next slide, this next quote. And it is, when you're tempted to criticize your wife's faults, remember, that it was those very faults that kept her from getting a better husband.

Okay? Wives, there's another amen right there. Okay? Let's read that one more time. When you're tempted to criticize your wife's faults, remember, it was those very faults that kept her from getting a better husband.

[33 : 48] Okay. Now, on to the other bedrooms in your home. The fourth core value, the fourth thing that makes a great father is that he covenants along with his wife to be faithful stewards that love their children by training and equipping them with Christ-like character and purpose in the limited time that they are entrusted with Him.

You know, the way the world views children and the way God views them is totally different. Okay? The world says we have to endure them. God wants us to enjoy them.

The world says they're largely a burden. God wants them to be a blessing. Amen? Okay? But it's totally different the way the world views them and the way God does.

But if you buy into a core value number one and number two that we've already looked at, then seeing children as God sees them will not be an issue for you. Okay? One of my favorite passages in all the Bible on children is Psalm 127 verses 3-5.

There is an incredible word picture in this passage here. Let's read it. Behold, children are a gift of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward.

[35 : 08] It doesn't sound like a burden or an endurance test right there to me, the words, does it you? Get this. Here's the word picture. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one Jew.

Think about that. Think about that warrior pulling back that bow. Pulling it back all he can. How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

They shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate. Guys, as heads of our homes, we have an incredible privilege and responsibility to make a mark on our children.

And it's not a question of whether we'll make a mark. It's just a question of what kind of mark we'll make and how deep that mark, how impactful that mark will be. You know, the world can be going loony around us and I think we'd all agree that it is, but our homes and everything that comes in contact with our homes can be a place of peace and can be a place of great vision of being imparted.

Just a matter of what we choose to do. You know what? There are few areas where I believe the church has missed the mark more than in the area of equipping parents for their vital ministry of multiplication in the home.

[36 : 28] And here's a quote I want to share with you. I believe that the number one equipping ministry of the church should be that of equipping parents to train their children in Christ-like character and purpose and to extend His kingdom to the next generations.

You know, why is it that much of the modern church and particularly youth ministry today sees their role as being entertainers? Okay? Wouldn't you agree that?

That's primarily what a lot of churches and youth ministry see their role as today is being entertainers. Why in the world would you feel like your job needed to be relegated to entertaining when you understand, if we can go back, when you understand that you've got the great vision of imparting to your children just like the arrows in the hand of a warrior that you're shooting out, you're aiming to shoot out straight and sharp arrows into the next generation.

And you have that priceless opportunity and privilege in the children that God entrusts to you. And it's a very limited time as we've said. But you know what? I think the greatest tragedy for a man and a father is not that he fails to achieve a six-figure or even a seven-figure income in his work.

No way. I believe the greatest tragedy for a man is to fail to see himself and his role in a family. To only have a vision that he is a provider that puts food on the table, that puts a roof over his family's head, and maybe provides a college education.

[38 : 11] But that's about it. And then once that job is done, then he can get back to more pertinent and important things like his golf or tennis game or trading stocks or traveling the world. Folks, that is to me the greatest tragedy for a man and a father.

Because I want to share with you, I don't know if you and your lifetime dads have arrived at your life quote, but I want to share with you mine. And you can imagine it's out of Robert Andrews' book, *The Family*.

And that is, nothing is more satisfying, more fulfilling to a man than to have those in his family over whom he has ruled reflect in their thoughts, words, and deeds what he has given his very life to build into them.

His influence for the kingdom is extended into the next generation and will indeed live on through the ages as his children perpetuate the change. Now, can the four Ps, the four Ps, popularity, pleasure, possessions, power and position, we've already seen folks, we've seen it from Tom Brady's own lips.

Those can't come near to achieving that kind of vision. And the younger you come to realize this, young men, the better, because it will spare you, it will prevent a lot of wasted years.

[39 : 29] Don't be out there thinking that, you know, your greatest accomplishment is out in the workforce. No, that's not it. Your greatest achievement is in your home, right where your family and your children are.

If you want to see your children's children walking in God's ways and having a major impact for the kingdom generations to come, then dads, you and your wives need to commit as a team to making that a significant investment.

And as far as resources, I have plenty on my website that I would share with you, dadsthekey.com. Now, if this is all true about children, then the last part about what makes a great father has to do with that time in a dad's life when he's reaching or soon to be at the empty nest, okay, which we're not too far away from.

We've got about three more years before Grant, man, is out of the house and we have achieved that empty nest status. The last point of what it takes to be a great father is he enlarges his vision and calling by investing these values in as many men as possible, young, middle, and older age through foster parenting, adoption, and or discipling relationships.

You know, obviously, the very first spiritual battle that we must win, dads, is in our own domains, in our own homes. But when we reach that point where the nest is empty or soon to be empty, the temptation for us is to kick back and kind of, you know, attain a mentality of just enjoying life.

[41 : 12] Okay? But I want to ask you, at any point in our lives, do you think God wants us to focus on ourselves and our own individual wants and needs or on others and their needs?

I think you know the answer to that question. And the last passage that I want to share with you is one of my favorites from 2 Timothy 2.2 where Paul said gave Timothy the charge, and the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

You know, there's four generations, there's four spiritual generations in that one verse right there. Four spiritual generations. Now, I want to just share with you two ways that God has been working that out in my life and in mine and Gail's life recently.

First is, is that as God led me to start creating the website, a lot of it was based on the book that I've shared with you, *The Family*, and I have recently started a second group with young men, many of whom are in this church, to go through this book right here to walk them through the principles of biblical family life.

And it has been a blast. I'm excited. We're just kind of getting started with the second group of guys, about five or six guys, and I'm loving it. The other thing where God is working this out is in mine and Gail's life is where we've opened ourselves up to becoming foster parents.

[42 : 48] After about 10,000 pages of applications and thousands of questions, we're just about ready to be foster parents. That was a little sarcastic note right there.

There's a lot of work that you go through to be foster parents and if you are one, you know what I'm talking about. You know even more. Do you know what? Truly, the sky is the limit if and when we

just open ourselves up to God and let Him lead us to other people around us that need spiritual guidance, direction, and courage.

The sky is the limit. And I want to conclude with one of my favorite stories and it's from a guy named Russ Crossan who's a family friend of ours who's written a book.

I know at least a couple of guys personally who are authors. Russ is another one and he wrote a great book several years ago called *A Life Well Spent*. And in his book on the chapter entitled *Posterity*, Russ talks about flying out to another state one weekend where he was going to spend with two men and their names were Paul and Jim Montague.

Paul was the dad in his early 70s and they'd started a small manufacturing business several years ago and the son, Jim, was working with him in it now and Russ was going out to Russ had been working with them on implementing biblical financial principles in their business and since they were gathering their family together for a reunion, they thought it would be a great idea for Russ to come out that particular weekend.

[44 : 27] So he flew out, they picked him up, he got there and he says in his book when he got there and he saw all the four or five generations there all together, he says he had little idea of what he was in store for.

And he said when he reached the entire, and I'm just going to read this as we finish up here, when they realized the entire Montague family was going to be together, they decided to be beneficial to bring him in.

At least 100 people representing four generations were at this family reunion. As I mingled through the happy throng meeting many of the family members, I noticed a unity and harmony that is rare in many families today.

I was especially impressed with the relationships between the generations. The children and adults interacted in a very mature and respectful manner, seeming to genuinely enjoy each other.

The jet skis on the small lake next to the house were in constant use with the older kids and adults helping the younger kids. The food spread on tables under the shade trees provided a setting for wide ranging conversation as the family members ate together.

[45 : 33] But what I wondered was behind the interactions I was observing, why and how did this family get along so well? I decided to ask Paul, the patriarch of the group.

After all, I was just beginning to my own family and I welcomed his advice. Paul explained to me that in six generations of Montagues, there had been 11 ministers, four lay ministers, 15 music ministers, 20 Sunday school teachers, seven missionaries, seven professors, 17 school teachers, and 12 Christian college students.

What a heritage I thought. What was the secret to ensuring that generation after generation would pass on to the next, the essentials for leading lives that counted for eternity?

When I asked Paul this question, he motioned for me to follow him into the house where he pulled an old book from a shelf in his library and he dusted off its cover. He flipped a few pages and stopped, then he handed it to me and said, Russ, this is the key to what you see out here today.

On the page were words spoken by his grandfather Daniel Montague more than a hundred years ago on August the 2nd, 1882. At the age of 77, he had addressed a similar family reunion, telling his loved ones this, Now if you wish those principles established and carried out by your descendants, inculcate into the minds and hearts of your children the principles of religious instruction.

[47 : 06] everything almost that is evil, everything almost to subvert the religion of Jesus Christ is at work and it is absolutely necessary to train the rising generation in the principles of Christ.

It is the great work of the country. For Christian institutions, friends, we have reason this day to thank God. And what I ask of you who are now on the stage of action is that you should be true to the principles of Christ and humanity to the name and characteristics of the Montagues that have gone before you.

Russ finishes up saying there was the key, the rising generations, the children. And he says, What I observed at this family reunion was a family's godly posterity.

Their unity and harmony was the result of a focused plan to pass on Christ's principles from one generation to the next. And the only way that these principles could have gotten from Daniel Montague in 1882 to the young children that were playing before him that Sunday afternoon was for succeeding generations to do their part while they were on their stage of action.

You know, the last part of my core value, number five, is that we're to train our children in the limited time that we're entrusted with them. and it truly is limited, guys.

[48 : 32] It flies by faster than we know it. If you've got younger children right now, I just encourage you, make the most under God's help and guidance. Make the most of each and every moment and every day that you can because it flies by so fast.

And to have a lasting legacy, Dad, we must base our lives on God's core values and be genuinely committed to living by them.

And that's my charge to you this morning. And remember as you go out, your last gift is a compilation of the five core values that I put together and framed for you this morning to take with you.

And let's pray. Join me in prayer. Father God, I thank you that you know all about family.

And you know how it was made to work because you put it together. And I thank you for this incredible institution of the family and the individual relationships with it, beginning with fathers and their role as the head of the home.

[49 : 42] I just pray for each father in this room right now that you would take the things that have been shared this morning and you would just drive them deep into each of our hearts and our minds and make us fathers that are our wives and our children won't emulate and see that passed on for generations to come.

Pray this now in Christ's precious name. Amen.