

Ephesians 6:1-4

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Date: 02 June 2013

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[0 : 00] Well, as Nathan said, my name is Kyle Webb, and my wife and my dad and my son are all here this morning. We have been just overjoyed to be a part of this faith family for the last few weeks.

We've only really been coming here. I think this is our fifth week we've been here. So just a little warning to those of you who might be visiting. Be careful when you ask to get involved, okay, around here.

You might be preaching within five weeks of being here. And I say that just jokingly. I love Nathan, and we were great friends in college, and we've kind of been separated for a while, and it's good to be back near him.

Good to be back near the Shell Nuts, who I also knew in college, and the Cheathams. You know, it's a great privilege and joy to be with you here this morning, to have the opportunity to share his word.

I love, this is something I love to do. This is something that God has really instilled in me with the desire to do, is to share his word. So what I'd like to do this morning is I'd like for you to turn with me to Ephesians 6.

[1 : 03] Nathan mentioned to you that we're going to be talking a little bit about the biblical basis for family-integrated churches. So I know in some ways this morning that I'm kind of preaching to the choir, because you're already a family-integrated church.

Most of you, or some of you at least, will know a lot of this already that we're going to be talking through, but it's a great reminder for us as a faith family to be able to recognize this is why we do the things we do.

And if you are a guest, you've been visiting recently, this is likely some of the reasons why we do things the way we do here in this church. So it's kind of twofold. If you're new here, then you kind of get an understanding, further understanding of why we do this this way at this church.

And you also get an understanding of, for those who have been here for a while, just kind of a reminder, this is why we do this. And I have to confess to you something before we jump in this morning.

I'm a recovering student pastor. I feel like I'm at an AA meeting. I'm Kyle, and I used to be a youth pastor. And a lot of what I want to share with you this morning comes out of my convictions of what happened during that time, those years that I spent in student ministry.

[2 : 15] And so I just want you to know that. I want to share with you this morning some statistics that are just sobering to me. Recent statistics are showing that we are losing a generation.

For instance, studies are showing now that we're losing anywhere from 75% to 88% of our young people by the time that they are freshmen in college. By the way, if you look around, not necessarily in here, but you look around in churches and all of our churches across America, and there's a generational gap of college students, 20-somethings that are by and large missing.

And I commend college students. We have a lot of college students in the room this morning. And this is even during the summertime when a lot of the college students are away. So that's really incredible. This church has been able to sustain that college group, this generational gap that exists in most churches and across America.

If you look at most churches, though, you're going to see a generational gap of 20-somethings and going into 30-somethings even, where these people, they're going off to college, these students are going off to college, and they're not returning.

I want you to think about this as well. Right now in our culture, our birth rate is below replacement rate. Replacement rate is 2.1 children per family. Right now in America, we're at 1.9.

[3 : 37] Now it's not as bad as most of the industrialized world. France is at 1.5. Italy is even worse at 1.1 children per family. And what this means is that we're not having enough children for our culture to continue to survive.

We're slowly dying generation by generation. France has a birth rate of 1.5. However, the African Muslims and Arab Muslims who have immigrated into France, their birth rate is 6 children per family.

This means that by sheer numbers alone, France is going to be within two generations of a Muslim country. Why?

Because the people in France, just like us, they want prosperity more than they want children. They want prosperity more than they want the blessings that God has given us through children.

Now let me put these two pieces of statistical information together for you and let you know why this matters to us here in our culture, why this matters to Christ's family church. At two children per family, believers, we're really no different than the rest of our country.

[4 : 48] At almost two children per family, and we're losing at least 75% of our young people by the freshman year of college, that means that we need two Christian families to get one believer into the next generation.

Let me make it even more plain. There are 16 million Southern Baptists on paper. It doesn't mean they're all worshiping this morning, but there are 16 million Southern Baptists on paper.

By these numbers, next generation, 4 million. Third generation, 1 million. Fourth generation, 250,000.

It's more than just numbers now, isn't it? Oh, it's okay.

We'll just bring it up through evangelism. Now that's interesting. In order to replenish those numbers through evangelism, we'd have to reach at least three lost people per Christian in our country.

[5 : 55] Right now, Southern Baptists are reaching one lost person per 47 Southern Baptists. Let me make this plan to bring it home. Christianity in America is dying.

Just plain and simple. Christianity is dying in our country. And this is what our answer has been. In our churches and across the United States, our answer has been, let's divorce ourselves from this topic.

Let's separate ourselves from this emerging tragedy that's going on in our country. And let's give our children to the student ministers and to the children's ministers and let them take care of it.

Youth pastor will straight them out, right? Well, that's a valiant effort, but it's simply not enough. Dr. Reed, one of my evangelism professors in seminary, wrote this in Raising the Bar. He says that over the last 30 years, we have seen the largest increase in numbers of professional youth ministry degrees and parachurch organizations designed to reach youth.

And we have seen the greatest decline in youth baptisms ever. So we have more people who vocationally are trying to reach young people. We have more organizations who are trying to reach young people.

[7 : 08] And yet we have fewer baptisms than ever. So they say, well, those youth pastors, they're just not doing their jobs. No, youth pastors for the past 30 years have been trying to do the job that God has given you as parents to do for your children, to raise them and encourage them in the admonition of the Lord.

And this is what we're going to see this morning, is that before the church was established, before Jesus ever established his church, that God established a family.

And one of the major functions of the family is to raise children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. And so before we dive into this text, I want to consider three simple foundations that are going to guide us as we go through this text this morning.

The first is that the Word is sufficient. God's Word is sufficient. I must confess that I'm not really an expert at much of anything.

I don't really consider myself an expert of really much of anything at all. And I'm certainly not an expert on parenting. And so I hope that you find it comforting this morning that I don't feel like it's my job or my position to tell you how you need to be parenting your children, to give you parental advice.

[8 : 22] I just don't think that that's what God's called me to do this morning. And it's not my goal to give you my personal philosophy on parenting. My goal is to expose this Word, which is true in our lives.

And to expose what God has told us about parenting. And by the way, for those of you who are single in here, this message is for you as well. Those who are single or maybe you're married but don't have any children.

Because we as a faith family need to absorb ourselves into this faith family and be able to encourage the parents, be able to help the parents as they try to raise their children in a godly manner.

So for you this morning, if you're single, maybe one day you'll get married. Maybe God's leading you toward that. Maybe God's going to bless you with children one day. And so hopefully these words will be true and ring true into your lives, into the future as God leads you in that direction. And my goal is to expose this Word that's true, that's really foundational for all of our lives, for all parenting. I'm going to stick as quickly, as closely to God's Word as I can.

[9 : 26] And it's not that God's kind of wishing that He had a revised New Testament saying what would be more relevant into a culture today.

It's not like God's sitting around thinking, man, if I could just write a whole New Testament that we could teach parents more about what it means to be parenting in today's culture. But God gave us exactly what we need in His Word.

We have everything we need, which raises the level, which raises the importance of God's Word. When we gather here as a faith family, we've got to realize that we're teaching from a Word that God has given to us, that has everything pertaining to life and godliness.

And so there's no different this morning. We need to unpack what the Word has to say about parenting. Now, I know as soon as I say that, there's going to be parents in this room that are thinking, now, Kyle, it's great and all, it's very interesting that you're saying all this, but I'm not sure that Habakkuk and 1 Chronicles has a lot to say about the situation that I'm in right now.

And you're probably right. I think I would go so far as to say this, I don't believe that this book was written to give you all the answers to all of your parenting questions. Believe me, one of the things that I'm looking forward to is when Joseph can actually communicate to us.

[10 : 48] He's 16 months old. It'll be really great when he can actually communicate what's wrong because as it is right now, he just likes to scream when something's wrong. And we don't know whether we need to take him to the hospital or to give him a bottle.

Sometimes we're just kind of wondering, what do we need to do with him? And Habakkuk really isn't telling us, giving us the answer to that. You know, Habakkuk's not really fueling the answer for something like that in our parenting.

However, this is the way the Word is sufficient. And don't miss this because this is the key in our lives. The most important thing that you can do for your children is to grow into the image of Jesus Christ.

In Leviticus and 2 Chronicles and Habakkuk, they all speak to that. And your kids need to see Christ in you more than they need to see the philosophy of Dr. Phil. So let's not bypass this Word, which is sufficient for all life, for all godliness, for all parenting.

The Word is sufficient. And it's the means by which God is transforming you into the image of Christ. Secondly, second foundation this morning, the home is central. This is where we get ourselves into trouble.

[11 : 59] And not in this church, but in churches across America, we get ourselves into trouble here because we live in an age of professionalism. We hire out even responsibilities, our own responsibilities as parents.

We want our sons to be good athletes, so we send them to the ball coach to teach them skills so they can become the best athlete possible. We want our daughters to get the best possible education, so we send our daughters to the tutors so that she can get her grades up and so that she can make better scores on her SATs.

And then what happens is we transfer that into the church world. And in the church world, we send our children to the student pastor, to the children's ministry to get the best possible biblical education.

What we're going to see this morning is that from the very beginning, God has established the home as the central and primary method from transferring His Word from one generation to the next generation.

It's not the responsibility of youth pastors and of children's pastors to teach or to evangelize your children. As a believer in Jesus Christ, it's your responsibility to disciple and to share the gospel

with your children.

[13:13] I want you to hear loud and clear that it is not the church's job. If you're a believer in the room, it's not the church's job to evangelize your child. What we're created within our Christian culture, our church culture in America, is an atmosphere where it's almost like we're saying, listen, we've got your kids, you don't worry about it.

We're professionals. Don't attempt this at home. And it's wrong. And it's unbiblical. And I'll tell you from firsthand experience that student ministry is ineffective the way we currently do it in America. And I want to encourage parents today that you have everything that you need to disciple your family in the home. Everything that you need is right here in God's Word.

The Word is sufficient. The home is central. The gospel is necessary. We've got to have the gospel being taught in our homes.

You have to teach our children. We've got to teach your children the gospel. The gospel is not something that we just hear in prayer, prayer, and move on with the rest of our lives. The gospel is incredibly important in the home.

[14:27] It's our source of salvation. And by the way, it's our only source of salvation. I don't think I have to tell any parents in the room this morning that your child has the propensity to sin.

They kind of come out that way, right? They come out ready to take you on with their best shot. I know this from having a 16-month-old and already he's tried.

Don't get me wrong. He's the biggest blessing in my life in the world. But he's also sometimes the biggest challenge that I've ever experienced. Because children, they come out as sinners.

And guess what? You're a sinner too. So what happens when you put sinful children and sinful parents under the same roof? You've got yourself a challenge, right? Some of you in here might just have an amen to say to that.

Some of you are just saying, that's me. You're speaking to me right now, Kyle. And here's the deal. You won't find this in many books or many seminars or any self-help type conferences.

[15:29] But what your children ultimately need is the gospel. See, in a lot of books that you read, you'll see a lot about behavior change. This is how you change your child's behavior. But the ultimate reality is that until your child has the gospel, until Jesus gives us new hearts, there's no hope for change.

And as a parent, until your child is able to receive Christ, until Jesus is able to impact them and change them from the inside out, you've got no hope for change.

We need new hearts. Our children need new hearts. Not just to be saved from the penalty of sin and just move on with our lives. We need new hearts. The gospel is our source for transformation. This is Ephesians 5.18, the context in which our passage this morning is found. Be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit in you through the gospel, transforming you. No matter how much we teach our children to be good, there's no way for them to follow God's word apart from the grace of God working within them and changing their hearts and their lives.

And so it's with these three foundations that we dive into our text this morning. Ephesians chapter 6, starting in verse 1. I know this is a long intro, but just bear with me. We needed to get through some stuff before we dive into the text.

[16:48] Ephesians 6, verse 1. And children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. You look at all four verses in this passage, and all four verses, parents are emphasized. In verse 4, it's fathers. In Scripture, we get this picture that fathers are to be the leaders in the home. They're supposed to be responsible for the spiritual formation of the family.

Not sole responsibility, but a leading responsibility. You see back in Ephesians 5, one chapter before where we are this morning, Ephesians 5, it doesn't get any clearer. The husband is the head of the home.

Husbands need to lead families. It doesn't mean that, man, that we're supposed to lord over our wives and children. It's not like we should say, me, man, you, woman, me, say, you do. Right?

[17:52] We're supposed to love our families, Ephesians 5 says, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Men, it's time that we step up to the plate and give ourselves up for our families.

The sacrificial love that God has called us to, men in the room. So what does this word say to parents? What is the application here to parents?

God gives you children by His grace. Verse 1, Obey your parents and the Lord. Verse 4, Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The whole picture here is bookended in this passage. It revolves around God. The picture is that God has entrusted children to the parents. Parents, your children are not your own. They are God's. And you are stewards over them. And God has called you to do something with them. And in this passage, God has called you to raise them up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord. Not only does God give you children by His grace, God gives you children for His glory.

[18 : 59] You look throughout Scripture. You look all the way back to Genesis. And you begin to see that God, everything that He does throughout history has been for His glory. Genesis is where Abraham receives the blessing.

God gives Abraham a blessing. He's going to be the father of many nations. Why? Scripture says it's for God's glory. The walls come down at Jericho. For whose glory? For God's glory. David is able to slay Goliath for the glory of God.

So that a nation would come to worship and so that all people would see that God is the kind of God that takes care of His people. And that God would be glorified in that. Even down to the cross.

Jesus died on the cross. Yes, because of our sin. And we get to benefit from the sacrifice that Christ made. But it was ultimately for God's glory.

So God has given us children by His grace and for His glory. And I want to put that next to what the world says about being a successful parent. Because there's a huge gap between what the world says as being a successful parent and what the Bible says as being a successful parent.

[20 : 08] The goal of biblical parenting is not to help your children get a good education. The goal is not that you see to it that your children have the best grades.

Go to the best college. As the best education. Now I'm not saying that education is bad. There's certainly some validity in the statement that we need to honor and glorify God with our minds to the best of our ability.

I believe that that's true and part of that is education. But what we run into a problem is when we put grades and we put education far above relationship with Christ in our homes. The goal of biblical parenting is not to help your children be a great athlete.

The goal is not to make your children the best at every single sport that they play. It's not running yourself ragged throwing the kids in the minivan running them around all over town trying to get to every sporting event that they play.

To win trophies that will eventually sit around gathering dust in some room that you never go in.

That's not the goal of biblical parenting. The goal of biblical parenting is not for your child to go on great dates.

[21 : 15] The goal of biblical parenting is not to help your children in glorified divorce practice which is what dating essentially is. Where children and teenagers and sometimes younger even onto their college years are involved in exclusive relationships sometimes even sexual relationships only to move on to somebody else the next year.

It's glorified the divorce practice and parents we should not be encouraging it. The goal of biblical parenting is not to help your children have a great career.

Likewise the goal is not to help your children make great money. See the problem with all of these is that there are worldly views of success.

And not what the Bible teaches is successful. I'm not saying these things are inherently bad I'm saying that we're teaching our children what it means to be successful in the world's sight not in God's sight.

And even in our churches we're teaching our children that they need to be successful in this world and this is simply not true. But here's why this is important and this is why this is so subtly dangerous to us because the picture that is so common is that we tell our children that they need to get good grades that they need to be dating the cutest guy or girl in high school that they need to be good at sports that they need to work hard and play an instrument so that they can be successful in this world.

[22 : 44] All along we teach them these things and every single day we prioritize a worldly view of success and yet we're not teaching our children to serve the Lord in their lives.

We're not prioritizing God in our homes and in our families. And God help us if our answer is to say well we attend church every week. so you give a couple hours every week to God while pouring hours upon hours upon hours of your time and effort into taking your kids to ball practice and to their ball games and to gymnastics and to the dance team and everything else that is wrapped in this secular world view.

This is what Bodie Bauckham says, author, professor, and pastor. He says in his book that's called Family Driven Faith he says if I teach my son to keep his eye on the ball but fail to teach him to keep his eyes on Christ I have failed as a father.

We must refuse to allow trivial temporal pursuits to interfere with the main thing. No sports endeavor will ever be as important as becoming a man or a woman of God.

Later on he goes in his book he goes on to share about this family who's struggling with their college student. Thomas had grown up in the church and he was a regular in the youth group and he attended Disciple Now.

[24 : 10] He went to all the youth group meetings on a regular basis. He went on the mission trips with the church. When Thomas got into college things began to change.

He stopped attending church. He began to struggle in class. Upon further investigation his parents found out the reason why he was failing his classes was because he was out drinking at night. with his buddies and often times missing classes. Finally Thomas was suspended from the college baseball team because the result of a random drug test revealed that he was using anabolic steroids.

The story kind of begs this question what happened? What happened? How could this happen to such a promising young man?

this is what Bodie Bauckham says. He says, this man and his wife had gone to great lengths to see to it that their son became the best baseball player he could be. This also meant that during the summer and fall church attendance was sporadic at best.

[25 : 14] Like many parents they found themselves traveling to tournament after tournament and praying for the opportunity to be out on Sunday since that meant that they were playing for a title somewhere. What they didn't realize was that they were teaching Thomas to prioritize baseball over the fourth commandment.

They were teaching Thomas that he should honor the Sabbath and keep it holy unless it's baseball season. Thus when Thomas got to college and he had to choose between going to church and hanging out with his teammates the foundation for his decision had already been laid.

In other words Thomas' lack of commitment to spiritual matters laid the groundwork for his moral compromise. Let me tell you something. In this room this morning don't think that this situation won't happen to you.

I've seen it as a student pastor over and over and over again and it's especially true for parents that prioritize all these other things over your child's spiritual formation.

The reality is that if dads in this room are more passionate about teaching their sons how to swing a baseball bat than they are about teaching your sons how to study the Bible then we've missed the point.

[26 : 32] If moms in this room are more passionate about teaching their daughters how to wear their makeup than they are about what it means to have a gentle and quiet spirit then we've missed the point.

The danger is that one day our sons and daughters are going to stand before God in heaven with all of these things that we've told them are important. all these things we've told them that would make them successful and they're going to be standing before God on that day and all of that is burned up in the fire.

They stand before God as beggars on that day and it is completely and utterly our failure as parents to have taught them what was truly important in their lives.

The goal of biblical parenting is not to raise our children in a worldly success. The goal of biblical parenting is to help your children accomplish a great commission.

That's the goal of biblical parenting. That is God's view of success. And it's there from the beginning of scripture. God says to his people, you raise your children to know me, to love me, to serve me.

[27 : 41] You raise your children to spread my word, to make me known in all the world. Is that what's really driving our parenting? Is that what's really driving us as parents today?

Are we fueling the great commission to make disciples or are we hindering? I've had parents come to me as a student pastor saying, I would never let my child go into a third world country. It's just too dangerous.

I've had other parents say, I would never let my child go into a country that was closed because of the danger level that there is in that country. That's because we've come to the point in our Christian walks where we value long life.

You won't find that in the word of God. You won't find valuing long life. What you will find is valuing, sacrificing your life, giving your life up for the sake of the glory of God.

Jesus had twelve followers. Twelve, he had more than that. Twelve close followers, these disciples. Judas committed suicide.

[28 : 47] Ten others died on account of sharing and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. Do you think that they would have done it all over again and done something different to spare their lives?

I don't think they would have. The twelfth one was exiled on account of the gospel. John was exiled on account of the gospel.

You simply won't find it in scripture where God values long life. In fact, you find the opposite. Here's where I want to take you to another location in scripture.

Deuteronomy chapter 6. If you would turn there with me. Deuteronomy chapter 6, the fifth book of the Bible. Another place where we really don't have time to go this morning, we're running out of time.

In Genesis 18-19, when God speaks to Abraham about his children, it's the first time the teaching is ever mentioned in God's word. It's mentioned in the context of family.

[29 : 49] It's God saying to Abraham, Abraham, instruct your children in my ways. Instruct your children in my commands. It's the first picture that we see of this word instructing. It's used in the context of a father teaching his family or leading his family in God's word.

Then you get to Deuteronomy 6. This is what Deuteronomy 6 verse 4 says. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. There's a statement of faith and based off that statement of faith.

Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all your soul, with all of your might. These words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them how? Diligently.

To your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your home. And when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.

You shall write them on the doorpost of your house and on your gates. You get the picture here?

From the very beginning, the central avenue for disciple-making, for spreading the word of God, has been in the home.

[30 : 52] So what does this mean for us today? How can we instruct our children so that they know the word? First of all, we have to have a verbal commitment to God's word in our homes. This is verse 7.

Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. That pretty much covers any time that you can possibly be teaching God's word in your home.

Be teaching it. If you're at home, talk about the word. If you're away from home, talk about the word. When you're going from home to wherever you're going, talk about the word.

All the time. Talk about it more than you talk about baseball. Talk about it more than you talk about college football. Talk about it more than you talk about how to do your makeup and shoes and whatever else girls talk about with their daughters.

Make a verbal commitment to the word. The best Bible teacher is not me for your children. The best Bible teacher for your children is actually not Nathan.

[31 : 57] I think that he would agree with that. The best Bible teacher for your children is you. As a parent. You are the best Bible teacher. God's called you to do it. We must make a verbal commitment, but also we must have a visible commitment.

This element is in this passage here. Deuteronomy 6. You know, mom or dad may not be talking to you right now, but it's there on your walls. It's on your gate.

We need to start stamping things on our forehead, maybe stamping scripture on our forehead somehow when we go out and walk around. I'm not ruling that out. Maybe that's there in the text. Maybe you want to really look at it incredibly literally and actually do that.

But I believe what this passage is really telling us is that the picture is that the word is visible in your home, so visible that it permeates everything that we do. And you might want to post your memory verse for the week up on your children's mirrors so that they can see it, visibly see it in the home. We also have to make a visible commitment to God's word. You know, just a few generations ago a man was considered spiritually responsible if he did these things.

[33 : 10] Unfortunately today a man is considered spiritually responsible if he sends his children to the most cutting edge youth or children's program. We can no longer sit idly by it.

I know, again, I'm just preaching to the choir here. You've chosen Christ's Family Church for a reason and that may be one of the reasons why you've even chosen Christ's Family Church because they do things differently here.

We do things out of the norm of what the culture is doing. I think that's a biblical approach rather than trying to copy what all the other churches are doing. It's a more biblical approach.

We must also train our children so that they show the word. In other words, you impress upon them the word but also you help them make it come alive in their lives.

You help them to put it into practice in their lives. the picture here is that you keep them within the boundaries and train them to walk in obedience and honor to God. It takes training and it takes discipline to do these things.

[34 : 14] Studying through Ephesians 6 makes you wonder why are families not doing these things in our culture today? The instruction is there. God's told us to do it.

Why are we not worshiping in our homes? Why are we not reading God's word in our homes? Why are we not having family worshiped? time. I wonder if maybe it's because we like to discipline our own lives.

Our children will never be what they cannot see. When you look at Titus 2.12 it talks about how God's grace is training us in godliness in such a way that we're able to impart that upon others. I think from observation the opposite is true as well. You can also train your children in ungodliness. If they see ungodliness in your lives, you're teaching that.

You're imparting that upon them as well. If you don't hold God's word high in regard in the home, you're teaching your children that God's word is just not important. So that means the reality is that husbands, wives, moms, dads, we need to step up to the plate.

[35 : 26] single people in the room, future moms, future husbands, future dads, call us to you too.

And the way it begins for those of you who don't have children is to rally around families in this church to support them. When a child is crying sitting next to you, you don't roll your eyes and think, oh man, I just can't listen to the sermon right now.

I can't figure out what they're saying. You support that family because, as Nathan said earlier, we don't just tolerate children, we love them.

Here's another side to that. We need to learn, as a faith family, that the worship of children is important to God.

Their worship is important. Which is why we want to include them in corporate worship. I've been in a lot of churches and you may have been in churches in the past before. They do this thing where they allow the children to sit in the service through the music time and then when the time comes for the preacher to come up to preach God's word, they usher them out of the service.

[36 : 43] Now, you might have a different philosophy than I do, but think about what that teaches children. It teaches them that maybe singing songs is important, but the teaching of God's word, we don't have to be involved with that.

teaching our children priority is playing games in a nursery rather than being in the teaching of God's word, time where knowledge and encouragement is imparted upon you as a faith family. family. Now, I want to encourage you to read the Bible together in your families. I want to encourage you to at least find one day that you can worship together as a family.

Schedule it. If you don't schedule it, it's not going to happen. I'm speaking from experience. At least one day a week that you can worship with your families. So, challenge husbands on the way home today.

Schedule time with your wife. This is the time that we're going to gather together. If you want to do it six times, seven times a week, that's even better. But one is better than none, right? So, I encourage families, figure out a time when you can get together to worship together as a family.

[37 : 57] The word needs to be taught in your home. You know what else you can do is you can read the word in the morning and every night with your children. That's something that anybody can do. If you need resources to help you do this, to help you in your family worship time, I'm sure Nathan can provide free resources for you.

I know there's some free resources if you're interested. I can share those with you as well. Let me tell you why this is so important today. We're wrapping this up. Let me tell you why this is so important. You go to scores of church buildings across America and across Europe and you see empty buildings.

These church buildings are empty shelves of what used to be great thriving churches. Completely empty today. I shared with you these statistics for a reason because if we continue in the same pattern in our culture today, we're going to see hundreds if not thousands of empty church buildings.

Possibly even other businesses having moved into church buildings because that congregation has died away. The statistics are real.

Not making it up. I'm not saying the church is going to disappear. God's word is going to continue on until the end. His word proclaims that. His word is going to carry on all the way through eternity.

[39 : 17] There's no question about that. But whether we're involved or whether our children or our children's children are involved with that has everything to do with how we interact with Ephesians chapter 6.

So we're going to pray right now and I just want to invite husbands especially to be leaders of your home. Step up to the plate. Wives, be supportive of your husband in that role.

Help him where he needs help. Help teach the children in the home. Children, quite simply, obey your parents. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for giving us this opportunity to gather here as a faith family in this room. We thank you, Father, for your word. I pray, Father, that it would change our lives, it would work in our hearts to transform us.

Lord, I pray for fathers in here, that they would be willing to step up to the plate. They'd be willing to begin to lead their families in spiritual formation.

[40 : 21] They'd be willing to read the word in their home, to have a verbal commitment to your word, to have a visible commitment to your word in the home. I pray for wives, Father, that you would guide them and that you would help them be a support to their husbands.

You would help them in the spiritual formation of their children as well. And I pray that the children would read the benefits of this endeavor by these moms and dads who are attempting to be the best they can be as spiritual leaders in their homes.

These children would be raised indeed in the admonition, the encouragement, and discipline of the Lord. And I pray, Father, that this church, these people in this room this morning, that we would beat the statistics, that we wouldn't be bound by statistics that are overwhelmingly true in our country.

So, Father, help us as we have been challenged this morning. Help us to rise up to that challenge, to begin to see the need to teach your word in our homes.

we begin to see the need to rally around families who need encouragement. Most of all, Father, I pray that you would be honored and glorified in our lives as we do these things.

[41 : 45] I pray this all in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.