

# 17. Gospel Shaped Lifestyle

## *Shepherd Your Family*

1. Rarely does sermon prep convict w/ gravity like this one has
  - a. Pattern over last few weeks: A godly person manages their emotions, their dependencies, their temper, their money → manage their family well
  - b. Pastors in the early church most likely were the head of the home where the church met → the impact of house and church was very obvious
  - c. Today, there are no short supply of opinions on how you should parent.
  - d. **What does a successful parent look like?**
  - e. My goal is to show you this has more to do about your heart than it does about your methods, and is therefore relevant whether you have children or not
2. *He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (1 Timothy 3:4-5 ESV)*
  - a. The barometer of health in a person is often what the home looks like
    - i. You can fake public, but you can't fake inside your house
  - b. The picture here is your kids doing whatever they want without discipline
    - i. ex: Mean Girls Mom → more of a friend to your kids than a parent
    - ii. No kids? Marriage is a mess.
    - iii. Not married? Your personal relationships are a mess.
    - iv. No personal relationships? You have bigger things to think about
  - c. In the church there will be discipline issues as well - everyone doing their thing
    - i. So if you can't handle your family, you won't be able to handle the church
    - ii. If you can't teach your kids scripture, you can't teach the church...
    - iii. If you can't answer your wife's theology question, you can't answer...
  - d. **Paul's point is this: If you can't shepherd the small church (your family), then you can't shepherd the big church (your congregation)**
  - e. Some of you are thinking: My kids ignore me. My spouse ignores me. My dog ignores me. How do I do that?
    - i. **What does it mean to shepherd my church at home?**
3. **Fall in love with the Bible**
  - a. A big part of parenting and leading is discipline - we all know that
  - b. You discipline your kids, not someone else's. Why? B/C you love them.
  - c. Biblically, discipline refers to instruction, training, and correction. Interesting b/c...
  - d. *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV)*
  - e. So from a biblical perspective, **discipline is inseparable from the Word of God** → knowing it, learning it, teaching it, being shaped by it
  - f. In your disobedience, God disciplines you with the power of His Word...
    - i. "Law was my schoolmaster"

- ii. Patient, kind, convicts you w/ raw truth from the Bible, shows you a better way in the Bible, helps you get there by power of his Holy Spirit
- g. How does a book have so much power? Well, what is the Word of God?
  - i. History of Israel? Moralistic fables? Man's thoughts about God?
  - ii. Actually, it is divinely chosen to all point to one thing → Jesus Christ
  - iii. As you stare into this supernatural book, you can't help but be transformed
  - iv. *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13 ESV)*
- h. **As you fall in love with the Bible, you will fall in love with Jesus, but you can't say you love Jesus and not love his words.**
  - i. One of the best things you can do for your family is to love the Word
- 4. **Discipline their hearts, not just their butts [or attitudes for non-spankers]**
  - a. Disciplining your kids means that you shepherd them by the Bible, but I am not talking about using the Bible as moralistic stories of "getting in line."
    - i. Yes you need rules. Yes you need consequences.
    - ii. But God gives you more than rules...
  - b. **Rules alone won't yield a healthy family.**
    - i. Why? Attitude trumps behavior. **What's inside trumps what's outside.**
    - ii. Rules may control external behavior, but it won't transform a person
    - iii. **Too many people discipline their kid's butts rather than their hearts.**
    - iv. Only Jesus can change your kids
  - c. **Discipline is primarily an opportunity to point your kids to Jesus, not to make them more compliant.**
  - d. What's the heart of the issue? You don't have a little angel, you have a little sinner. I've met your kids, and you've met mine.
    - i. Matt Chandler's story about his son
  - e. Preach the gospel to your kids because you want them to know and love Jesus, not because you want to control all their decisions
    - i. That's the difference between exasperating your kids and edifying your kids.
    - ii. Do I know the balance? No, I don't. We are all figuring it out.
  - f. **But the point is that all of the super-nanny, child psychology, cutting edge, brilliant methods in the world won't save your kid's soul.**
  - g. They need Jesus, and if you give them rules without giving them the gospel you miss the point of the Bible and the gospel.
- 5. **Understand Reality**
  - a. You may be saying, "Pastor... I've done all that"

- b. You've done all the right stuff, you've read the Bible, you've brought them to church, you've done family devotions, you've prayed, you've fasted, you've wept, but your kids just don't care
  - c. **Reality: You are powerless to make things actually click for your kids.**
  - d. Individuals need to take ownership over the gospel
    - i. It has to be their faith
    - ii. Similarly to the way that I can't live your faith out for you
  - e. **You can't make your kids love Jesus, but you can set up the date.**
  - f. And if you are in that situation, do I think you are disqualified? Not necessarily
  - g. Do I think you should be in leadership? Maybe not
    - i. If your kids are out of the house, I don't think this applies
    - ii. If your kids are at home as teens or younger, then you need to focus on your home, not as a punishment, but to redirect priorities
    - iii. ex: ruler illustration
6. When it comes to raising children, we tend to think that if we just find the right parenting strategy everything will work out. (or maybe you realize you dropped the ball)
- a. The reality, however, is that we can do everything right and our familial world can still fall apart.
  - b. Nobody knows this better than God. God did "all the right things" with his children, Israel.
    - i. He disciplined when needed. He was patient when needed. He punished when needed. He gave them instruction. He gave them rules and he enforced consequences.
    - ii. Regardless, all the right things weren't enough. They needed new hearts - to be changed from the inside out.
    - iii. Knowing this, God moved heaven and earth to make that a possibility.
    - iv. He sent his son, Jesus, God in the flesh, to live a perfect life and then to die a criminal's death, thereby taking mankind's punishment in exchange for his glory.
    - v. That is the gospel and it's what we need and what our kids need.
  - c. **Bottom Line: The best thing that you can do to be a "successful" parent is to love Jesus and to continually point your kids Jesus.**
    - i. They need to see it as your core identity, not as a checkbox for Sunday morning.
    - ii. **The best way for your kids, your family, and your friends to see Christ is to see Christ in you.**
    - iii. That's how to be successful - regardless of the results and regardless of whether it's your kids, your spouse, your brother, or your co-worker
  - d. "I want [my kids] to be raised in a household where dad is gaga over their mom and he is **leading them all to Christ as the answer to all things, over and over and over again.** I am commanded to have submissive children, so when I discipline them, I want to do it in ways that edify, not exasperate (Eph 6:4). **If by**

**God's grace, my children continue in the faith of Christ, I want them to believe because of me, not in spite of me.” - Jared Wilson**