

Colossians #10 - Enjoy Your Family

- Howdy, Pastor Mark Driscoll here the Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona, really excited to provide for you the series of sermons based on the book of Colossians. It's an amazing book of the New Testament, where the Apostle Paul is writing from prison to a newly planted church. And we took a few months here at the Trinity Church to go verse by verse through this book of the Bible. I had the honor of preaching and teaching, perhaps a few dozen books of the Bible in my career. And this is the first time I've ever been through Colossians and I'm really excited that you can join me. For as we are venturing into the section on how to enjoy your family in Colossians 3:20-21. The big idea is this, it's hard to have a loving, safe, healthy life giving enjoyable relationship, when one person is domineering over the other. And if you think about it, culturally, where things were at when this book of the Bible was written, it was a few thousand years ago in the context of something called the Roman Empire. And in that context, the father was very domineering. He was overbearing and dominating. If you can even imagine this, a child was just simply considered part of his estate, just like livestock or land, that meant that the children have no legal right, and there was no authority above their father. So if your dad abused you, there's nothing you could do about it. Your dad could actually legally kill you and nothing could be done to him. And if the father found himself just sick of his kids or in poverty needing to pay off a debt, he could take his sons and daughters and sell them into slavery. And there was no recourse of any kind, no legal rights for the children. That being said, if you had a good dad you were blessed, but if you had a bad dad you had a very painful difficult life. And so when Paul is writing to the fathers, that would have been counter-cultural and controversial, that fathers are to love and invest in and care for their children. But in our day, it's almost the complete upside down cultural experience in the American cultural context. It is children who oftentimes are domineering over their parents. They are rebellious. They are obstinate, they're defiant and disobedient. And in the 1960s and 70s, we created a rite of passage that is just generational rebellion. So kids will grow up and do horrific things, and we just say, well, they're teenagers, that's what they do. And it is this assumption that you'll well against, rebel against your own parents. You'll break their heart, break their rules and break the relationship. And so what we had was a situation where parents would dominate and domineer over the children. And now we've got an inverted situation where the children are dominating and domineering over their parents. And this includes a lot of the storylines in teen movies, a lot of stuff that's on television, that sort of pre-teen and teen designed for children, it's all about rebellion against parents. Now the Bible has great wisdom and what God is going to do today through the pen of the Apostle Paul, he's gonna speak to parents and children. He's gonna instruct them both to honor God and how to lovingly serve and care for and invest in one another so that it is not domineering, but it is instead creating an attitude and an atmosphere of affection and devotion where the parents can lead and the children can flourish. So we'll start in chapter 3:20, and will just deal with two verses today. "Children what's the word, parents?"

- [Congregation] Obey.

- Notice how quickly the parents were willing to put your kids. Take note, okay obey. "Children, obey your parents," in what? "Everything for this pleases the Lord." Will deal with each of these words in succession. The first thing you need to see is, he's writing here to children. God has particular directives toward children, especially children who are growing up in Christian homes. The word here means one who is younger, you're talking about a minor, a younger child earlier in the Bible in Exodus I think is chapter 20:12. One of the 10 commandments is that we should honor our father and mother. Honor is something you do toward your parents for the totality of your life. So I'm 46, my mom still calls me Marki and I honor her okay? I honor her, but I don't obey her. I don't obey her, I honor her. I'm now an adult and I have to make my own decisions. I will seek the counsel of my parents and the prayers and support of my parents, but I'll make my own decisions. So you honor your parents for your whole life. You obey your parents when you're a child, the goal is to have children that obey you. And then they grow up to leave their mother and father, and then for the rest of their life, they would honor their mother and father. But there's a difference between honoring for your whole life and obeying for your younger years. I'll give you an illustration. It was a bit time ago, I took my three boys, they were all minors, I had to drive them for haircuts. And so we go to this place to get their haircut. And so I walk in and I sign the boys up and they get their hair cut and I pay for it. And then the boys want product because they've got more bangs than their dad they need it they wanna look cool. So they're like, dad, we need, you know, certain product okay, so they get their product and I pay for it. And around the same time, there was another man who came in, young man came in with his mom. And she drove him to get his haircut, she signed up for his turn as he was getting his hair cut, she walked back to look at it and inspect it and make sure it was okay, when it was done she paid for the haircut. And this son of hers then said, similarly to my sons, I need mom, I need product for my hair. And she said, you don't need product for your hair. You already have a little bit of product and it'll last till your next haircut. And he said, no, mom, it's gonna run out I need more product for my hair, and they had a very intense argument, and he was in his 30s. I don't know why he was single, but he was a single guy in his 30s. And his mom literally said, and I quote, "You need to obey your mother." Okay, that is great when you're three, that is not great when you're 33 Amen. And so you obey your parents when you're little, you honor them when you get older, but you make your own decisions. So that is whom he is referring to here. He's referring to children. What he says is that children need to obey. Now this issue of obedience when the kids are little, is oftentimes for their own safety. How many of you had kids that if they didn't obey quickly, they were gonna hurt themselves badly? And if you have those kids, my sons would climb whatever was the tallest in an effort to just see what would happen and being their father, I knew what would happen. So there are times with your kids, you need them to obey immediately, 'cause they're really gonna hurt themselves. And let me say this about obedience. Obedience I'll say a few things that are controversial but helpful okay? Obedience is not counting. It's not counting, right? Don't make me count to 1,478 don't make me do it. 1,423 and a quarter you're pushing it, I'm gonna get there. When we count what we're saying is you can obey me when you feel like it. And now we're in a hostage negotiation and there's a clock ticking, not unlike one, that would be on a bomb in the middle of a hostage negotiation. When you're counting, you're teaching your children not to obey, but to negotiate okay? Now I understand there are times when the kids don't know what we're talking about, and

you need to put some time on the clock to explain it to them so they can process. I'm not saying that is bad, but I'm saying when the heart is stubborn and the child will not obey and you start counting, what you have just done is surrendered in the hostage negotiation, okay? And counting how many of you I've seen parents do this, I saw a parent do this at the grocery store. Most of what I learned from parenting, I learned at the grocery store, by the way, if you don't believe that children are sinful, just hang out at the grocery store and just follow parents around with small children and just see what happens when they get public. And then they know that their parents cannot deal with it okay? I was following this one kid around and literally the mom's like, I'm gonna count to 10. She's like eight and a quarter, eight and a half eight and three quarter I'm like, they're to, they don't even know where you are now they don't do fractions. They're defiant and disobedient right? So obedience is not counting. Obedience is not reverse psychology. Some of you had parents and your parents knew that you would rebel. So they would tell you to do the wrong thing. And then you would rebel and it would end up being the right thing. So it'd be like, do not, do not eat your vegetables. Oh, I'm gonna eat them, then your parents are like, woo hoo we won, no, you just raised a terrorist is what you did. You rewarded them for disobedience. How many of your parents did that? Do not clean up your room. Do not go to bed on time. What you've done is you've, it's called reverse psychology. What it is, it's saying my child's heart is rebellious, not obedient. So I will trick them into making my life easier, but that doesn't make their heart any better. So ultimately obedience is not counting, it's not reverse psychology, and it's not bribing. You can tell when a child has been bribed because they turn into a small attorney and negotiate all the deal points. It's time for bed what do I get if I go to bed? To live, you get to live ,you get to live. No, no, what do I get ice cream? No, no, you'll see kids will negotiate, and parents will negotiate. You can't have ice cream but you gonna have a candy bar. Oh okay, great, great now we're back into the hostage negotiation with the small attorney that looks like my child. It's not bribing them because bribing them is rewarding them for bad behavior and a bad heart. And here's what it does not mean, it does not mean parents obey your children Amen. How many of you have met those parents they just do what the kids tell them. I saw this again at the grocery store, I was at the grocery store, there was a very defiant kid at the grocery store. How do I know? We all heard him okay? He was that kid screaming and yelling sounded like someone was executing a child at the grocery store. So I'm thinking, okay, there's a sermon illustration here somewhere I'm gonna go find it. So I'm in the grocery store and there's this little kid on the floor, complete nuclear meltdown fit, you ever seen this? They wait till they're in public where there are witnesses to shame you and embarrass you. And they do this they're little, but they're nefarious and they plot, okay that's what they do. So this kid here he is, he's on the ground. He's just like, no You seen that kid? Some of you have that kid I'm sorry you need to go pick him up from nursery we can't handle him. This kid's thrown a total tantrum at the grocery store, and what would happen is he'd go grab something off the shelf, throw it in the car, his mom would say no, and he would throw a fit. And then she said, okay, okay just be quiet. You're making everybody you know pay attention, you're embarrassing me, just stop. Then the kid threw a total freak outfit, nuclear meltdown in the grocery store. And the mom didn't know what he wanted. And I heard her say, quote, "Just tell me what you want "and I'll give it to you if you'll stop." And I thought, do you have any idea what kind of person you are raising Mrs. Bin Laden. This is gonna be a horrible adult. Obedience is not counting.

Obedience is not bribing. Obedience is not reverse psychology and it's not parents obey your children. And what it does say, children obey your parents this is important Children's shouldn't just obey all the adults, they should obey those with authority, that is God given and loving okay? So I don't tell my kids growing up, just do what adults tell you, no way. No mom and dad will give you instructions, and then there will be people in authority, teachers, Sunday school teachers, coaches that'll have our deferred authority and you need to submit to their authority, but I'm not just talking about children in general, obeying adults in general. We had this situation some years ago, our oldest daughter is getting ready to start school. And so we were going to schools interviewing the schools and there was one school is a Christian school and we sat down for an interview, there was a table, there's the principal, there's Grace, myself and our daughter Ashley, and we're all sitting there. Ashley's a very compliant kid has always been a very compliant kid and all my kids are compliant. I have one of those strong-willed stubborn kids that God sent me to remind me of what kind of child I was. But this child is a very compliant and easy going child. And the principal, we just sat down, asked some questions of my daughter, kinda rapid fire questions. And it was more like a formal interview is pretty, pretty intense for five-year-old. She looked at me and her countenance was dad, who is this? And am I supposed to submit you know to his authority and answer his questions? And the principal rebuked my daughter said, you look at me, you answer my questions I'm the principal. And I said, no, you look at me, you listen to me. We're here to decide whether or not you're gonna be the principal okay? Now my daughter is not yet under your authority. She's not used to men just telling her what to do in front of her dad. So she looks at her dad asking, who is this guy? And you know, what are we doing? That's a reasonable request from a five-year-old girl, who's sitting down for an interview that she didn't know was going to happen. So what we're not talking about is children in general, obeying adults in general. 'cause some adults are mean, some are evil, some are dangerous. We want the children in a safe place with parental oversight and then delegated authority to others that love the kids and are safe toward them. And so what it means though, children obey your parents, this means your mom and your dad. How many of you are glad it's not singular obey your parent? I will obey mom or dad. How many of you have a kid that will obey mom or dad, but not mom and dad? What this is, this is a dividing conquer strategy from the children. Some of your kids have learned that they've learned that one of you is the clown and one of you is the cop. The cop well that's the one that'll taser yah The clown that's the fun one. So if they want something they go ask the clown. But if their sibling did something bad, they go tell the cop and they work this, okay? They work this Johnny hit me taser him. Can I have ice cream? They know who to ask the question of. So don't let your kids turn it into role playing of cop and clown. You both should be ones having fun with them, instructing them and correcting them. And they need to obey both of you. The parents need to speak with a unified voice. If that means you don't agree, you don't argue it out in front of the kids and turn them into the jury and let them render the verdict. You say, you know what mom and dad are gonna go talk about this we'll be back in a minute. We will go into chambers and we will discuss this issue. And then we will render our verdict to the children it'll be unified. If you've ever split wood, you get around of wood you put a wedge in the middle, you assert enough pressure and eventually it splits. Some kids have learned this tactic that they can be the wedge between mom and dad. The mom and dad are supposed to be one, but with certain issues, they can split mom and dad.

And by splitting, they can obey their mom or their dad, but not their mom and their dad. So parents need to be like two barrels on a gun. You gotta stick together. You gotta hang together. You gotta speak with one voice and you can't let your children say, well, mom says, no I'm gonna go ask dad. What's dad got to do backup mom. And you know, you've got a problem when it's for example, mom, home with the kids. And she says, wait, till you're who comes home father. What that means is you're not gonna obey me I'm calling in for backup I'm calling for backup. And when dad gets home, then we're gonna do no. It has to be when mom speaks, they also hear dad's voice. When dad speaks, they hear mom's voice that mom and dad sing together for the wellbeing of the children. They speak with one united voice and the parents need to speak consistently, and then also the children need to obey both mother and father. What happens though, if one of you is the fun one, the other one will overcome and over compensate by being the cop for the clown. If one of you is the cop and you're a little too intense with the kids, then one of you is gonna be tempted to become the clown and the fun one, you both need to be the fun one and have memories with the kids. You both need to be the teacher and instruct them. You both need to be the disciplinarian and correct them. And you should both enjoy the fullness of the total relationship with the kids. And they should obey their mother and their father in what? In everything. Children tend to have some areas that they will be more compliant and other areas where they are more defiant. And what you can't say is well they don't obey here, but they obey there we graded out on a curve. I got a C student right there an A or B there here and an F or there they're a C student you know they need to obey in everything because if you allow them to disobey in anything, eventually they'll start to disobey in everything okay? So obeying in everything is ultimately what God intends when he's talking about there is categorically. And so parents too, you need to know this, I'm gonna give you a lot of practical stuff. How many of you grew up in a home don't raise your hand, especially if your mom's here and it's Mother's Day and we don't want to ruin it for her, but let me just ask a question okay? How many of you grew up in a home where mom said, now don't tell your father or your dad said, now don't tell your mother, did you grow up in that home? That's teaching the children not to obey the parents in everything. And that one parent then is the sneaky parent and we keep secrets. And we don't tell the other parent. And now you've got a really divided and broken home. "Children, obey your parents in everything "for this pleases, the Lord." This is the father heart of God. God does not want a situation where the parents are overbearing and domineering toward the children. He also does not want a situation where the children are rebellious and foolish against godly parental authority for their own demise and destruction and difficulty. God wants the family to have a harmony and an order. For that to happen the parents need to lead and the children need to follow the leadership of the parents and that they all follow the Lord, and God is the father over the whole family. And this brings structure and order and life. It permits flourishing and health and relationship. And this pleases, the Father heart of God. And then God wants to bless and assist parents and children who are walking according to the revealed will of his good word. And this is very different than the parenting strategy that many of you were raised with. In the 1970s one of the if not the most popular parenting book that was sold in our nation, taught something that I will refer to as a family democracy. The parents and children are all at the same level and that they all get a vote on all the things that happen and that the children are literally seated alongside of the parents, even little children. And it was

called "Parenting is Peer." And it's how to just be friends with your kids okay? You need to have a loving relationship with your kids, and as they get older, it should transition from parental to more relational and friendly. But when your kids are two, three, four years old, they're not your peers, they're your kids. And they're not yet ready to be treated at the same level of adult responsibility as you. Now, a whole generation was raised on this erroneous philosophy. And the result was a lot of self harm and foolishness and devastation. Here's what I wanna tell you. A few thousand years ago, these principles were true. And in a few thousand years from now, they'll still be true. That every generation has its sort of pop parenting book of the moment. And it throws out some new convoluted view of humanity and parenting and a whole generation rushes to implement it. And then their children are harmed. Their marriage is harmed. Their family is harmed. And so when someone comes along and writes the next book, here's what I wanna tell you. This book will always work. This book will always work. And if you wanna learn more about parenting, spend a lot of time in the book of Proverbs. What we're looking at there is a book that is thousands of years old, but it's not an old book, it's an eternal book. God's word is not just a timely word. It's a timeless word that's why it's always timely. God, who is a father made us, knows us, knows us from our mother's womb, knows the heart, the soul, the mind of the children, God speaks to the human condition. God has cross-cultural wisdom for parents and children that has endured for thousands of years across multiple languages and cultures. And I just love you and I want God's best for you. So I want God's word to be the center of your home. And that gives instruction to parents and also children, because parenting is a lot like gardening. It's a lot of work and you don't see the fruit right away. You gotta be patient and it takes time. It takes no work at all to grow weeds. It takes a lot of work to tend to a garden. And children left to themselves they will become rebellious and foolish and self-destructive because of their sin nature. And so our responsibility as parents is to do the work of gardening to tend, to cultivate, to instruct, to correct and patiently wait, knowing that eventually the harvest of righteousness will come forth in the children by God's grace. But I wanna encourage you, it's a lot of work and it's a lifelong endeavor and you never stop being a parent, but ultimately God's word gives you all the directives you need to do a good job as a parent and as a child. And I wanna share with you briefly seven things that I put together that are biblical principles that will sort of guide your understanding and framework. I'm gonna do a full parenting series coming up this fall. I'll be the first one I've ever done in 20 years, Grace and I have got five kids, four teenagers. And we waited a while to talk about this, but we're hoping to be helpful. Seven parenting principles. Your child is your blessing, Psalm 127:3 says that children are a blessing from the Lord. I want you to first realize, accept, acknowledge that your children are a blessing and there may be days that they are a total burden Amen. But they're always your blessing, there's sometimes your burden, right? So even if they're driving you crazy, you could say you are driving me crazy my dear beloved blessing. That's all fact, okay, that's all there. But if you see them as your blessing, you'll speak, blessing over them, and you'll call out blessing through them. That they are your blessing, and your goal is to raise them that they're a blessing to the Lord yourself and others. Number two, your child is your responsibility. We're reading this today, speaks to mothers, speaks to fathers, schools, churches, governmental agencies, jails are to help parents, but they're not to supplant or replace parents. And one of the things we've done, we have shed a lot of our parental responsibilities. Your teacher is not their mother or father.

Your coach is not their mother or father. Your youth pastor, your children's ministry director is not their mother or father. Other people can support, but ultimately God holds firstly and primarily responsible the mother and the father for the wellbeing of the children. Number three, the point of parenting is godliness. Not just to raise obedient kids, you could raise obedient kids like you're raising obedient pet, but they don't have a heart or a love for the Lord. You can raise a very moral kid that goes to hell, that's not the goal. The goal is to be with them in the presence of God forever. And so ultimately we'll talk about this when we get into the series, but when they come to the Lord Jesus and they ask, give us basically the tweet of the Old Testament. He says, well, "Love the Lord your God, "with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength." And so ultimately the whole combination of parenting is the same for young people, as it is for old people to have a heart that receives the love of God and responds by loving God, with all their heart, their emotional life, their mind, their mental life, their soul, their spiritual life, and their strength, their physical life. That's the goal of parenting, and we'll get into that this fall. Number four, your child starts with a sin nature and no theology. When your child is born, they don't have a new nature, they have a sin nature. They've been born, but they've not been born again. And as a result, they need to meet the Lord Jesus to get a new heart, new nature, new desires, and they don't have any theology. They don't know about sin. They don't know about God. They don't know about God's laws. They don't know about God's grace. They don't know about God's presence. All of these things need to be modeled by the parents and then taught by the parents 'cause the children come without any knowledge of these things. So if your child is little and they're sending in rebellion, guess what? They don't have a new nature. So to instruct and correct them point them to the Lord Jesus, and hopefully the Lord Jesus, and they have a life changing relationship where their heart begins to soften. Number five, your child is vulnerable, so you have to protect them. When your kids are little, they're gonna hurt themselves Amen. How many of you hurt yourself a lot as a kid, I got a lot of stitches. I got a lot of stitches as a kid. We were the boys that would climb trees and race go-karts and we would play sports. And when kids are little part of it is just protecting them physically from harm. And as they get older, it's protecting them in their dating relationships, from dangerous people and difficult circumstances. And a lot of parental work is actually very practical and protecting them. Simple things like we just don't let our kids go do overnights at people's homes that we don't know. We don't know who's in the house. Do they have an uncle living there? Do they have older brothers? Do they have guns in the house? They have porn in the house? They have drugs in the house? What's going on in that house? We're not just gonna send our kid there and hope it goes well. It's a lot of wisdom and instruction and correction and protection for the wellbeing of the child. Number six, the Holy Spirit knows your child better than you do and will help you raise them. Do you know that God the Holy Spirit knows what your kid is thinking and feeling even when they're too young, to articulate that to you. The Holy Spirit has access to your child's heart and mind in a way that you and I don't. I noticed this when I had at least one kid that's a little stubborn and he was a little stubborn. And you ever had the strong willed child, the kid was not obeying and nothing I was doing was working and they were very little. And so I was trying to reason with them, but they were acting crazy and I was going crazy and we weren't making a lot of progress. I'll never forget, I picked up the child and I laid down and the child started beating on me I won't tell you what child it was. Children would murder you if they were bigger okay? They what? The

difference between a child and a murderer is just size. That's it not intent okay? The child is beating on me and I'm holding the child, and I just kept kissing him and praying over them. God, this is my child, I love them. I don't know what's going on in their heart, I can tell they're frustrated. Holy Spirit, you know their heart, Holy Spirit, you know, what's going on in their heart. And the kid is at war and I'm just kissing them and holding them and loving them and praying them. Praying over them. And the Holy Spirit did a miracle and change my child's heart. My kid looked at me and I literally could see their countenance change. My kid looked at me and said, I'm sorry dad forgive me. I just started crying and I held him, I forgive you, I love you, I wanna enjoy you. You know this is not good for you. Thank you for apologizing, remember just holding this child as they're now weeping and their tears all over my chest and crying because I'm loving them and praying for them. Okay, you Christian parents need to know sometimes you just need to seek the Holy Spirit on your kids, Amen. Right just go get them all right, okay? And number seven, you always love your child, and the goal is to work toward enjoying one another. Love is constant and the goal is to work toward mutual enjoyment. I want my kids to enjoy me. We want Grace and I, our kids to enjoy us, and we want to enjoy our kids. We do have five kids, we have four teenagers. Honestly, we enjoy them, we enjoy them and I hope they'd say they didn't enjoy us that our goal has always been, make memories, have fun. I'm that crazy dad who takes photos of everything. I'm the memory, dad. Hey, first day at school video. What are you thinking? Yeah, yeah that'll be funny later okay. You know, last day of school, what are you thinking? You know, first, you know, first day of school, last day of school, birthday, batting, whatever it is. I wanna be the dad who's there. I wanna be the dad is involved. We wanna be the parents who are present wanna take photos, make videos, make memories, enjoy one another we do. So I've had this conversation a lot with my kids, there have been times, especially when they're little. Now, if I wanna talk to them, I look up at them. 'cause my two sons are taller than me, but when they were little, I didn't wanna intimidate or be overbearing, so I'd get down, and I was an old catcher. So I'd squat and I'd look them in the eye. It's okay, in a real calm voice whom I would go back to basics your my dad okay. How do I feel about you? You love me with your whole heart, one of my poetic kids would say, you love me bigger than the sky and deeper than the ocean. That's what one of my kids would say. And I said, okay, I love you. Am I enjoying you right now? They'd be like, nah, you're not okay you don't we we agree on that point. It's nice that we've come to agreement. I would like to enjoy you and I'd like you to enjoy me. And I'd like us to have fun together and enjoy one another. And what you're doing right now, it's I love you, but it's hard to enjoy you, do you understand that? Yeah, I get that. Okay, so what could we do that we could enjoy each other, sometimes the kid would say, well dad, you said, or did this and I'm frustrated. Okay, well then let me acknowledge and apologize for that, maybe I contributed to this. Sometimes they would tell me something that had nothing to do with any of they'd be like in recess today. Johnny yelled at Susie, and so I came home and declared war on mom. Okay, I don't know why? I don't know why? But that's the chain of events. I don't get it, but okay. Well let's talk about that hurt that made you frustrated, see if we can unpack that. And sometimes one of my kids is real honest, he's like, I'm just naughty today. Oh, okay. And that's not repentance, that's just stating facts okay? So, I'd be like, okay, I wanna enjoy you. Yeah, but I'm not here today, could we shorten that timeline? Could we make it you were naughty today. And what it was for me was trying to communicate to my kids. I don't want you just to be doing

what I tell you. I wanna be enjoying what we're doing together. So we've got memories, we've taken the kids all over the world, they've traveled with us. We have a lot of fun, even when they were little. And they knew that one of the goals was, we wanna enjoy you. We want you to enjoy us. We wanna make memories together and have fun as a family Amen. So these are some of the principles. Now let me give some directives now to the parents. When he speaks here to fathers he speaking to fathers pointedly, but he speaking to others principally. So principally, this would refer to mothers, especially as single mothers, grandparents, teachers, coaches, right? Sunday school workers. And some of you when you hear a parent takes is you're like, I don't have kids this doesn't apply to me, it sure does. Because there are kids in your orbit of influence nieces, nephews, siblings, and, or you can reflect back on your own upbringing in your own parenting and ask, okay the way that I was raised positively and negatively how has that impacted and affected me personally. But the reason I believe that he focuses on fathers is because they were in the domineering position. Furthermore, as the family leader, if dad will do some things right, and well, it will in fact and affect the whole family in a positive way. Statistically, if dad becomes a Christian mom and the kids are Christian. If dad goes to church, mom and the kids go to church. If dad reads his Bible, mom and the kids read their Bible. And if dad prays mom and the kids pray. So if you can get dad straightened out, a lot of other things get straightened out because that tends to be the family leader. So "fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged." Fathers do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. And so we talked about it as a staff, but then also I brought this up at the dinner table at our home. And I pulled out this verse with my kids and I said, okay, what are ways that parents can provoke or discourage their children? What have you seen and observed or heard in conversations with your friends? And then I told him permission to speak freely. As your dad what are the things that I have said or done or failed to say and do it would fit for you in the category of provoking you or discouraging you? Permission to speak freely. And we had a good conversation and I'll share what some of the points were from my kids. I wanna make this really practical. There are principles and there are methods. The Bible has principles and then we as parents need to figure out the methods to be true to God principles. Number one, making more withdrawals through criticism than deposits through encouragement. Relationships are like bank accounts, encouragement is deposit. I love you, I was proud of you. You did a good job, I believe in you. I'm praying for you. I'm here for you. How can I help you? Encouragement or deposits criticism, correction is a withdrawal. All relationships will make withdrawals Amen. It will. You're a parent, you're gonna have to correct some things, those are withdrawals, but what provokes and discourages a child is, man all you do is you come and make a withdrawal you never make a deposit. That's where some of you your parents, or your dad never said he loved you. But boy, he would sure tell you everything you did wrong. Every time you did something, right? He didn't really say anything, but if you did something wrong, he was going to let you know. That's what provokes and discourages another thing would be a physically. Particularly when the kids are little, you can shove them. You can control them. You can intimidate them. You can raise your voice at them. You can threaten them. You can physically impose them, which is abusive. And that is provoking and discouraging a child. Some of you had a dad like that, and when you grew up and you guys got a little bigger, it got a little conflicted, Amen. Right, all of a sudden it was "Lord of the Flies" at your house. You know, Darwinism and action might

makes right. I'm now bigger than you dad. There will be a collision between the young buck and the old buck to see which one is really tough. My goal is never to get there. I'm already looking up at both of my sons okay? I want them to love me. I want to love them. And I don't wanna rule through force intimidation, coercion or size. And when you do that provokes and discourages because what the child learns is it doesn't matter, even when you're wrong, you win because you're bigger than me. That's very discouraging. A third thing as well, correction without instruction. Never forget I was at a grocery store, I've learned a lot of things at the grocery store. I was at the grocery store and this kid did something, I'm not even sure what he did. And his mom, just with lightning quick, you know, ninja speed just you couldn't even see it. Like you couldn't have gotten a photo because it was faster than the camera could even capture. And the kid's like, what? What the kids like what? And she didn't tell him and this kid's phone, his mom, he's like, what the heck man, just every once in a while, out of nowhere here comes ninja mom. He didn't know what he did. And I thought that's not right, it's instruction then correction, you can't correct a child for something you didn't teach them. Otherwise they don't know, I learned this when the kids were little, one of my kids was a little more let's just say, strong-willed you had a strong-willed child? Strong-willed child did something, and I was gonna go correct them, but I realized I'm not told them they can't do this. So technically I can't correct them for something, I haven't instructed them. So I got down and I said, okay, this is how it's gonna work. What you just did was wrong, and here's what it is let me explain it. And I try to talk to him in a normal voice, smile, love you, let me explain this. Daddy's never told you this, so let me explain this to you, you can't do this and if you do, there's going to be consequences, do you understand? And the strong-willed child said, yeah, I understand. I said, what are you gonna do? I said, I'm gonna do it. I say will you do this there's gonna be a consequence? They're like, yup. I said, well okay, let me clarify. You know, maybe I'm not raising the smartest child. You know, maybe, maybe this one needs a little remedial here aha. I said, well, here you have two choices, you could do what I tell you or I can discipline you and then you can do what I tell you. And they said, well, you're gonna need to discipline me. Oh, okay a, but that's what you voted for all right I was clear. I was clear I made it very, very clear and they're just like, you're gonna have to discipline me 'cause I'm gonna do it again right? That's a hard issue with the child okay? And so it's instruction and then correction, what provokes and discourages a child you just correct them, but you didn't instruct them, and they don't know what they did. How many of you growing up you knew what this felt like, 'cause you got busted for something and to this day you don't even know what it was? You don't even know what it was, they didn't tell you, how about this one? Verbally yelling, name-calling, cursing, barking, voice raising. I just verbal assault abuse, bad nickname, screaming at you. Some of you, your parents had a horrible nickname for you and the other kids picked it up and it was very shaming. That's part of provoking and discouraging, a publicly humiliating. How many of you were raised in a family that felt like every time people came over, it was time for a roast. You ever any of you have that family? How many of you don't even look? Some of you are laughing, so if you're crying, so you have had this family? What happens is you know, it's Thanksgiving, and it's like well, when Tony was little, he would poop his diaper and eat it. And it looked like the gravy and everybody's like, oh Tony. Tony's like, really? This is my fiance and she's just meeting the family. Right, it's some of it's your family would sort of have a good time roasting you in front of others. And that can be very

provoking and discouraging. So pray for Tommy. Also, it can be provoking and discouraging, if the parents don't distinguish between sins and mistakes, some of us you get frustrated with your kids 'cause you want everything perfect, and you think that you have the right to live in a museum with children okay? You don't, right, it's not a museum right? It is a home for children. And the difference between sins and mistakes is this, mistakes are how we learn, it's not rebellion. It's not disobedience. It's just part of growing up. I saw this some years ago at Red Robin and we were at a table, Red Robin and the grocery store. If you wanna learn anything about bad parenting, just spend some time at Red Robin and the grocery store okay? So we're at Red Robin and I'm there with my kids and you know, we're ordering and all that stuff, and then next to us, there's another table with a lot of little kids and they're very, very active and dad's on his phone the whole time, he's not paying attention. And so the kids order like, you know, strawberry lemonade or whatever it is, and the kids are really, really, really little. And they bring the big glasses that are actual glass with the ice in it, sweating all slippery. Dad's not paying any attention, dad's on the phone, you know, he's, I don't know what he's doing nothing important. And so the kid goes to pick up his strawberry lemonade and it's guess what happens?

- [Audience Member] Spills it.

- Yeah, he spills it okay, that's right. He spills it thank you. Okay let me ask you you're very helpful. Is it a sin if the lemonade slips out of your hand and you're a little kid, is it a sin? No, it's just a mistake, right? And it's not a sin it's a mistake. So it spills the dad disciplines the kid, I thought, you know what? The dad should take the wooden spoon to himself, he's the one who made the mistake. 'cause the kid should have what kind of cup? Sippy cup, sippy cup. Everybody knows it's gonna fall over, that's why they put a lid on it and the world's longest straw to buy the parents time from drowning, that's why they do that. But you can't discipline a kid for a mistake. How many of you raised a really clumsy kid? We had one kid they just be standing there and fall over and break stuff. Lamp broke, stuff broken like what happened? Like, I don't know, I'm just gone they're gone. One of my kids was skinny, I had my Shrek size head, totally imbalanced. It's living with a trunk little person who just got off a boat all the time. They're gonna fall over. They're gonna break stuff. That's what happens. That's what happens right? And so there's a difference between sins and mistakes, sins and mistakes. I'll never forget, I was just thinking of this one. So when the kids were really little, we were old enough we had those VHS tapes, did you have those? You have those. We had a little TV that the kids could just put it in, it automatically pull up their show and the VHS would not go in. I was like, oh that's weird, so I take it into the repair shop, this is a long time ago. And he calls me up he's like well, I've found the problem, come in we need to talk. Okay, so I go there he's got a bag, this big filled with crumbled Oreos. I said, where'd you get the Oreos? He said from the VHS slot. Apparently my kid thought that the VHS slot was a cookie jar and kept putting Oreos in that I'm surprised it played as long as it did. Pretty soon there's a full bucket of Oreos in the VHS player. I sit down with the kid I was like what'd you do? He's like, I was store, I was hiding the cookies. The kids were eating all the cookies, I wanted some cookies, it looked like a cookie jar to me and a nice place to hide the cookies. That's not a sin it's close, but it's a mistake. It's a mistake, they didn't

know. I told them, I was like, you can't put cookies in the VHS. They're like, oh, good to know, good to know okay? Couple others number seven, we could do this all day, but favoritism right? Favoritism provokes and discourages right? And it's like, this kid gets that this kid gets this, but let me say this there's a difference between favoritism and kids earning more responsibility. So I don't believe when you reach at certain age, you get certain privileges. I believe when you reach a certain maturity, you get certain privileges. Size asked our kids do you guys want more freedom? The answer was yes okay. And how do you get more freedom? Be more responsible. So you want freedom, I want you to have freedom. So you'll be more responsible and I'll give you more freedom, that's different than favoritism. Favoritism is you prefer one child over the other, you favor one child over the other that provokes and discourages. Other ones I'll read them quickly, just being absent, sometimes especially as dads, we can be physically present, emotionally absent. Do we had dinner with the kids? And I said, permission to speak freely. One of my kids brought that up, he said, dad, it's better now. But there was a season where you were physically in the room, but mentally you were gone. I said yeah, you're right I apologize, I'm sorry. I ask your forgiveness. That was a difficult season for dad and I lost focus and I'm sorry that that hurt you. Know that you are my priority, I value you and I regret that and I regret missing those opportunities to be there for you. I was physically present, but I was emotionally absent. Daddy was checked out. You're right and I'm sorry that you felt that. Others no protective boundaries. My kids said unreasonable performance expectations in sports or with grades, unless you're going to the Olympics with a 4.0, they're not pleased. Some of you as well, non-relational parenting style. This is where you get a lot of rules and not a lot of relationship. I'm big on a real investment in the relationship and minimal rules. If you've got a lot of rules, it's because you have a bad relationship. If you have a strong relationship, you don't need as many rules. And so ultimately non-relational parenting style is I'm not really emotional, close, affectionate with you, between you and I is a lot of rules, not much relationship that provokes and discourages. Sometimes it's just not being fun. Proverbs 3 Hebrews quotes "That the father disciplines, "the children that he delights in." That means you have a lot of time making fun with them and delighting in them and I'm the weird dad who takes photos of literally everything. I'm that dad, I wanna capture all the moments on video. First day of school, I'll wake him up, what day is it? First day of school how are you feeling meh? You know last day of school how you feel woo woo you know I'm that dad, it's your birthday. It's Kwanzaa I'll capture it all I don't care. Secretary's Day I'm down, man let me get a video. Whatever it is I wanna have fun, make memories delight in the kids so that most of our time together is making good memories, and occasionally there's correction in the middle of it. Couple is well not a generous parent. Parents that are generous tend to see their children respond more appropriately. Some people say, I don't wanna spoil my child. Let me tell you this, my line is always, I don't mind spoiling my kids, I just mind if they act spoiled. I think there's a difference between spoiling your kid and them acting spoiled I don't know about you, I feel like God's spoiled me. I feel pretty spoiled. I should be on fire right now. I've gotten a lot of good things Amen. Then ultimately God's been very gracious and generous to me, gave me a wonderful wife, gave me healthy kids. I get to teach the Bible. I'm in Arizona. I got a pool like I'm pretty happy, right? I'm pretty happy. And so for me I feel like God's been very generous toward me. And I feel like he spoiled me and I don't mind spoiling my kids as long as they don't act like spoiled kids, right? As long as

they are generous kids with others, they're grateful kids, then all's good. And if you are not generous, I think it discourages and provokes. And lastly, not repenting of your own sin, provokes and discourages your kids. If a parent never says I was wrong, how many of you have never heard that from your parents? I was wrong. It was my fault not yours. I didn't teach you that I failed there. You know what I disciplined you and I didn't really explained that, that was my fault. I wasn't paying attention. I didn't have a good boundary. I was you know, I didn't even pray for you. That was my fault I'm sorry. You parents need to know that one of the most powerful things you can give your children is an apology. Now receive that so you know what my parents aren't perfect, they know they're not perfect. It allows forgiveness to flow a little more freely, and they tend to be a little more gracious. I'm pretty much out of time, but that doesn't matter. Let me say one more thing. Let me give you one little parenting tip, we'll do a full series in the fall. I like to distinguish in leadership and with our kids in decision making of view, of voice and a vote. And the question is as the kids are age appropriate, there are more things that they can get a view of what we're doing, what we're working on, the decisions that we're making. There are certain things I want their voice, I want them to speak in. And there are certain things that they get to vote for, there are the things that Grace and I, as the parents get to vote for. So I'll give you an example. When we decided to move to Arizona, it was a long decision that involved the whole family. So we met and I wanted the kids to have a view, okay? We're gonna move and it's gonna be months from now. And I want you to be emotionally prepared, and we need to pray and seek God's will as a family. I want you to know the decision we're making, and I want you to be part of that decision making process, voice, okay voice. What are your priorities kids? Okay, your oldest sister needs a college. We've got elementary, junior high, high school, college, some of you play sports. One of you is musical, right? All of these issues, you know, how do we factor these? Give me your voice. What are the A priorities, B priorities, C priorities, we had a lot of these meetings as a family. I want your voice. I want to hear you. When it came down to a vote, Grace and I made the vote with the Lord. Otherwise the kids would have voted and we'd be living in Sydney, Australia, all five kids, no, that's not even a joke, that's a fact Jack, all five kids. We spent a month in Darling Harbor in Sydney Australia, and the kids all loved it. And so when I came to I said, we're moving, they're like, yay we're moving to Sydney, Australia. And if we took a vote, it was five to two. And we'd all be, you know, eat Vegemite and I'd be paying the bills and so, I said, well, no, no, we're not going to Australia. They're like you asked, I asked your voice, not your vote. 'cause five to two, we would eat nothing but Mountain Dew and Chicken Nuggets and live in Australia. That's where you would vote for the answer is no. This last year, when it sometimes will, it'll be dinner time. And I'll say, okay, who wants to go out? We're gonna go out to dinner. Where do you guys wanna go? They all got a voice. Okay, you guys vote? You can vote on that, that's fine. Where do you wanna I don't care it doesn't matter to me. This last Christmas it was okay, what do you guys wanna do for the holiday break? A view we got this much time off what do you wanna do? Voice they each gave us their opinions. One kid wanted to go here. One kid want to go there. One kid didn't wanna go anywhere 'cause that's that kid. They don't wanna go anywhere okay? They don't wanna go anywhere right? Let's go to McDonald's Jesus is there? Nah, stay home. Okay, so we got that kid. And all the other kids, one of the kids said, I wanna go to the Grand Canyon. I never even thought of that. I was like, oh, anybody else wanna go to the Grand Canyon yeah. Okay, we can vote on this. Where do

you guys wanna go for Christmas? Took a vote we're going to the Grand Canyon. So we went to the Grand Canyon for Christmas break. I think what can cause frustration with the children is if they don't have a view, you never let them know what's going on. A voice you know, let them work it out, and that's part of your discipleship. This is how we're making the decision. These are the things we're factoring in. This is the why? A good math teacher doesn't just want the answers, they want you to show your math. And raising your kids you don't wanna just give them the answer, you wanna show them the math. Why are we doing this? Well, actually, we thought about it, we prayed about it. And here's all the reasons do you understand? We appreciate your voice. We wanna hear from you. We wanna explain to you, because this is how we train people to become adults and make decisions by giving them a voice. And so for us, it's a view of voice and a vote. And I'll close with this. Some of you hear this and you're a little bit discouraged Amen. Every parent who's honest is a little bit discouraged. Every grandparent is also, if they're honest, a little bit discouraged. Let me end with some encouragement. Number one, God is a Father and he wants to parent you and love you and help you. And as he treats you, he'll give you the grace to lovingly raise your kid as he's raising you okay? So you're not on your own, you have a great Heavenly father, who's there to parent you. Secondly, you can always point your children to Jesus. It says in Luke 2, that Jesus submitted to his parents, he obeyed his parents. And that he grew in wisdom, stature and favor with men and God that's what Luke 2 says. And what that means is if your child is three years old or six years old, or 10 years old, or 16 years old, what's interesting. God became a man and he was that age. And so he can sympathize and empathize and relate to your child at that age. So you could point your child to the Lord Jesus, who's alive and well today after dying for sin and rising as our Savior. And the 13 year old kid could talk to Jesus, Jesus, I'm 13 I'm struggling a little bit with image issues or identity issues. I'm struggling with my siblings, obeying my parents, my schoolwork and Jesus is a God who says, I know what it's like to be 13. I was 13, I know exactly what you're feeling, and I'm here to help you to set an example for you and to be an assistance to you. Thirdly, and I wanna say this to parents in general, but on Mother's Day, mothers in particular, your kids don't need a perfect parent, they don't need a perfect mom. Jesus Christ did not have perfect parents, and he did not have a perfect mom, and he turned out pretty good, Amen okay? Your kids don't need a perfect parent, they need you. Jesus didn't get a perfect mom or a perfect dad, but he got the parents that he needed so that he could grow in wisdom, stature and favor with men and God. And the last thing is, as the funny crazy times happen, capture them laugh, have fun. Some of you are young parents and you just feel overwhelmed. Some of you are older parents or grandparents, and you realize time moves very quickly. And so what you gotta do is you gotta capture all the opportunities I was gonna share with you, just a couple of funny stories from people here at church. And then we'll take communion and sing. How many of you looking back, you can think of really crazy, funny stuff with your kids Amen. Here's one, my son's second grade field trip was to Three Rivers Stadium to tour the Pirates locker room. He had lunch with several team members too. Everyone was to bring a disposable camera to capture the memories. When my son came home with no camera, I asked him where his camera was? His response was I threw it away, it was disposable. Our newborn had projectile no not vomiting, diarrhea onto his dresser, that's a real jump shot by the way, onto his dresser and we weren't even sure what had happened and raced to clean it up. We both had to literally

jump out of the way again, as it shot about two to three feet onto the wall, his lamp and all in his dresser drawers, and just barely missed us praying this doesn't happen with baby three coming October 1st, right? Worst paint ball game ever right there, okay? Next one, the funniest thing about my pregnancies were the names of my doctors. First baby Dr. Payne. In between Dr. Blessing and second baby Dr. Miracle, I would have hoped for Dr. Dre. Okay, last one, raising kids in another country, our son had braces and one of the bands had come loose, not knowing French very well. I attempted to call the orthodontist office to make an appointment, the French words for band and sheep are similar. I got them mixed up, so I heard the receptionist give a little snort when I explained that the sheep had come off of my sons tooth. There's going to be lots of opportunity for fun and joy. I wanna encourage you parents, that God loves you. He loves your kids and he has good for you and your kids. Father God, thank you so much that you're our father. Lord Jesus, thank you, that you came as a child and that you identify with the kids and that Father you're there to help us parents. Lord, I do pray for the parents in the church, a lot of grace, a lot of joy, a lot of hope, a lot of encouragement, a lot of memories and a lot of fun. I pray for the kids Lord that they would learn to obey their mother and father and that the parents would take the lead and raising their children to be obedient to the Lord and enjoyable to them, because Lord, this pleases your heart. Father as we come to communion, remember that our God entered into human history in the body of a baby. And that he grew in wisdom stature in favor, in obedience and subjection to his parents. So pray for us all Lord, as we partake of communion, that we would remember that Jesus came in the flesh as a kid and that he forgives our sin through his broken body and shed blood. And that there is forgiveness for us. There is hope for us. There is life for us. There is joy for us because of Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen.