

Parenting On Point #5 - Loving Physically With All Your Strength

- Howdy, Pastor Mark Driscoll here welcoming you to my first ever parenting series. More than 20 years in the pulpit, never taught an entire parenting series. "Parenting on Point" is a five-week series looking at what it means to love God, and live in the love of God with all your heart, emotional life, soul, spiritual life, mind, mental life, strength and physical life, and help your neighbor do the same, starting with your own family, and the kids that are sleeping in the bunk beds down the hall. So thanks for joining me, hope to be of service to you. All right. How many of you came to church today expecting a great sermon, a word from God, okay?

- Yeah.

- Yeah, lemme lower your expectations all right. I have got the flu. I am not feeling good. I'm a total baby when I get the flu. My wife has birthed kids, and I have whined more about the flu than she has five pregnancies. So I can't hear anything. I couldn't hear the band, I hope they sounded good. I have a ringing in my left ear, I'm probably at some point gonna cough, and I'm hot, and I'm sweating like Mike Tyson in a spelling bee. I am not feeling the best. And the hard thing is I've got one of those jobs you can't call in sick. I actually preached one time with a stomach flu, and a bucket in the pulpit. And I told the sound guy, "If I make a break for it, please turn off my mic." And so that's kind of where we're at today. I'm not going to lie, I'm gonna lower your expectations, but it's really interesting in God's providence, 'cause today I'm talking about loving God with all your physical strength, your life energy, despite the circumstances of your body. That's the downside of preaching, you have to experience what you're telling. And so that's where I find myself today. And so we're finishing the "Parenting on Point" sermon series. And in Mark 12, they come to the Lord Jesus, and they basically ask Him, "Hey, what's the point of the whole Bible?" And He says, "Love the Lord, your God, with all your heart," emotional life, "soul," spiritual life, "mind," mental life, "and strength," physical life. Loving God with all your body, what does that mean? What does that look like? So some of you are Christians, some of you are not, some of you are somewhere in that continuum trying to figure out where you're at. The story of the Bible is an interesting one, it says that God is eternal without beginning or end, that God preexists all the days, and God is spirit. God is a nonphysical being, God is spirit being. Now we're into a place where for us who live in a body, it's hard for us to conceive of all of this. And the Bible says that God made everything out of nothing. It says this in Hebrews 11:3, that the physical world was made by the spiritual God, that God made everything out of nothing. And so we ask, "How does that work?" I don't know. I can only make things out of things. So I can take wood and make it into a table. Some of you can take fabric and turned it into clothing, but nothing into something, that's only what God does. God makes everything out of nothing. God makes the physical world, He gives it to us as a gift. The Bible says that He created a lovely garden for our first parents to inhabit, that He made for our first parents and for us a physical body. The Bible says that we're knit together in our mother's womb. The Bible says that the body that God gives us is a gift. And it says that God gave us the physical body, and He breathed life, the human soul into the physical body in Genesis 2, right at the beginning of your

Bible. So we're basically two parts, we're the external, visible physical, we're the internal, invisible spirit or soul, your two parts. And they work together, your body affects your soul, your soul affects your body. It all works together. And what happens is God puts our first parents in the garden and He tells them that there's something they can't do with their physical body. "You can't partake of this one forbidden fruit, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Well, those of you who know the story, our first parents, they sinned against God in their physical body. They partook of that which was forbidden. It looked good, it seemed like it would taste good, and as a result, there was this physical longing and yearning for that which was forbidden. Something that we've all struggled with every day since, wanting to take something that would seemingly give us physical bodily pleasure, but would do us spiritual harm. And they sinned against God, and we've been separated against God ever since. And then God came into human history to remedy the sin problem. So God comes as Jesus Christ. That physical God enters... Excuse me, that spiritual God enters into His physical creation. So the eternal God enters into time, the spiritual God enters into the world. And this is the opposite of the way that the Greeks who were prevalent at that time in philosophy and spirituality thought. They thought that the inner, the soul, the spirit was good, and the body was bad. So the goal was to unleash and release the soul from the body, to die. And this is the opposite, God, who is a spirit takes upon Himself a body, and enters into human history as the Lord, Jesus Christ. I'm gonna show you in a minute, He grows up physically, He suffers, dies on the cross in our place for our sins, physically, He's buried, physically, He rises, physically today, He lives, physically, Jesus Christ is ruling and reigning in the body that rose from the dead for our salvation. He's coming again to renew creation, to cause people to resurrect from the dead, and to not only heal our soul, but to also heal our body. So that we could live together as God's people in His forever kingdom. That being said, let's look at Jesus is God in the body. We read this in John 1. And the Word, that is Jesus, that spiritual, immaterial, invisible God, became flesh and dwelt among us. He came on a rescue mission. And this word for flesh here, it's where the theologians will use this language, and they'll talk about the incarnation. Incarnation. So carne is meat, flesh. So how many of you like chili con carne, amen? It's almost football season, put it on chips. Something to pray about, it's really good, especially with cheese and... Yeah, amen. I'm thinking about it right now. So chili con carne is chili with meat. How many of you eat carne asada? Carne asada? Don't even pray about it, just eat it, it's that good, okay? It'll be in heaven 'cause it's the perfect food. Carne asada means meat, carne is meat. And so what it's saying here is Jesus is God in a physical body, that's what it's saying. Jesus is God in a physical body. And sometimes religious people get very confused about this. Sometimes we think that what we do in the body is not very spiritual. So they said that Jesus was called a glutton, a drunkard, and a friend of sinners. Jesus did eat, but He didn't eat too much. Jesus occasionally had a glass of wine, but He certainly wasn't an alcoholic who got drunk, and He had sinful friends but He never did sinful things. Religious people have a hard time seeing holiness including what you're doing in your body. You can eat and drink, and have relationships that are not sinful, they're actually in fact, very spiritual. And sometimes even religious people have a hard time really conceiving of what I'll call the full humanity of Jesus. Jesus had a mom. He was born like you and I are born. And as kids do, He had to eat and drink, and grow up, and teeth, and go through puberty. I still remember as a new Christian in a Bible study, and one of the new Christian guys asked, he asked this

question not to be irreverent, but he said, "I have a question, if that is okay. Did Jesus ever go to the bathroom?" I blurted out, "I hope so." I mean what a rough 30 plus year run it would be. Like, I'm feeling bloated. I mean, it would be a real rough run, but how many of you are even saying that? "Don't say Jesus went to the bathroom. That's very sacrilegious." I don't wanna be irreverent, but Jesus was fully human. The Bible says that He got tired, 'cause that's what the body does. The Bible says that He got hungry, 'cause that's what the body does. The Bible says that He was exhausted, anxious, at times He was weary, 'cause that's what the body does. The soul lives in the body, and the soul and body do life together. We read this about Jesus' life on the earth, "The child that is Jesus," Luke 2:40, "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God," or the power and presence of the person of the Holy Spirit was upon Him. It says He grew and became strong, that's His physical growth. So we as human beings, we wanna tend to the outer life, our physical well-being, and the inner life, the life of the soul. And it says that Jesus grew in his inner life, wisdom and favor, and He grew in his outer life, strong, and He grew in stature. Grew in stature. And lemme say this about growth, physical and spiritual growth are not identical. There are exceptions. Sometimes kids get sick or they have an illness or some sort of problem, but as a general rule, a child grows physically, that's just the natural progression. The same is not true spiritually. You and I do not just happen to grow spiritually. It takes effort, it takes intentionality, it takes the power of the Holy Spirit, it takes self-discipline and self-control. And sometimes when we're growing or we're raising a child, this will include those of you who are parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, caregivers, teachers, Sunday school workers, foster parents, coaches, counselors, whatever the case is, just because someone gets older doesn't mean that they become more mature, amen?

- Amen.

- You see sometimes we'll say, "Well, when they get older and wiser." How many of you are older, and you know that not all older people are wiser people? And that's the case. It is possible to grow internally and externally, to grow physically and spiritually. But physical growth does not necessarily mean there will equally be spiritual growth. Jesus grew physically and He grew spiritually. That should be the goal for all of us. All of us! And so part of this is tending to the physical well-being of the child. Some of you parents are ones who will very much emphasize the spiritual, and everything is very, very spiritual. Others of you will emphasize the physical, everything is very, very physical. And it's both. Raising a child is raising a soul in a body, it's both. So the body needs sleep, the body needs hydration. The Bible... The body rather needs good nutrition, the body needs exercise. These are things to grow physically. The soul needs prayer. The soul needs scripture. The soul needs worship. The soul needs service. The soul needs the presence of God. And it's looking at, you're raising a human being, how do I raise a total and whole human being? Lemme say this since we're in Scottsdale, Arizona, part of my function is prophetic. We live in a place that cares a lot more about the body than it does the soul, cares a lot more about the body than it does the soul. But it's important for us who are Christians to not overreact and say, "Therefore, we overly emphasize the soul, and neglect the body." They both go together. What this means in parenting, sometimes it's a spiritual issue, sometimes it's a physical issue, sometimes it's both. Sometimes parents will blame everything

on the body, "Oh these are the terrible twos. They're just terrible for a whole year, that's just the way..." And then they're three, and they're like, "Well, these are the awful threes. And these are the fatal fours, and these are the tragic fives. And this is the painful 27s." And you know you're just like, at some point I think we gotta deal with their soul. There's something amiss in the life of the child. Other times we can over spiritualize everything to the point where... No it's just physical. How many of you know that a child without a nap, and a child that is demon possessed are basically the same child, right? It's physical, right? Sometimes it's just physical. I didn't know that hangry was a thing until I had a child that got angry. They're a Christian until they're hungry, and then there are non-Christian. So what I've learned is they need the Holy Spirit, and a snack, for the whole person needs to be tended to. I'll give you an illustration, I'll give you a story. Some years ago we were on a plane. I think our oldest was two, around two, and I think our second was a newborn. And so we were taking a trip all the way to Florida. I was going to speak at an event and Grace needed to come, and we were hoping to maybe take the kids to Disney World. And we packed some snacks, right? Lead us not into temptation, right? Packed some snacks for the kids, some games and activities, and also packed bubble gum 'cause their ears were gonna blow up on the plane, and they don't understand what's going on, so you give them gum and sorta save them from themselves. I brought a lot of lollipops. 'Cause I figured if they started screaming I'd give them one, that's a solution. Some of you are thinking, "You're bribing your child." Yep. And there are times that you need to do a deep dive into Leviticus and get to the , and sometimes they're too, and you're just trying to survive the flight, amen?

- Amen.

- Okay, if you don't believe this, you don't have a child. So anyways, for those of you that have a child and you believe this, so we're on the plane and Grace has a seat, and I've got a seat, and the two-year-old's got a seat, and it is a little bit of a rough flight, we got up too early, ran out of snacks, not so good, it went okay. But the two-year-old's a very godly-compliant kid for their age, but they're struggling. They're pretty much struggling. So we land and the kid thinks, "Glad that's over!" I forgot to tell them, "This is a layover." Layover is the Greek word for pain, okay? We're gonna be in pain, is what I forgot to tell them. So they thought we're done, off the plane, "Yay, what's now?" "Next plane." They're two, they can't fully understand this. We get on the plane, full flight, no seat for the two-year-old. So Grace is in another part of the plane with a newborn. I am in the back in a middle seat with a two-year-old on my lap, who has not slept, is hungry, dehydrated, and frustrated. This otherwise compliant, wonderful child has a complete and total nuclear meltdown. I am that guy on the plane. I fly a lot, and I'm that guy. And everybody is looking at me, giving me the stink eye, 'cause my kid is the one freaking out. And I could read their mind, I know exactly what they're thinking. Here's what they're saying in their heart, "Put her in the overhead bin." That's what they're thinking. Just put her in the overhead bin, right? That's what they're thinking. So I look at my lovely daughter, she's freaking out, can't calm her down, I'm trying to hold her in the middle seat between two business guys. And I look at her and I say, "Honey, I will do whatever you want. What do you need me to do?" 'Cause now it's a hostage negotiation. That's where we are, okay? She says, and I quote, I kid you not, "I

want a pumpkin." Okay. This is not gonna end well for me, I could just see that. I look at her and she looks at me, and I said, "Honey, I don't have a pumpkin." Nuclear meltdown. Lemme just say this, if you're raising a kid, no matter how much they love the Lord, you will have a pumpkin day, amen? You're just going to. And what I learned was, you know what, I could cast the demon out, I could invoke the presence of God, I could anoint her with holy water, I could get on the microphone, and see if there's a priest to come do an exorcism, I could slaughter a goat, we could do anything, what we need to do is try again tomorrow. That's what we need to do. This is just at the point where physically the child is done and it's not necessarily their fault, and they're not in sin, they've just found the limits of their humanity. I'm I making my point? Sometimes it's like that. You're like, you know what, it's a pumpkin day. We'll try again tomorrow. And so when it says that Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and favor, as a parent and as an adult, cultivating your body and soul, and helping raise the body and soul of the child, but being aware and self-conscious that the body does impact and affect the soul, and they work together. Next slide please. So helping a child grow at every stage of life. It says this in Luke 2:52 about Jesus, "He increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man." Again, there's this trajectory of maturity with Jesus. Paul says it this way, reflecting back on his own childhood, in first Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways." So here's what I want you to know, maturity is to be evaluated based upon age. It's not a problem to act childish, if you're a child you're a?

- Child.

- Year three you're like, "They're so childish." Kids are like, "I'm a child." This is consistent. So if at two you're teething, freaked out, can't stop drooling, are very, very frustrated, have not had a nap, and throw yourself the floor, and kick your feet, you're like, "Well, welcome to two." But if you do that at 32, we're all feeling awkward, amen? And you're like, "That's immature behavior." Immature behavior is predicated upon life stage. So when it says that Jesus increased, what it means is, at two, He was mature for two, at four, at six, at eight, at 10, at 12, at 16, 18, 20, 22, 28, 30, He's mature for that age. So what it is, it's looking at your child and saying, okay, what does maturity look like at this age? And here's what's wonderful, you can actually point at every stage of life to Jesus. When they're four, "Okay, what do you think Jesus was like when He was four? Do you think He took His truck, and hit His brother in the head?" "No, I don't think He did." "Okay, well that's good answer." At eight, at 10, what do you think it was like when Jesus had to go to school? What do think it was like when Jesus had to do His chores? What do you think it was like when Jesus hit puberty? What do you think it was like when Jesus was a young man? And at every life stage, from conception in the womb till maturity, we can look at the Lord Jesus, and say we have a God who understands. We have a God who's entered into human history, and has gone through all the developmental life stages that we do. And what Paul says, he says, well, there's a child and there's an adult. And it's necessary to mature, the childish ways go away so that we can mature. Lemme say this, God wants us to have a childlike faith, not a childish faith. What's a childlike faith? Jesus says He wants us to have a childlike faith. It's innocent, it's trusting, it doesn't argue, it assumes that what is being said is true and for your

good. Childish faith is very different than childlike faith. Childish faith is someone who's supposed to be physically and spiritually maturing at some similar trajectory, but their physical development is far outpaced their spiritual development. Their body is a lot more mature than their soul. So lemme say this, when it comes to the physical maturing, and evaluating maturity levels, there'll be three, four, or five, depending upon what experts you lean on, life stages. I'll hit three for the sake of brevity. Infancy is zero to four, just say that, it's kind of before kindergarten, roughly in that sort of time frame. How many of you have kids that are this age? Okay. And you're tired, amen?

- Amen.

- You're tired because these are physically exhausting years. The children can't feed themselves, bathe themselves, they can't go to the bathroom, they throw up. I mean, it's crazy. It's constant physical... They wake up in the middle of the night. They don't have a job, so they're not really worried about sleeping in in the morning. This is like the worst roommate you've ever had, okay? That's an infant. They're physically exhausting. And they will just try everything. They put everything in their mouth because they're tactile, so they got a knife, like I wonder what this does, no, right? If you have a son, they immediately climb to the highest point, and fall on their head. Those are the two steps of behavior for every boy, get to the highest point and fall on your head. That's just what they do. I don't know why, I don't have a verse, I'm just observing my childhood. So anyways, what happens in these years is it's all about change. How many of you have noticed that? Your grandparents, parents, caregivers, teachers, kids go away for the summer, they come back, they change. There's constant change. They physically change, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, total change. How many of you are aunts, uncles, cousins, you haven't seen someone. Then you see the child, and it's been a while, and you're like "God, Lee! They change so fast." Now they're talking, now they're walking, now they're reasoning, now they're rebelling. It happens, the personality starts to evolve. So if I had to give one focus for the Christian parent in this life season, it's Ephesians 6, "Obey your mother and father." It's an echo of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20, "Obey your mother and father." The first thing that the child needs to learn at this age, practically speaking, in addition to God's rule, is that God has delegated authority to the parent or parents and that the child is under authority. Some of you never learned that lesson, which is why you've grown physically, but you're still very immature. 'Cause you don't respect authority, you don't obey rules, you don't understand that your boss is in charge, that's why you keep getting fired, right? That the coach is in charge, which is why you keep getting benched. You don't submit to obey authority. It is important for a child to know you are not in authority, you're under authority. You're under authority. And one of the worst things that has happened in America, it was a generation or two ago, one of the leading psychologists for parenting basically said that it was to be a pure relationship, not a hierarchy in the home, and that children were not necessarily to obey their parents. Which leads to rebellion, and generational breach, and self-destructive behavior, 'cause children do not have wisdom. They do not have an understanding of cause and effect, and reaping and sowing, and consequence. And as a result, if the child gets to do whatever they want to do, that child is in the process of destroying themselves. Because they have a sin nature, they need a new nature.

And it's the parents' job to put guard rails in place through yes and no to protect them from harm. And so the child needs to learn to obey. First thing is obey your mother and father. And it says, so that it might go well with you, so that their life would continue. Some of you, you think that by submitting to, yielding to your child that you're going to earn their favor or trust because what you want is their approval. What you need is to be their parent. To be their parent. 'Cause sometimes you tell a child no, and they say, "I hate you." You need to say, "I love you. And I'm not living for your approval. I'm living for God's approval. And I need to submit to His authority, and you need to submit to my authority. And we all need to acknowledge and recognize authority." Then comes childhood, this is sort of basically ages five through 12. So these would kind of be the elementary years as it were. These years are largely about character formation. Now the child can reason, they could start to read, they can start to understand deeper, more complex concepts. This is where you bring the word of God to them. And what you're really working on is character formation. This would be introducing them as early as possible to the Lord Jesus, Bible teaching, reading a Kid's Bible at night, praying over them, worshiping with them, loving them, serving them. But at this point they're able to reason a little deeper, and you're able to work on character. Now they're not just under the parental authority, they go to school. They go play for a sports team, and they've got a coach. They're going to maybe Kids' Ministry at church, or Student Ministry, whatever the case might be. And now they've got some places that the parent is not present. So the child needs to walk in wisdom, and they need to form character. And this starts the transition from a heavy physical involvement, to also an emotional and spiritual investment in the development of the character of the child. And the goal is to get them to be filled with the Holy Spirit, as Jesus was mature for their age. And also this is the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control. Self control. That's character development. Self control, not a self-indulgent child, but a self controlled child. It's character development. And here's what you need to know, if you have a lot of kids, we've got five, when they're little, you can kinda treat them like a herd. And as they get bigger, you've got to deal with them one-on-one, because their character development is different. This kid has character flaws here, and this kid has character strengths and weaknesses there. And it's getting to know each child, developing a relationship with each child, cultivating the character in each child. And then thirdly, is sort of the teen years. This is where we move them into middle school and into high school. These years are confusing. This is self-insecurity. How many of you remember the teen years? You don't wanna go back? How many of you did wake up today and say, "I miss junior high. I really miss junior high. I miss the acne, I miss the social awkwardness. I miss the physical gangliness." For you guys, "I miss having three long hairs on my chin and no more. I miss my voice sounding like my mom and my dad in the same sentence." All right. In the same sentence, right? It's all very awkward, amen? It's very awkward. And there's an insecurity there, like, who am I? What am I doing? How do I fit? And so in the teen years, a lot of it is identity formation and relationship training. That's what it is. Who are you in relationship with God, and how do you develop relationships with other people? Lemme say this, the teen years don't need to be horrible. Some people say this. Our oldest recently became 20, but before that we had at one time four teenagers, and you know what? It was great. We don't have perfect kids. I know for a fact, they don't have a perfect dad. On the perfect scale, their mom is a lot higher than their dad,

I'm sure of that. But they don't have a perfect mom, but we love our kids. We enjoy our kids. I actually like my kids. And I will just throw it out there, it helps, if your kids know that you like them. And people would always be like, "Oh wait until the teen years." Don't prophesy death over my children. Don't prophesy death. And don't say it in front of them, you're gonna give them a bad idea. The teen years are a critical time to transition from a lot of physical involvement, to more emotional and spiritual. Now they've got a driver's license, now they're going to school, now they're going to work, now they're going to sports. Their life is starting to move, further distance out from the oversight of the parents, but not from the influence of the parents. Proverbs talks a lot about parenting. If you wanna read the best book on parenting, maybe Proverbs is a good choice. And it says in Proverbs 1, that Proverbs exist to make young, simple people, older, wiser people. And it starts with the fear of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." So it's teaching the kid, God sees and knows all, even if I'm not there, God still goes with you, you need to live your life in relationship with God, and out of reverence and respect and regard for God. And then it goes on to talk about making wise decisions not foolish decisions, which is a lot of the teen years. Helping them make wise and not foolish decisions, because when they're little it's all about obey, but as they get older, you can't tell them what to do all the time, they gotta make some of their own decisions, and wisdom is helping them make those decisions. And so what Proverbs 1 talks about, it's fearing God, making wise decisions, listening to, honoring your mother and father, seeking their counsel and input, and then number four it's about picking good friends. That's Proverbs 1. Making good relationships, right? If you walk with those kids, you're gonna walk into trouble. You walk with those kids, you'll walk with the Lord. Now we love those kids and we want to evangelize them, but we don't want them to evangelize you. You're trying to convert them to obedience to God, and they're trying to convert you toward rebellion to God, you need to be the one who sees them converted, you can't be the one who's converted. A lot of this is about relationship and friendship, including dating. And one of the craziest things that happens at 18, it's not in the Bible, but some parents, even Christian, will take sort of a crazy ideology, and they'll just say, "Well, they're 18. Now they're adults, they make their own decisions." Are you kidding me? They can get pregnant, they have a driver's license, they can vote, they can join the military, they can get a credit card. For sure, this is where they need a little advice, amen?

- Amen.

- 'Cause those are consequences for the, perhaps, rest of your life. I'll never forget, I was dealing with a pastor some years ago. His daughter turned 18 and she's dating a really bad guy, and she's making really bad decisions. I was like, "What are you doing?" He's like, "Well, she's an adult now. She needs to make her own decisions." I was like, "You're always her dad. She's not your little girl, she's a young woman, but you're still her dad." Lemme say this, kids always need their parents. So you can be 50, you still need your parents. How many of you, you got older and you go to buy a house, they don't tell you about how to qualify for a home loan, and 20% down, and insurance. Nobody talked to me about that. You want to choose a college major, your parents are just like, "Good luck." "Help me figure out my career path." You're going to marry somebody, and your parents are just like, "Throw a dart." "If it hits a name, find that

person." And it's like, "No, I need a little help here." And what I find is, as the children get older, they need to know that we're there for them, and the relationship is built that they can talk to us so that we can lovingly help them. See, they're not always your little child, but you're always their mom and/or dad, okay? And Jesus' parents were godly parents, they were good parents, and we even see them later in life having an ongoing relationship with Him. And to be sure they didn't fully understand who He was or what God's call in His life was. But when we see everything at the end, the family is all walking with God, and the family is all supporting Jesus, and the relationships are healthy and intact. And not only Jesus, but the whole family grew in wisdom. Lemme say this as well, the body must be ruled by the Spirit. God gives us this body and it has passions and pleasures that can lead us to, or from God. In our culture, this would be sex, food, drugs, pleasure, laziness, that the body can get very cranky, that the body can have yearnings and desires that just demand to be satisfied. And if all we do is indulge the sinful fallen desires of the body, what the Bible calls the flesh, we will find ourselves pursuing death. Paul talks about this in Romans 8:11-13. "If the Spirit," that's God, the Holy Spirit, okay? So you have your body, your outer life, you have your spirit or soul, your inner life, and you have the Holy Spirit, who dwells in your body and in your soul, okay? That the Holy Spirit needs to be the one who is regulating your spiritual life and managing, regulating, ruling over your physical life. "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies, through His Spirit who dwells in you. So then brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you to live according to the flesh, you will die." He's talking there about addiction cycle. If you eat everything you feel like eating, you're gonna kill yourself. If you drink everything you feel like drinking, you're gonna kill yourself. If you get high every time you feel like getting high, you're gonna kill yourself. If you sleep with everybody you feel like sleeping with, you're gonna kill yourself. What he's saying is that the fallen body separated from the Spirit of God and the dominion of God, it is self-destructive by nature. It will consume until it is destroyed. We call that the addiction cycle. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. The only thing more powerful than the desires of the body is the authority of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit created the human body, He has dominion, and rule, and reign over the human body. And the human body will because of its sinful proclivities. Now God made the body good. When God made our first parents in their body, He said it was very good. So it's not that what God has made is bad, it's that it's infected, corrupted by sin. And if all the body ever does is just eat its desires, the desires lead to death. What he's saying is, then the body needs to be regulated by God, the Holy Spirit. The one who made the body needs to rule over the body, and as a result, we can make decisions to worship God in our body. Some of you will struggle with this because you think that worshiping God is solely spiritual. It's your soul connecting with the Lord, and it is. It's also loving God with all your strength, your physical body. He says it this way in Romans 12:1, "Do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind." He goes on to say, "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God. This is your spiritual act of worship." Worship is what you do in the body, in the body, in the body, in the body. So when you feel overwhelmed, and you just wanna drink a lot, the flesh would say, drink. And the Bible would say, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Be filled with the Spirit. Be filled with the spirit." When you wanna eat to comfort

yourself, and lead yourself into physical illness, you remind yourself, no, no, no, the Holy Spirit of Jesus says He's my comforter, and I will go to the Holy Spirit for my comfort, not my comfort food, all right? This is when you're surfing the web and you say, "Oh, there's a website. I could go down that rabbit trail." How you click with your finger is an act of worship. That oftentimes worship is what we eat and don't eat, what we watch and don't watch, where we go and don't go, who we touch and don't touch, amen? And then it includes your physical body. And he's talking about the Spirit of God dwelling in you, it's this language from the Old Covenant, the Old Testament. So if we were in the days of the Old Testament, you wouldn't go to church, we'd go to the temple. And the temple would be the place where God's presence dwelt. So we'd have to make a long pilgrimage to a place called the temple, it's high up on a mountain. We'd need to ascend up that mountain after we cleansed ourselves, washed ourselves, in white, showing that we're repenting of our sin, and we're cleansed in the sight of God. And then depending upon if you were a male or a female, or a Jew or a Gentile, that would determine how close you got to something called the Holy of Holies. That was the presence of God. Jesus comes in a body, He pays the penalty and price for our sin by dying on the cross physically, in our place, for our sins, and at the death of Jesus, that curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom, from God to us, so that the presence of God was unleashed and released on the earth. Now we don't go to God's presence, God's presence comes to us. Now we don't go to the temple, our body becomes the temple. What that means is the life lived in your body is like a priest in the Holy of Holies. The high priest would be the only one to go into the presence of God. And they would not go in there and get drunk. They would not go in there and binge eat, and become gluttonous. They would not go into that place, and bring inappropriate technology to surf the internet. They would not go into that place and rage physically, and break things, and throw tantrums, because that was the Holy of Holies. Here's what I need you to see. According to the Bible, this is now the Holy of Holies. This is the Holy of Holies. So the Bible says, "You were bought with a price, therefore, honor God with your body." And some of you are thinking, "No, no, no. I love God in my heart." Good start, love God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength. It's the total person, totally committed to the Lord. Heart, emotional life, soul, spiritual life, mind, mental life, strength, physical life. If you're a single person and somebody says, "Hey, we're all gonna go out drinking tonight, and go have a lot of fun." You realize, actually they're all gonna hook up. If you don't go, your body not going is an act of worship. If you're out on a date with somebody, and you're a young professional, and they say, "You wanna go back to my place?" "No, because that would not be holy. And what I do in my body is an act of worship. And what I don't do with my body is an act of worship." If you're at work and somebody who's a coworker, you know that there's a little flirtation going on, and they say, "You wanna go grab coffee?" "No. This body does not go on that date." And saying no is an act of worship. What we do in our body is an act of worship. Do you get that? Jesus was tempted in His body. He overcame sin by resisting the temptations of the physical body. It's interesting that when Satan came to Jesus in Luke 4, it was after He had fasted for 40 days, and the Bible says He was hungry. You need to know that the enemy will wait until your body is tempted, and it is weak, and it is desirous, and then that he will provide for you an opportunity to sin in your body. That's how he operated with the Lord Jesus. And his temptation in Luke 4, to the Lord Jesus was make some bread. It's not a sin to eat, but it's a sin to eat with the enemy. That's where all the problems started, with

Adam, was eating with the enemy. And Jesus, though He was hungry, after 40 days of fasting, the Holy Spirit gave Him the self-discipline to say no to the desires of the body, the temptations of the body, and to say yes in obedience to the Lord. I don't have time to unpack it, but I was reading it this morning, in Luke 4, where Jesus was tempted. And then he said, He began His ministry filled with the Holy Spirit. He was led by the Holy Spirit. The only thing stronger than the desires of your body is the power of the Holy Spirit. Which means, and here's what it says in Corinthians, I'm way down a rabbit trail now verbal processing, but it says, "Whatever you do, eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God." God, do you want me to eat this? Holy Spirit? Do you want me to eat this Holy Spirit? Do you want me to drink this Holy Spirit? Do you want me to watch this Holy Spirit? Do you want me to go there Holy Spirit? Do you want me to touch that? It's an act of worship. Check my notes, make sure I haven't missed anything, but one thing I would add, when it comes to raising children, and then I'll bring Grace up to do some Q&A, one of the most important things you can do to teach and train your child to live by the power of the Holy Spirit, even including over their physical body and desires, is to teach them to serve. Part of the problem in The Valley, is people move here because the sun's out, the cost of living is low, and you can have disposable income perhaps, to find a great school where your kids can be served, to find a great sports team where your kids can be served by the coach, as they are by the teacher of the school, to find a great church where the program can serve your kids. If you're struggling to find a good tutor to serve your kids, and if you're really struggling to find a good therapist to serve your kids, what's consistent? The child is being served, they're not serving. The way that we grow spiritually is not just by being served but by serving. How do I know this? 'Cause this is what Jesus says. Jesus says, "I did not come to be served but to serve." Some of you, the problem in raising your child, is you keep looking for more people to serve them better. And that's not the problem. The problem is that they're not a servant, and they don't serve. As a result, they become very selfish in the center of the universe, and they wait for their problems to be solved by others. They don't think about helping others with their problems, they lack compassion, and empathy, and consideration for others. We even called this a church service. But sometimes we don't come thinking, how can I serve? And sometimes we think, how can we mature? The question should be, where can we serve? People who serve, they grow in maturity, emotionally and spiritually. True or false?

- True,

- True, okay? This is teaching the child when they're little, "You need to serve others and be considerate of others." And as they grow, this can be informal, "When you go to school, look for kids, and people, and places to serve. Welcome the new kid, invite him to sit with you at lunch, care about them." When they go to church it's, "Hey, look for the new kids, look for people. Look for a place and an opportunity to serve." And as they get older, if they take on the posture of a servant, they will tend to mature. I'll close with an illustration. So this is the history of The Trinity Church. So Grace and I, we've got five kids, and we transitioned out of ministry in a difficult season. And as a result, we couldn't go to church for a short season. And so, the family decided, we're gonna get together on Sundays, and worship together at home for this interim season. Okay. And this was kind of the kids' idea, which I was really encouraged by 'cause they

could have gotten bitter against God, and me, and mom, and church, and everything. And some of you got church hurt and you understand this. And so what they decided was, we'll each take a role. So they deputize me as the teacher. So I appreciate that. I felt good getting elected to the pastor position. And so then one of my kids said, "Well, I can sing. I'll lead us in song." And they picked a few songs. And one of the kids said, "I'll read scripture. I'll be the Bible reader." Okay, great. One of the kids said, "I'll take prayer requests." And one of the other little kids said, "I'll collect the offering." This is four-hour Sunday home Bible study, okay? And I looked at the little one, I was like, "Why are you gonna collect the offering?" He said, "Dad, we're gonna collect the offering for months. And then I'm gonna give all the money to a single mom. 'Cause I know one that's got a kid, and they need money, and we'll give it to them." So he's running the finance committee. So here we are at the house, and we start doing this little service together, some family and friends come, it grows a little bit. It continues for a little while. Very fun actually. And then my kids would set up the house, and set up the chairs, and then they started cooking breakfast. Next thing we know, we got a lot of people in our house, and my kids actually really like serving. It's really fun. Well, then we transitioned, we moved to Arizona, and we're attending a church, and the kids had a conversation again, and they're like, "Let's plant a church." Five kids. I said, "Okay, what do you think?" And they're like, "Well, kinda like we did at the house, but we'll do it for more people." I said, "Okay. Well, it's going to be a lot of work. We gotta raise money, we gotta find a building, we gotta work. I don't know what's gonna happen, or who's gonna show, I don't know what's gonna happen." "That's okay dad, we'll do it together. We'll all serve." So The Trinity Church was planted as a service project by the family and other families joined us. And it was really interesting. One of the most encouraging memories in my whole life, I got up on, I think it was a Saturday. It was June and July here in Arizona. If somebody shows up for a work party in Arizona at June or July, you know that they really love Jesus in their soul, amen? 'Cause you're like, "I wanna go outside and work." So I go downstairs, it's like a Saturday work party, and my three sons are sitting on the couch, work gloves and boots, they're coming in to do demo and throw out garbage, and paint walls, and do work. I looked at them and said, "What are you guys doing?" They said, "We're going to serve, dad." I said, "Really?" I used to have a staff that would pick me up, and drive me in. And instead I've got sons who ride in with me to go to work. "That's great, boys!" And they worked, and other families worked. And if you were here in the early days of The Trinity Church, half our workforce was child labor. I'm just telling you, it was. It was child labor. But the families worked together and the kids served. And as we grow, I want that always to be our heart, that we serve families, and that family serve. That we serve children, and that children serve, amen? That's how they mature. I'll bring grace up for some Q&A. I was way too long in the other sermons, and took all the time. And as we close this series today, peekaboo, we'll just leave a little time for Q&A. And thanks Grace for being a great, great, great mom. How are you feeling baby? Good? Okay. I probably kept you all night snoring. When I get sick, man, I sound like Darth Vader all night, it's terrible. So we'll do a couple of questions. "Should we force our kids, teens to go to church or at what point do we let them decide? My husband and I always love going. And this was never an issue." From Leah and Travis. I grew up in a home, my parents were Catholic, some Catholics know and love Jesus, I did not. I wasn't really interested in church, I wasn't involved in building relationships. To me, it was just sort of something you do, like going to the dentist or the doctor, it was something

unpleasant that you just had to do, until I met the Lord Jesus. And then I realized, oh no, this is for my soul. This is good for me. And so I didn't grow up with a heart of going to church, but Grace's dad was a pastor. He planted a church, pastored there 40-some years until he passed away. And so you were one who grew up in a pastor's home, and you were a pastor's kid. So maybe this would be a better question for you to kick off. They love the Lord, they're involved in church. Their kids are in their teens, may hit that place where they don't wanna go. What do you do if you're a parent, and that's the circumstance?

- I would pray for them. I believe that when they're under our roof, you strongly encourage them to go to church with you. Because that's the time when you kinda have a little bit of control and push toward that. But you don't want it to become a legalism either. So if that's the case, be asking questions, "Why are you not wanting to go?" Or, "Is there something that happened? Is there something that you feel when you're there?" There may be something legitimate that they're really struggling through, and you can help them walk through that. For me, I have always loved church, just the body. I didn't always love listening to my dad when I was younger. He was a different type of teacher than I always enjoyed. And so, I would serve. When I didn't listen to the sermon, I would at least dialogue it with him at home. But then I would serve in Kids' Ministry 'cause I loved babies. So there was always something that I was participating in. So it's hard for me to... If my kids were to decide not to join church, that would be a hard thing for me. So I would address that, I would pray for them. I would start to have a discussion, just say, "Hey, what's going on here? Is there something that we can help with that, you know, behind this?"

- Yeah, I think part of it is, as the kids get older, especially the teen years, it's attending service together and then talking, what was your takeaway? What did you learn? And it's making it part of the dialogue, and the relationship building in the family. Number two, I would say it's helping them build relationships in the church, not just with their own age, but with various ages. One of the things that's been really encouraging for us is our kids actually really love the people in the church, we love you all as well, and they've got relationships. So they look forward to going to church 'cause they get to see people that they know and love. And so it's taking that additional time to get involved, to get connected, to make relationships, so that the kids actually have familiar faces, and people that they're looking forward to seeing. And then thirdly, finding a place to serve. So our kids attend one service, and they serve in Kids' Ministry at the other, 'cause they love being the big brothers and sisters, and serving the youngers, and hopefully investing in loving them. So thank you kids for serving. But it's giving them a place to serve so that they have a ministry. They're like, "Well, I need to go." So there's been occasions where, one of the kids will be a little tired, or had a choir trip, or gone on a long sporting event or whatever, I'll be like, "You wanna go to church tomorrow?" They're like, "I have to go. I serve, and the little kids in the Kids' Ministry are looking for me, and so-and-so if I'm not there, she gets really sad, 'cause she feels safe with me, and I need to be there for her." It's like, awesome. You got a place to serve. You're serving. So it's learning, it's relationships, and it's serving. And as that happens, then it's not just going to church, it's being the church. And so we've asked our kids, "How are you feeling?" They love The Trinity Church, they love you, they love coming, they love serving, they love being involved, and they get up on time and early, and they actually come on their own

accord, which is, for me, I never would have done that as a kid. You would have had to come with a stun gun, and a threat of hell to get me to go to church on time. And our kids actually want to. So it's like Grace said, it's not just when they're little, it's really exercising your authority. 'Cause there are times your kids don't wanna go to bed. You're like, "You have to." They're like, "I don't wanna eat healthy food." "You have to." Right? "We're going to church." "No." "You have to." You're under authority, this is good for you, this is healthy lifestyle, you need to do this. But as they get older, it's cultivating the want to. "Do you wanna go? Why do you not wanna go? And how can we help you want to be involved and connected with God and his people?" But I think part of it is too, is mom and dad need to be setting the pace. And this includes dad. I'll always use the opportunity to speak to the fathers. 60% of church goers are female. The majority of those who are serving, and giving in church are female. And oftentimes, it's the husband and the father who's not as interested, engaged, or involved. And if you want your sons to go, dad, you need to set the pace. And it can't just be mom who is trying to be the spiritual one in the family, but dad is sort of on the other end of the teeter-totter, sort of working against what mom is trying to do. And so, it's important that the kids see mom and dad, if you have an intact home. And if you're a single parent, it's mom or dad loving and serving, and being relationally connected, involved, and making that sort of commitment. And lemme just say, getting up, sitting there, listening to God's word, responding, is all an act of worship. And I believe in podcasts, and I believe in books, and I believe in technology, but there's something about getting together with God's people, building relationship, and serving, that you can't just get through a podcast or a book. That's why Jesus came down from heaven to be with us, and didn't just drop information out of the sky. He came down for relationship and for presence, and that's part of Christian ministry. Last one, "I work out of town three weeks at a stretch. I also get three weeks off, and well, I make almost twice what I could at a local job? I'm wondering if it is worth being away from family for such a long time. Although three weeks at home at a stretch is great. How should I decide." says Thomas. What you're talking about here is establishing a lifestyle that works for your relationship with Jesus, which is your first priority, your relationship with your spouse, which is your second priority, and your relationship with your children, which is your third priority. And if the fourth priority, the vocation sort of interrupts, and disrupts all of those first three priorities, then it may be a good job that provides a good income, but not providing a healthy lifestyle. There's a difference between income and quality of living. How many of you have noticed that? You can make a lot and not have a healthy lifestyle. You can make less and have a more healthy lifestyle. And sometimes parents, including fathers, which this is the case, can think, if I make more money, I'll take better care of my child. Not just physical provision, but emotional and spiritual provision. And lemme say this, some parents will talk about quality time. As your kids get older, it's quantity time. 'Cause you don't know when their heart's gonna open. How many of you have scheduled Tuesday at 11:17 to 11:27, the child and I will have a very deep, heart-to-heart life-changing conversation? And then it doesn't happen. And then it's 9:37 on Friday night, and you're tucking them into bed and they say, "Oh, could you pray for me?" "About what?" And then they say something and their heart opens, and now there's a one hour conversation. And for some reason, that is the appointed time. And if you weren't there, you wouldn't be available for that conversation. So it's the ministry of presence. And so what you're saying here is, I get three weeks on, I get three weeks off. I would

say, it's going to your spouse and asking, "How's this working for our relationship?" Going to your children, "How's this working for our relationship?" And the spouse and the child or children are not being negative or critical, but being honest. And there was a season where I traveled a lot for work, and making ends meet and raising five kids. And I was gone a lot. And sometimes when I was home, I was distracted, I was tired, I was in recovery mode, not serving mode. And it was interesting because since we've moved here to The Valley, we love it here, we've reset our lifestyle, and the kids said, "Dad, it's nice to have you back." I'd say, "But I was there." And they'd say, "Yeah, you were there, but you weren't there." Lemme say this though, moving physically, doesn't reset your life. This is the fastest growing city, the fastest growing county in America, and a lot of people are moving here for a fresh start, but unless sometimes there is a reprioritization of what values you carry forth in your life, and what relationships are most important, just changing geography does not necessarily change family. Sometimes priority is what changes family, not just geography. So I've rumbled a lot, as is always the case, anything you would add to that, sweetie pie? How would you do if I was gone three weeks at a time, and was home for three weeks at a time?

- Yeah. I mean, it just doesn't build what we're trying to build. I mean, we have a mission for our family, and our relationship with each other in the Lord, and it just doesn't fit into that. And I think sometimes there're seasons of maybe paying off debt, or trying to find another job, where you have to just dig in, and provide in this kind of way. But I think really looking long-term and saying, how long are we willing to do this? Because it will start to divide the family. And oftentimes, I commend the dad for even wanting to work hard and provide and all that, but oftentimes, the family is thinking, "I would rather have him home than have a nice bicycle." It's just that relational investment is so important to the wife and kids. And a dad is needed in a family. So yeah, I think we wouldn't do well. I mean, when you traveled a lot, it was hard, and having the little kids, and even though I love little kids, it's just a busy, exhausting time. And if you don't have family around to help out, or friends that are willing to help out, it can be even harder. So yeah, I would really look at long-term what this would do to the family.

- And sometimes too it's military, family, or job requirements, and wanna be sensitive to that. But I would just ask this couple to have an honest conversation, and that is, "Are we starting to live two lives, where 50% of the time we're single, and 50% of the time we're married." And if it's 50% of the time you're single, and 50% of the time you're married, here's what happens in marriage, God wants you to be one. If you set up a life where it's sort of parallel train tracks, and we're trying to kinda live separate lives, but keep up, here's what happens. Okay? And if that's happening, you say, "Okay, how do we do this?" And get to one. And that would be the heartfelt conversation I would really have. And you men who are providers, and your wife is a primary caregiver, and you're the breadwinner, you know the pressure of this. I get that, as head of household with five kids, and heading into college and all of that. But, lemme be careful how I say this, Jesus says it this way, I'll just quote Jesus. When all else fails, quote Jesus. "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his soul?" What He's saying is, what does it matter if you get 100% on your outer life, and 0% on your inner life, okay? And it's that relational, spiritual, emotional investment in the child, children, spouse, that matters. And so,

we're always gonna push toward relationship, healthy relationship, relationship, healthy relationship with God, with spouse, with children. And if you can do that with this sort of workflow, and technology allows FaceTiming, or maybe intermittent travel, or taking family members with you, maybe that works. And if it doesn't, it's saying, okay, maybe we need to reduce our standard of living, so that we can increase our quality of living, okay? That being said, I'll have you pray for us Grace, and thanks for joining me in the series, and being a good mom.

- Lord, thank you for coming in a physical body, and modeling for us how to live holy and godly before you. Lord, I pray that you'd give us wisdom in our relationships, as parents, as friends, as spouses, Lord, that you would just guide, and direct physically how we're supposed to be, emotionally, spiritually, Lord, all these areas that you ask of us, just give us wisdom Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen.