



HOW TO RAISE KIDS IN A PROGRESSIVE WORLD

Pastor Mark Driscoll RealMen | November 15, 2023

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All right, something a little bit different for our last time together. We've had a great semester. I love you guys. It's been incredible. It's amazing to see the room filled and all the things that God is doing. Uh, let me, uh, lemme just do this before I jump into q and a. Uh, let me just ask, if you have become a Christian or recommitted to Christ after a prodigal season in this last semester, would just raise your hand. Just raise your hand where you're at. Can we just welcome those guys? Love those guys. Thank you guys. We're honored to have you. Uh, in addition to what we do here each week, we also broadcast, uh, real men online. And, uh, what God's doing in our midst is incredible. I mean, we've doubled and had to go to two nights, and then what God's doing online is really quite supernatural. So, uh, in addition to our time together, the live stream some weeks is half a million men around the world, uh, gathering oftentimes in groups, uh, to just meet and to pray for each other and to build relationships, including whole churches that are gathering together. And we've had a lot of pastors come out and visit and just give us kind of an update on what God's doing, uh, as their men watch and they gather together. So what I wanted to do, uh, to close our time together, and then I've got something very special for you at the end that we'll save for online. And that is to just take a couple of questions in our series. This, uh, semester has been, uh, dominion. So it's that our God is a God who has all authority and dominion. He's our father, we're his sons. And like every father, he delegates that authority to his sons. And so you as a man have a measure of dominion. We talked about dominion over yourself and governing your own life and your health and your finances, dominion over your family to love and lead and protect and preserve them, and then dominion over the particular aspects of your life. And we had a few questions from online from those men who are joining us online. So I just wanted to do a couple of quick q and a, I'm not sure exactly what the questions are gonna be, and then I'll pray and then I've got something kind of special for you. So we'll see what these two are. What's the best parenting advice you've ever received? Okay? Um, so, um, how many of your dad's got the kids, right? I got the kids. Just think about this for a moment. Just think in a moment. In addition to the men who are online, think of the men who are in the room. So let's say, I don't know, there's four or 500 of you guys here tonight. I don't even know. But let's say, um, statistically, let's say most of you become fathers, say 400 fathers in the room. How many kids do you think will have on average? 1.5. Okay. Yeah, you guys are gonna have 3, 4, 5. Um, I can just tell you 'cause if you pray, your wife's gonna wanna be with you. So if you, if you, if you pray, you, you increase your odds in other areas of your life, if you worship God, your wife will feel safe with you. Um, and so let's say we each have, let's say there's gonna be, uh, 400 of us that are gonna be fathers, and we're each gonna have, uh, four kids. That's an average. That's 1600 children. Let's think about that. Okay? How many kids are those kids gonna have? Right now we're looking at what, six, 7,000 children. This is where, um, God tells us to think generationally. And so at our church, we say, we open our Bibles to learn. We open our lives to love so that lives and legacies are transformed. And I guess what I see when I see you men, is I see the future and I think, okay, so there's, there's 1600 children coming and some of 'em are already here. And, uh, and maybe there's 7,000 grandchildren coming. And the men in this room will determine what reality those children and grandchildren are born into. You feel that that's a big deal, that's a really massive opportunity and responsibility. Um, and so this issue of the parenting question is an essential one because basically it is like, what will the momentum and the legacy be for 1600 kids and maybe 7,000 plus children? I mean, that is a massive issue. And that means if the men get it right, you could have generations of blessing. And if the men get it wrong, you could have generations of cursing. And so the first thing that comes to mind as we're kind of wrapping up Dominion series and practical application is this, um, your presence is more

powerful than you think. And that the father is a gravitational force and center of the home, meaning the father is the head of the home. Whether or not the culture believes that, because the Bible says that he is, and if as the head of the household, you are the gravitational center and you're the highest influence. Now, some of you will think no mom is the, she is the gravitational center. She's the emotional center, but you're the leadership center. And when the children are younger, they do absolutely need their mother. But as they get older, more and more, do they need their father? So I've got my, our five kids now, they're kind of, we're coming up on birthdays, so it'll be eighteen, twenty, twenty two, twenty four, twenty six, when they were very little. I, I was there and I loved them, but I, I didn't, I didn't have a lot to contribute. You know, it's 3:00 AM I don't have any milk, you know, I'm, I'm, you know, I'm, I I'm, I'm sort of in the bullpen waiting for a little later when I get called. And then when the kids get a little bigger and they need coaching and protecting, then the dad kicks in. And where I'm at now with my kids, it's a lot of coaching. And so when they're little, mom cares for them. When they get older, dad is coaching them and he's helping them prepare to launch into adulthood. So the first thing I would say is this, just acknowledge and recognize that you are the gravitational center of your home. Meaning, um, where you are, you will find, guess where your kids are gonna be wherever you are. If you have a healthy home, if you're in the living room, your kids are gonna end up in the living room. Um, which is why you want to be home and you want to be available. Statistically, if you are a believer, your family is going to be believers. Statistically, if a woman goes to church with the children and the father is not a Christian, statistically the children do not convert because dad is still the gravitational force and center of the home. Conversely, if dad goes to church and loves Jesus, guess what happens statistically the wife and kids follow 'cause he is the head in the gravitational force. If you've got a Bible at your dining room table and you're not a religious guy, but you're a relational guy and you're like, Hey, I wanna read a scripture and we're gonna have a conversation about it over dinner, that will be normal in your family. And they'll do that for generations. If you pray over your family, you will be setting sort of what is normal. Whatever a child grows up with, they think that's normal, and then they compare everything else by it. And the problem today is most children grow up in a very broken, dysfunctional environment. So they think that's normal. You wanna set a healthy nor we pray we have fun. We make memories. We love Jesus. We go to church, we have friends, we say we're sorry, we say, I forgive you. We set a culture in our home that's normal for our kids. And so the most important thing is your children are honestly going to follow your example. Your sons, unless you do something wrong, they're going to want to be like you and your daughters, unless you do something wrong, are gonna want to marry someone like you. And so, just you being a healthy present man is more important than what school they attend. It's more important than what sports team they're on. It's more important than, uh, what tutor you get for them. Literally, your presence is just massively influential. The second thing, um, is one thing that we don't understand, I don't think we emphasize enough, is ultimately, um, it takes the Holy Spirit to raise a healthy child. And it takes a Holy Spirit in Dad and in mom. But eventually, as soon as the child can have a personal relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit is in them, then all of a sudden really the primary influence becomes the presence of the Spirit of God and the child. And this is where religious parenting is very damaging because what religious parenting says is God tells us and then we tell you. And as soon as possible, if you can help your children learn how to have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, their faith will be activated and, and the Holy Spirit will lead and guide them. 'cause the truth is, you can't always be there for your child, but the Holy Spirit can. And sometimes you don't always know what to say or do, but the Holy Spirit

does. And you can't really change your child's heart, but he can. And so as early as possible, not just telling your kids what to do, but asking them, why don't you go pray and talk to the Lord about that and come and tell me what you're thinking. Have you, you know, when they get old enough? That's a good question or issue. Here would be some scriptures I would encourage you. Would you go read those and then I'll take you out to lunch, or we'll go for a walk or bike ride or whatever the case is, and put a glove on your hand. We'll have a conversation. When my boys were growing up, they wouldn't just talk unless I put a glove on their hand. And as soon as I put a glove on their hand, now they start talking to me. If you sit your son down, you're like, it's Bible study time. Probably not gonna get good progress. If you're like, you put a glove on, I'll put a glove on. And, uh, I wanna, you, you got some stuff going on in your life, I wanna do a lot of question and answer. I question. You answer not in an interrogation way, but in a conversational way. What are you thinking about? What's in, what I would ask my kids a lot growing up is, what is God showing you? How can I pray for you? What are you learning? What are you dealing with? Uh, what are you thankful for? Lots of questions. And I'm trying to peer into the heart, and then I will pray for them. I will pray over them. And as soon as your kids have a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, I'm telling you, all of a sudden then parenting becomes really, really easy because you're like, he's got them and I'm here to help direct. But he's got them. How many of you have seen where your child literally, like they came into relationship with God and you could see that the spirit of God was at working and through your child, you could just see it. You're like, oh, okay, now they're convicted of sin. Now they are wanting to consider others. Now I'm seeing them love and forgive. Now they have a heart for worship or prayer Bible. So anything you can do to cultivate a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, with a child as young as possible is the best thing. And as soon as your kids start coming to you and they're like, dad, I was praying about it, and here's what I'm thinking. Okay, praise God. Now your faith is activated and it's your own. And I've, I've not seen enough parenting on the role of the Holy Spirit in parenting, but without the Holy Spirit, all it is is just rules manipulation, control, reward, and punishment with the Holy Spirit. It's, it's really evangelism and discipleship for the kids. And so I would just be praying all the time and cultivating all the time, that personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. I'll never forget my one son, I'll close this. He came down one time, he was little, maybe four or five. And uh, I was walking out the door and uh, I was going to do a hospital visit. And he said, dad, where are you going? I said, I'm going to the hospital. And he said, why? I said, well, there's a guy in the hospital, he is not doing good. He's really struggling. So, and I, I was, you know, a young pastor at the time. I said, so I'm gonna go visit him and pray for him. And he looked at me, he said, uh, can I go? I said, well, little buddy, you know, I mean your, your little guy, like the hospital's kind of scary, you know, a lot of tubes and machines and things. And he said, uh, dad, I really want to go. I said, okay. Um, I said, but if you come, you gotta be quiet. You gotta be my associate pastor. You can't climb on this guy. He's got tubes all over him. You're gonna see stuff that's gonna be a little scary. It is a hospital. He said, okay. And, uh, I said, uh, yeah, you can go. And so he grabbed his kid's bible with the pictures 'cause he can't read yet. So I've got my big Bible, he's got my kid's Bible, he gets in the vehicle with me in my truck. So I'm like, okay, today you're my associate pastor and you're going on a hospital visit. So he went with me and he was very well-behaved. And um, when time came to pray over the guy, his legs had been immobile and he had a permanent life altering medical condition that rendered him paralyzed from the waist down. And I'll never forget, uh, I went to pray for this man. And I son looked at me and he said, dad, can I, can I lay hands and pray over him? He was like four or five. I was like, yeah, little buddy, you can do that. And he prayed over

this man and this man started moving his, his feet and his legs and he looked at me, he's crying. He's like, oh my gosh, God answered your son's prayer and, and I can move my legs. I'm not, I'm not paralyzed like I was. And I just remember thinking in that moment, man, my son has the Holy Spirit as much as I do, and his faith is genuine at a young age. And isn't it wonderful that God wants to show up in his life and do significant things at a young age to build his faith? And I thought, man, all these years I've been doing ministry. I should have just had my kids involved in what I'm doing. And they would pick it up as they go. So now, um, he's your student ministry director and he's teaching your kids. Uh, but it started when he was four with a kid's Bible going on a hospital visit, uh, praying over a guy who was sick in the hospital and on the way home too. I'll close to this. He's like, dad, that was awesome. I wanna go on all the hospital visits. I was like, well, not everybody gets healed, buddy. Like you really, you got off to a good start. You know, you got off to a good start. So, um, so next we'll do one more and then I got some for, I have a six year old girl. How do I handle Tranny's Pro? That's probably not like a transmission, I assume, like manual, uh, automatic, uh, 'cause you shouldn't have your six year old girl driving, by the way, if you're like, she sucks on a stick shift. How do I help? Like, um, she can't even reach a clutch. Okay, how do I handle t****y in my extended family? Don't raise your, how many of you don't raise your hand, but like in your heart, in your extended family, there's gender dysphoria confusion, or maybe in your sphere of relationships and you're raising your kids and you're trying to figure out how to navigate this issue. First and foremost, the best thing you can do is in your home keep clear gender lanes and set what is normal from a very young age. Okay? So what that means. So the Bible talks that God made us male and female and that we are to be masculine and feminine. And the Bible speaks to men and women and it teaches them to raise quote, sons and daughters. The problem in our culture, it doesn't believe any of that. That's why it's so confus and corrupted. So first and foremost, within the family, you know, mom and dad set an example of this is masculine, this is feminine. And sometimes when your kids are little, true or false, they'll want to go ahead and get dressed up. You ever had a son that, like his sisters are getting dressed up and so he gets dressed up. What do you do? Stop it immediately. Tell your son, I love you, son. We don't wear tutu's. You're a boy. You're a boy, okay? And if your daughter, um, doesn't understand femininity, then it's encouraging that with her it's daddy dates and taking her out for, you know, time together and dress up. That's appropriate, but it's as early as possible establishing the gender lanes. Then when they grow up in the world we live in, they're gonna start to see things and they're like, that's odd. Like, why is that man wearing a dress? Why is that girl trying to be a boy? And the best thing at that point is, first of all, don't shelter your children because they're gonna deal with these issues. But also don't shove your children. Don't, you know, six, start doing the gender reassignment surgery discussion over the game operation with your traumatized first grader. You know, um, instead, rather than pushing or um, preventing what you do, you wait for the issue to arise. And then that's a teachable moment. And so what happens in life? It talks about this in Proverbs. You know, in Proverbs it's a father teaching his kid. As they're going, he's like, you see that guy? Yeah, that's what happens if you're an alcoholic. You see that guy? Yeah, he's running around with women and he got a venereal disease, Proverbs five. And so now he's physically sick. And that's what happens if you sleep with the wrong women, um, you, you get a venereal disease. So a lot of what's happening in Proverbs is the father is taking case studies as they emerge and arise, okay? So assume that in the sovereignty of God with the parenting of your child, God will put case studies in front of you and that's your moment to say, class is now in session. And so class is always in session. You're always the teacher as the husband and father. And a lot of times it's just taking those teachable

moments. So like for example, when the kids were younger and we were watching tv, if something weird happened, I would hit pause and we would talk about it. What I didn't say is we're not gonna watch tv. What I'd say is, let's talk about that. Let's just have a conversation. You meet somebody that's, you know, obviously gender dysphoria confused. Let's have a conver. What do you think about that? How does that make you feel? Isn't do you think that's sad? They they seem confused. How about if we pray for them, you know, we pray for them. You've got a relative who's confused. Yeah, they're confused and you know, it's sad that they're confused. We still love them. What they're doing isn't right or healthy, but let's pray for them that they stop being confused. And so you wanna raise kids that have, you know, a good understanding of right and wrong, but you also want them to have a heart for people. 'cause we're all broken and sinners and a work in process and we all got their stuff. And sometimes the best thing is use those moments as a case study in education. Um, for example, um, first time I dealt as a pastor with a transgender was in 1997. I was in Seattle, so everybody lied. I was like, this is crazy. It's like, no, some places it's been crazy since, you know, Clinton. And so, um, so I'll never forget, it was 1997 and a dude walked into our really small church and he was wearing a full dress. He had a Adams apple. I could tell he was a dude 'cause of the beard and the Adams apple. And he walks in and heels and he does not know what he's doing in the heels. He is obviously new at this. And he walks up to me 'cause he had to use the restroom. He's like, uh, I need to use the restroom. I was like, huh, I didn't get this class in seminary. I'm not sure what the answer is to this question. This is in first and second confusion. Like, I don't know what to do with this. And uh, I looked at him, I was like, I was like, I don't, I don't know what to, I don't know what to say, man. Like, I don't know now, now I know 'cause, but at the time I was like, I don't know. And I was like, why are you wearing a dress? You know? I just thought I'd ask. And uh, he's like, 'cause I'm not sure if I'm a boy or a girl. I was like, okay. I saw he's confused. You know, he is obviously confused. So I said, well, how about this? How about, um, we've got a, I don't know which one I'm supposed to say yes to. I think either way I'm gonna get some black, you know, like if I send the guy in the dress to the men's restroom and he probably think, but if you're standing up in the women's restroom, that's also a thing. And so I said, well here, let me take it. So we gave him a private restroom. He used it. He came out and uh, I started talking to him. I said, why do you think you're confused? He said, I don't know. He said, I just, you know, I'm dealing with a lot. He was a nice guy, he was heartfelt. He was just been through some trauma, some abuse. As we talked, he was broken. And he said, I just thought maybe I should come to church and try God, 'cause I'm not doing very good. I was like, okay, we love you. We're glad to have you. And, um, you know, and some of the kids in the church then started asking the question. Like, that was different. You know, those are the teachable moments. And sometimes as parents we could say, I wanna shield my kids from that. It's like, no, no, no. Let's assume that the Holy Spirit just called class de obsession. Let's be compassionate conservatives, loving and present. Let's use it as an opportunity to ask questions and converse with a child. And if the person is really hurting or struggling or confused, let's make sure that we pray for them because we have a heart for them and we want them to obey God's word. 'cause that's best for them. The worst thing you can do is not say anything because then they'll assume that it's okay. Or the worst thing you can do is just make the conversation so awkward that as things come up, they don't want to talk to you. And things are gonna come up throughout life where the kids just need to be able to come to mom and Dad. And what we found as we just kind of had a, it was always a conversation in our home, talking about stuff. I'll give you two things that come to mind and then I'll close one, like we were watching the television one night and um, and there was the Extreme Makeover Home

Edition television show that they used to have where the family gets a new house and everybody cries. And one of my kids said, um, Hey, hit pause, hit pause, hit pause. I was like, okay. Hit pause. Like, what? And they're like, I wanna talk about it. 'cause that was kind of the, the way we did it. I said, what's that? And they said, every episode we've watched, they don't have a dad. If you don't have a dad, is that why you don't have a house? I thought this is a great conversation. They said maybe if they had a dad, they wouldn't need somebody to give 'em a house. So we had a big long conversation with my sons and I looked at my sons and I was like, uh, I was like, do you guys wanna be dads? They said, yeah. I said, well then you gotta make enough money to get a house, otherwise your kid's gonna be on the show. You know, you don't want your kids on the show. And I remember then I was like, do you boys mind if I pray over you that you make enough money that you're not homeless? They're like, yeah, dad, please do. So I'm praying over my sons watching Extreme Makeover Home edition that they wouldn't need to be an episode. And so the point is, like classes always in session and there's always something to teach and to learn. Um, and this includes on the gender issue. Sometimes one of your kids come home from school, they're like, one of the kids is confused. Let's talk about that. And so it's just this ongoing education as a dad, having the conversation in the real life moments. And honestly, if you're always just trying to teach the kids, there's only a percentage that they're gonna remember. If it's something that's in front of them or happening in their life, and then you have a conversation about it, honestly, those are the most sticky, memorable, teachable moments. But you want to use those moments not to say that's wicked and that's evil. What you wanna say is, those people are broken and they're hurting. Let's, let's pray for them and have compassion for them because for some reason they're confused and we love them and that's not God's best for them. Does that make sense? This is why being present as a father is so important and not always being on your phone or watching TV because if a teachable moment comes and you're not present, that window of opportunity's gonna pass by. But that might've been a divine opportunity for you to take what they were experiencing and then to educate them and to disciple them in the moment. Lemme pray for you, and then I'll tell you what's next. Father, thanks for the men. Thanks for a great semester. Thanks for time together. God, thank you for all the men that are getting activated online and in room. And God, we just say in Jesus' name, we need more fathers and more husbands, and more brothers and more leaders. God, we live in a completely broken world and it's damaging women and children. So I wanna honor these men and thank you for their life. And thank you that they are working hard to be built up, to bless women and children. And God, I pray for their children and their grandchildren. And Lord, even to thank that maybe 1600 children and 7,600 or so, whatever the number is, grandchildren are gonna be forthcoming. Lord, that's massive. That's an incredible responsibility that we as men just in this room bear. And so, Lord, help us to take that seriously and to serve faithfully in Jesus' name. Amen.