

Lead The Way

Session 3, Biblical Parenting Conference, 10/12/25

Proverbs 4:10-11. We've had a great weekend with our Biblical Parenting Conference, and this morning is the capstone. Focusing on how to parent according to the Scriptures. And lest you tune out – as a single person, or teenager, or empty nester – thinking there's nothing here for you, please think again. Because these principles apply to all of us. No matter what stage of life you're in.

Intro

Plus, the state of our culture begs for us to tune in. The Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University did a survey earlier this year on the role of God in the life of Americans. And the results weren't very encouraging. (<https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CRC-Release-AWVI-2-Mar-12-2025-Final.pdf>)

Only 40% of American adults believe that God exists or influences lives. And only 14% say he influences their own life, their everyday choices. And even fewer, only 9%, say they have an active relationship with God.

No wonder families are a mess. No wonder kids grow up believing whatever sounds good or seems good. Following the latest trend; or friend; or influencer. And based on the numbers, "Christian" homes aren't much better. Because they're Christian in name only. Parenting more like the world than the Bible. It's a problem.

And nothing short of repentance is going to change it. Nothing short of parents who surrender themselves to the lordship of Jesus Christ, take the initiative, and lead the way. Lead by example in their homes.

To that end, I want to give you 6 principles. 6 ways to *lead* the way as a parent.

1. Admit your failure (Ps 32:5)

There can be no repentance of sin apart from admission of sin. And failure to parent biblically is sin. It falls short of the standard God has set.

You say, "Come on, Pastor. I haven't been sinning. Maybe dropping the ball here and there, or missing the mark. But sinning?"

Yes. Because dropping the ball and missing the mark *is* sinning. And if it's the norm, you're failing. If your M.O. is to parent contrary to the Bible, you're failing in God's eyes. If your M.O. is to do what's easy and convenient in parenting, you're failing. Because biblical parenting is anything but easy.

And if you're going to make a change, you have to admit it. You have to *admit* your failure and ask God to forgive you. Admit it, and ask God to help you. Admit it, and ask God to change you.

Like King David did in **Psalm 32:5**. Speaking to God he said – *I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.* (ESV) God forgives, but you have to admit it. Acknowledge it. Confess it.

If you don't, *you* won't change, your *parenting* won't change, and your *kids* won't change.

You have to *admit* your failure. Admit it to yourself, admit it to God, and admit it to your family. Get real and get honest. That's the first step to lead the way as a parent.

Second, is . . .

2. Seek the Lord (Isaiah 55:6)

As in, pursue him. Get serious about your faith. If you're going to have any hope of leading your *child* to the Lord, and leading them in the *ways* of God, you have to seek him yourself. Call on God yourself. Pursue him yourself.

Like it says in **Isaiah 55:6** – "*Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.*" Implying that a time will come when you can't. When it's too late. Especially in parenting. You only have them so long.

What's more, if *you* don't seek the Lord, chances are *they* won't seek the Lord. They might seek the riches you seek. They might seek the fame. The influence. The position. But the Lord? Probably not.

You have to *lead*. You have to seek him yourself. And if you do, 9 times out of 10 your kids will too. If you lead the way, they'll follow. But you can't do that if you're not *on* the way. Seek the Lord.

And one more thing here. If you don't seek the *Lord* in your parenting, you won't have much to *offer* in your parenting. At least not much of any substance. It's something Becky and I learned the hard way.

We were only as good in our parenting as we were about seeking the Lord. If we were in the Word, we had greater insight and a better perspective. If we prayed, we were more patient. If we worshipped, we were soft. But if we didn't, we were disasters. Three degrees shy of the lunatic fringe and a padded room.

If you're going to lead the way God's way, you have to seek him *yourself*.

3. Walk with integrity (Proverbs 4:10-11)

Your leadership, in seeking the Lord and parenting your kids, cannot be hypocritical. It can't be Sunday only; or outward only. It has to be every day. Inside *and* out. You have to walk with integrity.

Like for instance, King Solomon did with his son. At least for a time. Proverbs 4:10-11. In the midst of a litany of instructions, Solomon says – [10] *Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.* [11] *I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness.*

When you lead someone in *paths of uprightness*, you're walking them yourself. You're not just *teaching* them how to live, you're *showing* them. You're doing it. Like a wilderness guide who shows you the map and teaches you the skills, and then says, "Let's go." Leading the way himself. Actually *walking* his talk.

If you're going to lead the way and parent biblically, you have to walk with integrity. You have to be the same at home as you are at church. The same with your kids as anyone else. No matter where you are. In other words, **be authentic**. That's how you parent *biblically*.

If you aren't, if you're not authentic, you're living a lie. And make no mistake, your kids will see it. They'll sense it like a bloodhound.

Proverbs 10:9 says – *Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.* Especially in your home. Where your kids see behind the curtain.

But that's only part of the problem. The other part is that your kids will do the same. They'll live as you live. They'll walk as you walk. If you're deceitful, they'll be deceitful. If you hide things, they'll hide things. If you wear a façade, they'll wear a façade. Monkey see monkey do isn't just a game.

If you're going to lead the way and parent biblically, you have to walk with integrity and be authentic.

4. **Know the Word (Proverbs 6:20-22)**

If you're going to lead the way and parent biblically, you have to know the Word. The Word of God. The Bible. It's not only the best way to follow the *Lord*, but the best way to lead your kids.

But you have to know it. You can't teach what you don't know. And you can't lead the way if you don't know the path.

Psalms 119:105 says – *Your word [speaking to God] is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.* But if you don't know it, it won't shine. Not for you *or* your kids. You can't *lead* the way if you don't *know* the way. And you can't *know* the way, if you don't know the Word.

Nor will your kids have a map of their own. If *you* don't know the Word, chances are your *kids* won't know the Word. To navigate the highways and byways of life themselves.

Proverbs 6:20–22 – [20] My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching. [21] Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck. [22] When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you.

The Word of God you teach, and the commandments of God you impart, will lead your kids, and protect your kids, and speak to your kids, far more than anything else you convey. Far more.

But you have to know it to give it. You have to take it in and make it a part of *your* heart. Because once again, you can't lead where you don't go, and you can't teach what you don't *know*. You have to *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly* (Col 3:16).

That means four things. First, you have to . . .

- **Read it constantly** – Whether it's reading through the Bible in a *year*, or reading a chapter of Proverbs every *day* for a year. Or some other book of the Bible. You might

even listen to it while driving to work or getting ready in the morning. In order to *know* the Word, you have to *read* the Word. Constantly. There's no shortcut.

Second, you have to . . .

- **Hear it regularly** – If you're going to know the Word with any kind of depth, you have to hear it preached every single Sunday. And I don't mean preached willy-nilly "as the Spirit leads." That usually means the pastor failed to prepare. I'm talking about expository preaching. Where a passage or a verse is explained, illustrated, and applied every single week. Listen to that. Hear that.

Third . . .

- **Discuss it weekly** – With *other* people who are reading and hearing it. Like in a Small Group. Youth Group. Men's ministry. Women's ministry. Iron doesn't sharpen iron unless the two pieces meet. Unless you *talk* about the things you're learning, and how they *apply* to your life. Discuss it weekly to make sure it sticks, and sticks rightly.

And last . . .

- **Study it diligently** – Don't just read it, think about it. Understand it. Ask yourself questions about it. Make connections. Notice patterns. Maybe even take a class. Or go all in with a certificate program. *Great are the works of the LORD* [Psalm 111 says], *studied by all who delight in them.* (2)

If you're going to *lead* the way as a parent, you have to *know* the way. The Word.

5. **Love your spouse (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4)**

Lead the way by loving your spouse. What does that have to do with parenting, you might ask? Everything.

Because loving your spouse creates an *atmosphere* of love. And century upon century of human experience tells us that kids *flourish* in such an environment. When God tells husbands to love their wives, Ephesians 5 (25); and wives to love their husbands, Titus 2 (4); it's not just for the sake of their marriage.

Dads, one of the best things you can do for your kids, is love their mom. Moms, one of the best things you can do, is love their dad. In what you say, what you do, how you treat each other, and most certainly in the affection you show.

When our girls were growing up, I can't tell you the number of times we saw them staring at us out of the corner of our eye while kissing in the kitchen. And a few years later, when they were teenagers, they'd say, "Get a room." To which I would say, "*You* get a room." And then go back to kissing my wife.

It's not the *only* way you should express your love to one another in the presence of your kids, but it's certainly one of them.

Because first of all . . .

- **It makes your kids feel secure**

Loving your spouse leads to greater confidence in your kids. And greater stability in their emotions. And greater happiness in their heart. Because the thought of their home life disappearing never enters their mind.

Second, loving your spouse . . .

- **It increases respect in your kids**

Husbands, if your son or daughter knows that you're head over heels about your wife, they'll be less inclined to disrespect her, and more inclined to obey her. Because they know that if they cross *her*, they cross you.

And wives, if your kids know that you're head over heels about your husband, they'll be more inclined to follow and submit to him. Just like you.

Loving your spouse increases respect in your kids.

Third . . .

- **It models a good marriage for your kids**

And they need it. Heaven knows they're not seeing it at their friend's house. Or on TV. And even more important, what you model in *your* marriage, will be the default in theirs. So make sure it's loving.

And fourth, love your spouse because . . .

- **It guards against child-centered parenting**

Parenting in such a way that your *kids* are your primary focus, instead of your husband; your kids instead of your wife. Which not only models a *bad* marriage, but leads your kids to believe that the world revolves around them. Because that's their experience.

Better to love your *spouse*. (**Summary**) Better to lead the way in the way that's best. The way that's biblical. And if you're single, if there's no spouse to love, love the Lord. Demonstrate and model these things as *if* you're married.

And finally . . .

6. Go to church (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Lead the way as a parent, by going to church. Don't neglect meeting together. Hebrews 10 (25). Make church a non-negotiable. If the doors are open, make it a priority and get here. Lead the way **all the way**. In worship, and fellowship, and learning, and growing.

And not just on Sunday. Get here *all* the days something's going on. Men's ministry, women's ministry, Kids Club, Youth Group, Freedom Groups – go to church **and get involved**. Lead the way and be discipled. You *and* your kids.

You say, "Man I'd love to, but my student doesn't really like Youth Group." Okay. Figure out why, help them fix it or overcome it, and make them go anyway. Because that's what's best. Be the parent, and lead the way to do what's best.

And while you're at it, serve. Go to church and serve. *Help* with the work of ministry. Model an other-*oriented* mindset for your kids. A *servant* heart. Teach them and show them that their highest calling in life is to serve the Lord.

Summary

6 principles to make sure that the problem in our *culture* is not the problem in your home. 6 actions points to make sure you lead the way in your *family*. Admit your failure, seek the Lord, walk with integrity, know the Word, love your spouse, and go to church.

Pray – Father, help us. Use these truths to *change* us, and encourage us, and spur us on. So that we disciple our kids to love you, and live for you, and follow you just as we do. Would you do that, God? Help us to parent our families biblically, so that your favor is upon them from generation to generation.

You Are Loved