Tim Lundy: Gentlemen, as we come to session 10, and you look in your notes, you do see it. It's a very important part of that definition of what it means to be a man. Remember, we're looking at that compass of life. And we said a real man finds his true north in what God says. And so we find the direction out of it in God's word. So he follows God's work. A real man knows on each side of him always he's balancing, how does he love and protect the woman, God's woman that has been placed in his life? And also, how does he balance that with the work that he's been called to do? And then in this last part of it, the legacy that he leaves behind. How is he shaping God's world? And particularly, how are we shaping it with the next generation? How are we investing in that way?

And it's one of those things that when you think about it, it's one of the most challenging parts of being a man. You have to have a high level of intentionality. And in some ways, you have a short season in it. In a picture of it, I was reminded of a lighthouse, the Bell Rock Lighthouse. It's pretty amazing when you know the story of it. It's in the North sea, it's off the coast of Scotland, rough sea waters and difficult, difficult place to place even a lighthouse. The Bell Rock Lighthouse is on a little rock that's only one acre, and this reef that was there. And here was the most challenging part, 20 hours a day the tide comes in and covers the reef.

And so in 1811, Robert Stevenson with 65 other men built a lighthouse on that one acre of rock and they only had four hours a day to work. They'd go out there and do their efforts and work four hours a day and then the tide would come in. But in 1811, and since that time, the 115-foot lighthouse stood and has been a testimony, not only to their work, but also it's been a safety in a difficult part of the seas. And I look at that level of work, that level of intentionality, and especially that decision that even within this short window we're going to do something significant. And I think for us, especially as men, we think that way a lot of times about our work and what we're doing in it, but do we think about our family and our kids with the same level of intentionality, the same level of effort?

If you look in your notes there, we're looking at a man and his children and God's first recorded command to man in the Bible is, "Be a dad." You look at it all the way back in Genesis 1:28, he said to Adam and Eve, God said to the man and the woman, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it." And in it, you see both parts of a man's legacy right there. You see that hardwiring. There's a hardwiring to subdue the earth, that no matter what you put your hand to, you want to win at it, you want to make a difference in it. But there's also a hardwiring there that he says, "Be fruitful." You should have a generation beyond you and not every man is called to have children. You look at different people in the Bible, Jesus never had children, Paul didn't have children.

So it's not a command that says, "Oh, you have to." But for those of us who've been called into a marriage relationship, and I would say even if you don't have children, there's still that hardwiring that you want to impact the next generation. You want something that lasts beyond you. And if you've been blessed with children, you know how deep that runs. Children are given by God to enrich a man's life in a multitude of ways. It's not just a challenge, there's such great joy that comes out of it. And I say this as a dad with seven kids. I've got three daughters and four sons. I've got two son-in-laws and now a grandson now. And I'd say at every level, whether boy or girl, they bring such incredible joy. I love how Psalms puts it, "Behold, children are a gift of the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward."

And this proves out in studies. You hear a lot of times, especially men and young men, you're told, "Oh, man, once you have kids, your life's over, your funds over." That's not what the studies actually prove. In fact, some of the numbers, 97% of all parents say they have no regrets about having children at all, 75% say it strengthened their marriage, 89% said it actually increased their personal joy in life, and the 81% of all parents said that watching their children grow up for them was life's greatest pleasure. Those are high numbers. They're hard marks. And so I would say that, especially to young men that may be watching this or hearing this, there is a joy that comes out of this, that don't be deceived in it, it will run deep in your heart in your life.

I love how Teddy Roosevelt put it. And you think about Roosevelt's life, he was a soldier, he was police chief, he was a hunter, he was president of the United States. Look how he describes it though. He says, "For unflagging interest and enjoyment, a household of children certainly makes all other forms of success and achievement lose their importance by comparison." And this is a guy who literally has done it all. He's succeeded at every level. And he says, "But when I look at life and then I look at a household of kids, man, that doesn't compare to the joy that comes from it." Don't lose that. See, children give a dad a way to make some of his most significant and enduring contributions to bettering the world. Your legacy as a man is lived out to your children and recognizing that at an early stage is an important thing to do.

I love how Neil Postman put it. He said, "Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." They will go to a place we will never go. They will live in a world we will never live in. We sent them there. Did we send them there hoping or did we send them there with intentionality? And that's why this point D, the challenge every dad faces is how to raise up and launch well-adjusted, difference-making children into the next generation. And we talked about this in session four, but it really requires more than just being a good dad. It requires being a smart dad. It requires that intentionality and being smart in how we approach it. So in the rest of this session, I'm going to walk you through this and we're going to... if your child could come to you and say, "Dad, this is what I need most from you, this is what I need."

And here's what I would say because some of you right now, you're going, "Well, my child is raised." They still would say these things. So don't count yourself out yet. You still have a voice and an opportunity as a grandfather. Those of you that are young dads, you need to really pay attention to this. Those of you who are young men who are not in relationships with it, I'd say pay attention the most. If you could grab what I'm about to walk through now, what you will do, there's guys sitting all around this room as we walk through this session that'll be telling themselves, "Man, I wish I knew this. Man, I wish I'd had this back then." You're the guy that's back then. Pay attention now to it because it's so important. What would they say? First thing, "Dad, I need you and mom to be there for me in my early years." The early years really matter when they're baby, when they're little, when they're home.

And this sometimes, dads, it's a season when we're trying to establish a career and it's one of the easiest seasons to pull back in. Studies have shown that a strong nurturing environment and the opening years of a child's life along with lots of face-to-face interaction with mom and dad is essential to healthy brain and personality development. And this study in particular is referring to Dartmouth did a study about the wiring of a brain, and especially the wiring of small children in the home. When you're born, your brain is not completely hardwired yet. The connections aren't all there. And it's not just a biological function that happens, it's through social interaction that a lot of those wiring and networks are created. It's a social act interaction with mom and dad that's important in it.

Look how Paul Meyer puts it. He says, "One of the things I've learned in my psychiatric training is approximately 85% of a person's ultimate personality is formed by the time he or she is six years old." Those first six years are obviously the most crucial. Studies have shown also that young children with limited physical and emotional attention from busy and absent parents will struggle later on. Now, again, I say this to highlight the importance of it. And I say it especially for us as men because it is a season of life. It's really easy when they're little to go, "Well, that's mom's domain, it's mom's world, she's got that," or we've put them in the best daycare and again, you've got to figure out, "Okay, how do we make life work as a family in the windows you have, in the time that you're home, how are you personally connecting?"

Look at the note there. Dads far more than moms wound their children for a lifetime by being out of touch with them in the early years. Dad's absence is particularly damaging to sons. There's a unique thing that you bring to it. Anna Machin wrote a great article in Aeon. It's entitled the Marvel of the Human Dad, the Marvel of what dad brings. And she's talking to particularly these early years. It's interesting the difference in how a mom bonds with a child and a dad bonds. A mother bonds with the baby and you see it right out of the gate. They have that natural bond, but the bond that's created between a mother and a child is through affection and cuddling. And it's in those moments of cuddling and when she's breastfeeding and nursing that both the child and the mom's brain, it releases the neurochemicals, the oxytocin that bonds them together in it. And it's interesting.

The moments that bond a dad to a child it's not through cuddling. And it doesn't mean that as a dad, we love being affection, but the highest spike in a dad's brain and in the child's brain is through play. And in those moments of play, here's what Anna Machin pointed out, "A child begins learning the give and take of relationships." Because with mom, it's all just take. Mama's going to love me, mama feeds me, mama takes care of me. Dad steps in though and it's, "Hey, we're going to play now. I'm going to throw you up a little bit. I'm going to chase you. I'm going to run away from you." And suddenly it's like, "Oh, wait, if I'm going to interact with dad, it's not just cuddle in loving, slow, more dangerous." It turns a child's orientation outward. It creates activity in it.

And here was the interesting part in those moments of play, it releases the most amount of oxytocin in dad's brain and the child's brain and they're bonding through that activity the same way mom bonds through nurturing. It's almost like God designed it for the two to work together in partnership. This is our child. Children need us. I would challenge you if you've got kids, two things that always just mark off a mom brain facetime and Floortime, facetime and Floortime. Are they seeing my face personally? Years ago, I was reading the newspaper at breakfast, and Kent, he was a little guy and he was trying to tell me something. He's like, "Dad," and he was talking, "Dad." And I'm kind of, "Uh-huh (affirmative), Uh-huh (affirmative)." He finally grabbed the newspaper and pulled it down. I said, "Kent, I'm listening to you." And he said, "Show me your face." And it was like, "Are you actually getting my eyes? Did you get my attention?"

And if you're like me and you got several kids, sometimes it's just good to stop and go, "When's the last time we had face-to-face conversation. just one-on-one, they saw my eyes and we talked?" The other thing is if you've got little kids, Floortime is invaluable. And here's all I mean, you may come home exhausted, just lay on the floor. Literally getting in their world, laying on the floor, let them crawl on you, play. Because here's what it does, you have to engage with them. You can't stay on your phone. You purposely engage their world. Now, if you're like me and they've outgrown that stage, turn Floortime into fun time. When's the last time you did something fun with them that they would say is fun? Facetime, Floortime, level of intentionality because it's so important to them. I love how [inaudible 00:13:51] puts it, "No one outgrows his feelings of childhood. For better or for worse, the child lives on in the adult." That's why this season is so critical.

Here's the second thing, point B, "Dad, I need your discipline and instruction to be balanced with love." Every household has to have a combination of discipline and love and you find that balance. Look at the chart in your notes. There's really four major households in it. And if you look on the spectrum there, the left and right, low discipline and instruction. On the right side of that line, high discipline and instruction. On the top and bottom, the top half is high love household, bottom half is a low love household. Now, out of those four, if you walk through it, on the upper-left, you see a household that's low discipline but high love is a permissive household, it's a permissive household. Lot of love there, but you can get away with anything. And in that, not a lot of instruction out of it.

On the right-hand side, the quadrant there of high love, high discipline, it's an authoritative household, authoritative, great balance of both of those. Lower left-hand quadrant, you see a household low love and low discipline is neglectful, a neglectful household. And then over in that lower right-hand corner, it's high discipline instruction, but low love. It's the authoritarian household, authoritarian. Now, as you look at those, in each of those quadrants with it, obviously, what you want to shoot for as a dad is that upper-right. You want to be up in that place. It's high discipline, there's high instruction there, there's high intentionality, but it's high love. And remember, we talked about it. It's not just that you love them that they actually know they're loved, they actually felt they were loved in that.

Children raised in those authoritative homes they're more likely to adopt the values of the family, more likely on all these things. There's not a given on anything. I know children that were raised in those homes that didn't adopt the family values. So it's more likely, more likely to respond to authority figures. Now, I have seen this quite a bit. When you've had that proper balance growing up, you don't resent authority so much. I've had people, young guys especially that have worked for me in the past and I couldn't figure out why do they have such a chip on their shoulder about authority, and then I find out their background, a lot of times they grew up in homes where they didn't feel loved in it. They don't trust authority and it bleeds out. And they're more likely to possess a high sense of personal well-being.

Now, as you look at that chart, here's the interesting thing though. If you go through those four things, obviously authoritative is the best. What would you say is the second best one? It's actually permissive, permissive. It's not ideal. You certainly would want a child to have discipline and instruction, but even in the absence of that, if they feel loved, if they know they're loved, they have a better footing for life. What do you think is the third best one? It's actually neglectful. Yeah, it's interesting. Now, it's got a balance on it, some neglectful to such a degree. But neglectful and authoritarian, the damage between them a lot of times because sometimes a kid grown up in a neglectful household, they at least know the rules of the game. They at least know, "Okay, I got to take care of me and I know what to expect in that."

There's many a child... And I would say this especially that's grown up in the church and it was a dad who was trying to do it the right way, but he did it so harshly. And he was so determined, "We're going to keep the rules, and we're going to do the rules, and we're going to do it right," and the child never felt loved. And sometimes I get the privilege of talking to those adult men who grew up in those houses. And it's interesting how much they're like, "I'm not interested in church. I'm not interested in that life because of the wounding that happened in it." And it usually was from a dad who did love him, but didn't know how to express it and was so scared all the time.

I think we become more authoritarian when we're afraid. You see it in culture and you see it in a household that I've got to control this kid, I got to keep them from making the same mistakes I did. And it's a bad world out there and there's all this bad stuff, so I'm going to crack the whip that much harder. And it's all good intention. But if you combine just that kind of household without the love, so wounding that comes out of that. There's the power of being able to live as a man in love and in instruction. And it's a challenge for all of us. Let's be honest, there's a challenge for us in it.

John Wooden, the basketball coach at UCLA, probably the greatest basketball coach ever, he talked about growing up in rural Indiana and his own father and the lessons he learned from his father. And the rural part they lived in, it was near a lot of gravel mines, gravel pits, and a lot of times farmers to make extra money would use their horses or plow horses to drag out these wagons of gravel out of the pits. One day he and his father were walking along and they saw this young farmer and he had a team of horses that were trying to pull this wagon out of this pit. And the young farmer was getting madder and madder and wanting them to do it. And he was raising his voice and starting to hit them more until finally Wooden's father walked over and he said, "Can I help here?"

He told the young man, "Just be quiet." And he walked over to the horses and he started just talking to him, construct their noses and held their bridles. Then right there with them, as he stood with them, he finally let out a little whistle and started to pull the reins and suddenly these horses that had been fighting it and straining and all that just started moving forward. Wooden said as a boy, he was just amazed watching it, but he said what he saw that day, he saw over and over again in his father's life.

Listen to his words, he says, "I've never forgotten what I saw him do and how he did it. Over the years, I've seen a lot of leaders, and I would say this is true, a lot of fathers as well act like that angry, young farmer who lost control. So much more can usually be accomplished by dad's calm, competent, and steady approach." And then he said, "Here was the indelible lesson in my life. It takes strength inside to be gentle on the outside." And I'm telling you, your sons, your daughters, even your wives, they long for both of those things. They long for our strength and our intentionality and our discipline, but they long for the gentleness that comes out of the heart of love. So as men, how do we establish that in our homes?

C, "Dad, I need you to know my personality and honor it. I need you to know my personality and honor it." There is no one size fits all parenting style. The smart dad will adjust his parenting efforts to fit each of his children's unique personalities. Sometimes I'll talk to parents and they'll say, "We don't know why this one child just is rebelling all the time. We've raised them all exactly the same way." And I want to go, "There's your problem." You didn't have exactly the same child. And the more as a father, you start understanding, "Okay, this is how this child is wired."

If you look in that, the sooner dad knows his children's unique personalities, the better. This insight will help you as a dad, better connect and interact with each of your children. And I like this line, and avoid unnecessary hurts. They're not intentional hurts. None of us intentionally wanting to hurt our children, but when I don't understand them, I can unnecessarily, unintentionally hurt them. And so that's why this knowledge is important. You can see there's a lot of resources available. One of the ones listed here, Personality Plus for Parents by Florence Littauer. It's a great tool that can help you figure out your children with that. In each of it, it's figuring out how are they wired, what's their personality type? Where do they fall in the birth order? It's amazing how birth order and understanding a little bit about birth order impacts all of us and our children as well.

If you have a firstborn, firstborn children are usually very conscientious. They're very reliable, they're dependable in that. Firstborn children can also be fearful in stepping in a new situation because they've always had to be the first in it. And then you take a second born and they come along, especially if they're middle child, the middle child of the same sex. If you have a boy and then another boy, that middle child by design, a lot of times will try to define himself or herself different than the firstborn and purposely do that. And so you may be sitting there and you go, "Man, you've got this conscientious, reliable firstborn that's always hit and then the second born is acting out all the time or not doing it." And the worst thing you can absolutely do to him is look at him and say, "Why can't you be like Johnny, your older brother?"

That's like you're screaming in the air. They hear, "Okay, I'm going to be that much more, not like Johnny," because you're pushing in something. And a lot of times middleborns are very sociable that they usually create a pretty good network. They're very competitive in different ways. Sometimes not as afraid as a firstborn can be in settings. Then you look at the lastborn, if you are a lastborn child, some of you you're in the room, you are the baby and you got away with murder, a lot of times there's the life of the party. A lot of times they can manipulate or move people because they're used to doing that with siblings. So even just that window, if you ever stopped for a minute and go, "Okay, where did each of my children come in the order? Am I treating them all exactly the same way? And how do I speak into that and recognize who they are?"

D, "Dad I need you to discover my bent and actively support it. I need you to discover my bent and actively support it the way I'm wired." The bent of life. Don't push your children to be what you want. Help them become what God has gifted them to be. Their bent is their natural abilities and passions. This word, Proverbs 22:6, it's often used a lot of times around discipline. But if you look at the interpretation, "Train up a child according to his bent, and even when he's old, he will not depart from it," there's a core part of recognizing how did God make this child. Not the way I want to make this child, how did God actually make him? And am I working with that bent or am I always trying to change it?

I always think of it like a bow. You think of that stick of a bow that's been shaped with it. There comes a point, you're not going to be able to take that and you look at it and go, "Well, I don't like the bent this way, I'm going to constantly start bending it the other way." And you do that too much and at some point what happens? It breaks. The same thing can happen in a kid's life. When they are made a certain way and God gave them certain abilities, God gave them certain passions, but as a dad, they don't match your passions. They don't match what you dream for them. And so you're constantly kind of, "What if we just shape it this way a little bit? Let's go, come on." And if you don't watch it, it can break.

You look at the notes there, it says, "Do you know your child's natural abilities and passions?" In a child's teenage years, the smart dad will use aptitude testing to find out... Again, another resource there. AIMS is a testing center in Dallas. It's pretty comprehensive. One, it can help you on those later teenage years. Your excitement and support as a dad for your child's natural abilities and passions is a huge factor in his or her healthy development. Your excitement about how they're made, how they're wired. I know a guy, Paul, Paul grew up an athlete. He loved sports, great at sports. He had like six, seven children. I don't think he had one athlete in the whole bunch. You would have thought in the childhood lottery at some point you have that many kids, "I'm going to get an athlete somewhere down the line." They were artists, they were musician, unbelievably gifted kids, but didn't care about sports.

Part of Paul's job was he ran a sports league and it just shows you how much he was involved in it. But I'm going to tell you this, you've never seen a dad get more excited about art recitals, about a kid playing an instrument because here's what he determined, "This is how God shaped these kids. And maybe they didn't get what I match with, but I am determined to shape them and cheer for them and encourage them in that." Now, I would encourage a practical way of doing this is ask yourself, "How am I exposing my kids to a lot of different things in life?" One of the things I've try to do as dad is maybe even things I didn't grow up doing, things I don't like doing, but they might like doing. They might like playing that sport that I didn't like playing. So at least give them the opportunity to expose them to them.

They might like hunting and you go, "Well, I never grew up hunting." They may love it though. You at least expose them to it. They might like cars and working on it and you go, "I don't know anything about cars." See, that's part of the reason you want to network with other dads because as you network with other dads, they have strengths you don't have, they have abilities, they know parts of the world you don't know. And so we don't let our limited world become the limitation of our children as well, that we're trying to help them step into different arena, try things out.

And as they try them out, you may discover they love something that you didn't even realize with that. That's part of that intentionality. And then when they discover it, cheer for them. You'd be in their corner. You'd be the first voice to say, "Man, I am so proud of you. I'm so excited about what's happening." Your voice is the most powerful in their life in this. It just is. And to train them, shape them according to the way God shaped them, not according to the way you'd like them to be.

E, "Dad, I need you to know too much is too much." Too much, is too much. And look at the categories under that. Too much control over your child's life crushes the spirit and incites rebellion. And this goes back to that authoritarian household. When it's too much, I'm going to control them and I'm going to keep them from all the mistakes I made. And I'm going to be so in control that if I stay two steps ahead of them, they don't have to get in any ditch, they don't have to have any problem. I can control every step of life. This mentality, by the way, it keeps growing of parents today. We live in a much more fearful culture, and because of that, we control our kids' world.

It was interesting, they did a study, they took several parents that grew up in the same town and charted where their houses were and then they said, "Show us where you were allowed to go as a kid." And then on the map they charted how far the kids were allowed to go into the town, where they were going to parks and that and the distance from their homes. Then they said, "All right, show us where your kids are allowed to go." And almost invariably, the kids were limited to their yards and not much beyond. And when they questioned the parents about it, they go, "Do you see the disparity between the two?" Invariably, every parent spoke up and they said, "Yeah, but the world is so much more dangerous. There's crime today, there's this today." Then they pulled out the stats and they said, "Here's the crime rates when you were a kid and they were all higher. Here's the danger rate when you were a kid. You should know more today with it."

And again, hear me, I'm not talking about we become neglectful parents, you turn him loose. But it's a picture that we do grow up with a fearfulness. And so part of that fearfulness is I'm so scared they're falling behind, I'm so scared they're not going to hit. And we can control it. We almost become like Lennie from of Mice and Men. Remember the Steinbeck novel, Lennie who would have the little animals, he'd have the rabbits, the little animals and he loved them and he loved them and he loved them to death. He just squeezed them so hard. You can do that with kids. Maybe you don't do it as dad. You know who's particularly tempted to do this? Is mom because mom loves them so much and mom wants to make sure she's ahead and she's taking care of them.

And this is a part of it in our passivity if you just stepped back and let her do it, she'll squeeze it for the both of you. And there's a place as dad you have to step in and go, "We're going to give them some space here." We had it recently and one of my sons was in a conflict with one of his friends. And we had heard a little bit about it and we've heard one half of the story. And one night, we were at this school function and ran into the other mom and that mom and Lee were talking together and Lee heard the other half of the story and what had happened.

And then we got in the car and she's immediately like, "You need to hear the whole story of this. And they did that and he said this and that, and we're going to go home and they're going to... He's going to call him. And finally, I said, "No, we're not going to do that." She's like, "What?" She's like, "He's got to do the right thing." I said, "I am all for him doing the right thing. But two mamas are not going to fix this. They're going to fix it as men because they're young men. You're not going to mama him there. And so I'll speak into it and then you both have to back off and let them take care of it." She loved me saying that.

No, it's hard in that moment. And here's what you can do in that moment. You go, "Do I really want to go through this?" Why don't it just be, "Yeah, I'll just let that play out. I'll just let her take care of it." You know what that is? That's passivity. And so part of it is... Yeah, one thing I appreciate so much about my wife in that moment, she goes, "Okay, you're right." And she trust, "Okay, you'll step into this." So it's not telling her, "Oh, we're not going to deal with it and then I don't deal with it." What I'm saying in that moment is we're going to address it as men and so it's my responsibility. I have to address it, I have to step into it, and you make that commitment to it. Too much money in your child's life will spoil them and steal their will to succeed. It will steal it.

If you go ahead of them all the time and you give them money for everything and they've never earned anything in life, if they've never had to feel that satisfaction of wanting something and earning it, the satisfaction of knowing, "Man, I can make some money, I can do this, I can accomplish it," don't rob that out of them. And we do it out of love and convenience. Sometimes it's just easier to give them the money instead of forcing them to earn it. And so too much is too much. Too high expectation for your child wounds and embitters them. Man, when you're always setting that bar higher and higher, no matter how they do, there's a little bit more.

Years ago, George Brett, the baseball player, incredible baseball player, the last guy who came the closest to hitting 400 for a season. And it was interesting, at one point, at the very end of the season, he was at 400 and if he had sat out a couple of games, he would have ended the season at 400. But to his credit, he said, "No, I'm going to play out the season." And he played the last games and he ended up right below it. As he finished that last game, he walks over, highest batting average than anybody's had in decades. Walks over and there's his dad. You know the first thing his dad said to him? "Five more hits and you would have had it."

And if you know the story of their life, that was his dad's mentality his whole life, no matter how great you are, it's never great enough. And the challenge for us as dads is we have these dreams and we know what our children can do and we want to push them to it and whether it's athletically or especially academically. "Man, that was a great grade, but boy, I bet we could get that GPA up more. Man, we got to get in that school. We got to get ahead." And they feel that and you go, "Yeah, but in my role to help them be better, yes, but there's a fine line between better and bitter." In fact, I love that Colossians verse, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. Notice, he doesn't make that challenge to mothers. This isn't the temptation of mothers. Temptation of mother is to control the baby and take care of. The temptation of a father is we push too much to the point of that exasperation and they lose heart.

F, "Dad, I need you to show me what to believe by living it. Show me what to believe by living it." Faith if it has no works is dead being by itself. Look at the research. Research shows over and over again that children are more inclined to embrace the faith of their parents if they witnessed dad or mom applying their beliefs to real life situations. Now, again, let me note the words more inclined. There's no guarantees in this. I know kids that were raised in some of the best households where mom and dad both lived it out and they still struggle with this. But where they see this disconnect, and here's where it really gets hard, kids who are taught certain principles all the time, kids who are brought to church and they hear it, but then they see that disconnect between, "Wait a second, we all say this, but dad doesn't really live this. Dad doesn't really believe this in his actions." And they immediately go there and go, "Okay, I see how it works. I see. Okay."

So this is just stuff you say and there's certain generation they're looking at it going, "I don't even think it's worth saying. I'm just going to have both match. I appreciate their honesty in certain ways." So it's a challenge to us. Look at that bottom line. You will leave in your children what you've lived out in your home. They just they pay attention. They know. Now, as you look at that, does that mean we have to be perfect people? No. In fact, one of the greatest things you could show them is this is what you do when you screw up in life. This is how God steps it. This is what grace looks like.

I think they are dying to see that kind of honesty out of parents and having real conversations so that I don't have to walk around and pretend like I've got it all together and perfect all the time, but I show them how it's really lived out with real faith. And maybe you're here and I know there's a lot of guys you're looking at it and you go, "Yo, the years when I had my kids in the household, I don't even have a faith walk, or I blew it so much. I regret so much that I didn't speak in their life or I didn't live it out." You know what? You can show them still today. Show them what it looks like for a man at your age to go, "You know what? I'm going to get real with God." To be honest enough with them to go, "I really did blow it. You guys need to hear it. Yeah, let's just be honest about where I was in that. But can I tell you honestly what grace looks like at my stage in life?" May be the greatest gift you give to your adult children.

Instead of walking around the guilt all the time, "Oh, I should have, I should have," just step into it and go, "I didn't. And let me tell you about a God who meets you when you don't do it right and how he gives you a second chance." And that alone would be one of the most powerful things that you could give to them. Along with that, "Dad, I need you to bless me. I need you to bless me." Every child needs dad to speak the blessing directly into his or her life. This blessing was introduced in session four. We talked about it on those must-do list for the smart dad. Look at the three phrases they need. One, they need to hear over and over again, I love you, I love you and hear it in a way they can hear it, not just in the way you like telling it, the way they can hear it.

Secondly, they need to hear, I'm proud of you, I'm proud of you. When your child steps off of a sports field, when your child steps off of performing in any way, when your child brings to you part of what they've done, one of the greatest things you can say as a dad, instead of going to that place of, "Man, that was good, but let me tell you how you could have done a little better," just stop at them, I'm going to go, "I'm so proud of you." I had a guy tell me years ago, he said, "The best thing you can tell your children, especially in sports, is just tell them I love watching you play. Man, there's few things that bring me greater joy than watching you out there today." Just let them hear that. And look at that third phrase, you're really good at. Especially as they start becoming teenagers and beyond, speak into their life that you go, "I'm watching you. I see what you're good at."

And it needs to be really something they're good at because what that tells them is, "Man, dad's paying attention to me. Dad's affirming what I thought I felt, but he actually pointed it out and he was cheering for it." This blessing by dad can never be given enough to his child either publicly or privately. Even Jesus needed it. Look at that verse from Matthew, "Behold, a voice of the cloud said, this is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." This happened several times in Jesus' life where God, the Father, spoke audibly in an interesting... The only time you hear God speak audibly about his son, he's blessing him. Look what he says in that moment, "This is my beloved son. I love him in whom I am well pleased. I am proud of him. Listen to him."

Man, he knows what he's saying. He's good at this. And there's a part of it that I go, "God's saying that to the audience, but he's also saying it to his son. And if Jesus needed to hear it, you think our children need to hear it? Absolutely. Are you blessing your children? There is many an adult man who's walking around dying to hear the blessing of their father, still dying for it today. Don't let your children be one of them. And maybe it's an adult child you didn't bless enough, call them today. Call your daughter. Tell her, "Man, you know what? I love you. I am so proud of you and I watch you. I watch you with your kids. I watch you do things I didn't do. I watch your work." Call your son today. Tell him, "I love you. I am so proud of you. Man, I'm looking at your life. Man, you're so good at this." It is so powerful. Don't squander it. Bless them.

H, "Dad, I need you to adjust your leadership style to me as I grow up. I need you to adjust your leadership style." And you look at those ages there, from 1 to 13, you're going to be your child's coach. And then the earlier end of that spectrum when they're a little child, you're the coach that sends in all the plays. You're doing everything, you're calling it. As they start going up to teenage, you're a coach that maybe you're calling the plays, but they've got to execute them a little more. And then in the teenage years, you got to change, become your child's cheerleader. You're no longer the one that I get to call every play. They do exactly what I tell them to do.

Now, I've got to step back a little bit, and okay, I'm cheering for them, I'm encouraging them. I'm seeing those things in their life. And it's interesting, encouragement will actually foster the greater activity more than discouragement or correction stops activity you don't want. And so if you're tempted, if you're a high-control person, you will be tempted to stay coach all those years and tell them exactly what to do. It's a mistake. You have to learn to back. And then when they become 18, you move into that consultant role. And again, doesn't mean you don't speak in their life, doesn't mean you can't say things. But the thing about a consultant, you invite a consultant in and now they have the power whether they're going to take it or not.

And so again, now at 18, there's still an early phase of that, but the more they move into adulthood, you've got to learn to adjust your style to that. "Ah, dad, I need to make some great memories with you. I need to make some great memories with you." There's a direct correlation between the memories we keep from childhood and the lives we live as adults. You're more shaped by memories than you realize and so much is caught in those moments. Every child can be strengthened for life by special moments with dad that live on in the heart forever. The smart dad works at creating personal memory, making experiences with this children every year. And again, this takes a level of intentionality of just stepping back and go, "What's the memory of this year?"

This is why family vacation is so important by the way. More children will look back on their lives and go, "Man, vacation was such a time I really had dad." Those family vacation memories and then personal memories, something you did individually with that child that they just they hold onto. Is interesting, there was a man in his office, he had a picture of he and his father duck hunting. And they're smiling there. Someone saw the picture and they go, "Oh, man, is that an activity you love doing with your dad?" And the guy spoke up and he said, "Actually, that was the only day we ever went duck hunting in my life. But to this day, it's one of my greatest memories. And every time I look at the picture, it makes me smile and it reminds me how important it is to create memories with my children."

Doesn't take much. But guys, the window of when you can do it, the tide comes in quick, It covers that reef real quick. And so if we don't take advantage of those hours of those windows we have, you can look up and go, "Oh, man, I wish I'd done more." Now, again, you can make memories now with the adult children. You can call them today. Here's what it takes though. It probably is going to take a little more money. It just will. But you call it and you go, "You know what? We're going to have a golf weekend. I'm paying for it. We're flying to it. It's going to be awesome. You're going to be there. We're going to be together as a family." And there's a part of it you go, "Ah, I can't afford all that." Here's all I'm saying. Some of that money spent in it, you'll never regret it because you need the memories too.

J, "Dad, I need you to talk to me about God and share his word with me. I need you to talk to me about God." Children have a natural curiosity about God. Our job as smart dads is to build on that curiosity, not squelching. Jesus called to them saying, "Permit the children to come to me. Do not hinder them. For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." One of the best things you can do as a dad is to tell your children about your relationship with God and what his word is teaching you. Now, again, you don't have to be a Bible scholar. Some of you, even that phrase, it intimidates you. It's like, "I don't know how to speak into their life with it." You are one of the most real voices in their life. And so as you read and you go, "Okay, here's what this verse said," just even saying that to your child, just saying, "Hey, I saw this one verse," even if you said to your child, "Then I read this verse, I didn't understand it, but here's what I got out of it. Here's what God's saying to me."

The the reality is our quiet times in our reading never were meant for us alone. It was always meant to give away. And learning to do that in your children's life it invest in them in a way that they'll walk away from that and go, "Then this faith thing is real. Dad actually takes it seriously. Dad doesn't have all the answers. Oh, man, that's a relief because I don't have all the answers either. And so it's great to be able to share that with him. But dad's looking to God and I'll look to him too."

Look at the final thoughts here. Guys, children are God's gift us. We feel that gifting most in two wow moments, the day they're born, there's no greater thrill than when they're born. There's a wow moment as well the day they stand before us as mature, honorable adults. And that is this wow moment, sometimes you go, "Wow, I didn't think they were going to get here." Sometimes it's a wow of, "Wow, God, you are good because this young person standing in front of me, this adult standing in front of me, and you did something in them beyond what I even invested. Wow, what a joy."

Children are our best long-term opportunity to better God's world. They are the arrows of change we shoot to shape the future like arrows in the hand of a warrior so are children of one's youth. And that part always convinced me when I think of an arrow going into the future, when I think of they are the legacy, they're going to live in a world I'll never live in. And I think about it though, in one way, it's inspiring on the long-term, but it's convicting on the short-term. That means I've got to change today because here's the reality. There is no project you're going to work, there's no talk you're going to give, there's no sale you're going to complete that will live on longer than the kids that you send in the future.

Do we give the same level of intentionality to it? And recognize, look at this, children are ours to love and guide into becoming healthy, productive God-glorifying adults. Such a responsibility will humble the smart dad. It is humbling, teaching this is humbling. Let me tell you, I walk through each of these points and I'm like, "Oh, God, I need your help." He knows that he's inadequate for such a task. He knows he needs God to succeed and that reality will drive him to constantly call on God for his wisdom and help, that reality that comes with it. And I want you to take away that point because hear me guys, God calls himself Father. If there's anyone that understands what this role is all about, it's God. If there's anyone who wants us to succeed at it, it's God. If there's anyone you should turn to in it, it's God.

There's no one on your side more as a dad than your Heavenly Father. I think a lot of times he's sitting up there and he goes, "I know exactly how you feel. I know exactly what you want to do, and I'd love to help you more." See, a lot of times we think he's that dad that's looking up there going, "Man, you are screwing up as a father. You should be doing this better." And we feel guilty when really he's the father up there going, "I'd love to help you. I am for you as a dad. I want you to succeed in this" Turn to him, turn to him.

And I want to close out with a prayer. You can see the prayer written there, but I'm going to ask you to bow as I read it. It's a prayer by general Douglas MacArthur. Listen, as he prays, and I'm going to make it my prayers, we close. "Build me a son, Oh Lord, who'd be strong enough to know when he is weak, brave enough to face himself when he's afraid. One who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat and humble and gentle in victory. Build me a son, Oh Lord whose wishes will not take the place of deeds, a son who will know thee and to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge. Lead him, I pray, not in the path of ease and comfort, but under the stress and spur of difficulties and challenge. Here, let him learn to stand up in the storm here. Here, let him learn compassion for those who fail.

Build me a son whose heart will be clear, whose goals will be high, a son who will master himself before he seeks to master others. One who will reach into the future yet never forget the past. And after all these things, add I pray, enough of a sense of humor so that he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility so that he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom and the meekness of true strength. Then I, his father, will dare to whisper, 'I have not lived my life in vain.'" Amen.