



# HAS THE NUCLEAR FAMILY BOMBED?

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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# Has the Nuclear Family Bombed?

**SERMON REFERENCE:** Exodus 20:12

**LWF SERMON NUMBER:** #1854

God created the nuclear family, but with the world in its current state, we may be tempted to ask ourselves: *Has the nuclear family bombed?*

God gave us families for living, learning, and lasting; they are a little part of the Garden of Eden that we have carried with us. Adrian Rogers says, "When the home begins to decay, the nation begins to decay."

Exodus 20:12 says, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

Whether we are worthy or not, children must honor their parents. But are we fathers and mothers worthy of honor? We can never be perfect parents, and we will never have perfect children. But there are five ways to parent our children that are worthy of honor, regardless of our imperfections.

- First, by loving them: *Love is not giving our children what they want, it is giving them what they need.* They need this love steadfastly and consistently. Children need hugs, blessings, and comfort. They need a listening ear and their parents' prayers.
- Second, by lifting them: *Wise encouragement is better than lavish praise.* Children need encouragement like a plant needs water. We must let our speech be positive and affirming.
- Third, by limiting them: *It takes firm restrictions to set children free.* It is our responsibility to liberate them by limiting them. These limitations, though lovingly placed, will be tested over and over again, but they should never move. Psalm 11:3 says, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
- Fourth, by leading them: *To teach without training is to fail in your task.* We need to compliment character more than talent and teach by example. There should be more emphasis on moral attributes than sports, grades, or popularity.
- Finally, by laughing with them: *Serious situations call for a lot of laughter.* Our homes should be filled with joy and happiness. We should let our children see that God is over every circumstance, and we are free to laugh at ourselves, even in times of trouble.

## Life Application

Do you honor your parents? Are you a parent worthy of honor? Evaluate your relationships today, and pray for God's guidance and grace.



# Has the Nuclear Family Bombed?

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## 1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Exodus 20:12 represents the first commandment with promise.
  - i) We are commanded to honor our parents that we may live long in the land that the Lord has given us.
- b) There are many in today's society who are trying to redefine the values we hold.
- c) Many are attacking the values of our Christian families and the nuclear family itself.
  - i) God created the nuclear family.
- d) Why did God give us families?
  - i) For living.
    - (1) The family unit is a little part of the Garden of Eden that we have carried with us.
    - (2) Children need families
  - ii) For learning.
    - (1) The Ten Commandments were given primarily to the home.
      - (a) Not to the schools, industry or government, although they apply to each.
    - (2) We are to teach the Ten Commandments in our homes.
  - iii) For lasting.
    - (1) Exodus 20:12
    - (2) When the home begins to decay, the nation begins to decay.
- e) It is the parent's responsibility to teach children to honor father and mother.
- f) The message today will help us learn how to live in such a way that our children can give us honor.
- g) Since Adam and Eve, no parent has ever been perfect.
  - i) Our children are not perfect children.
  - ii) As parents, we cannot guarantee how our children will turn out.
    - (1) Proverbs 22:6
      - (a) The book of Proverbs is a book of proverbs, not promises.
        - (i) A proverb is a proverb, a promise is a promise, a precept is a precept, a parable is a parable and a prophecy is a prophecy.
        - (ii) A proverb is a general principle that when generally applied brings a general result.
          1. A proverb is a short sentence based on long experience.
            - a. Ex. "Early to bed, early to rise will make you healthy, wealthy and wise."
      - (2) God gave all children a will.
        - (a) This is why we should not set goals for our children.
        - (b) We have desires for our children; we set goals for ourselves.
          - (i) Our desire is to have godly children; our goal is to be a godly parent.
      - (3) We should not pretend to be perfect.



- (a) Our children already know that we are not perfect.
  - (b) They don't want to know that we're perfect; they want to know that we are real.
  - (c) Children will learn far more from watching you handle your mess-ups and failures and problems, then from our phony perfectionism.
- h) How do we become parents that children can honor?

## 2) BY LOVING OUR CHILDREN

- a) Love is not giving our children what they want but giving them what they need.
- b) How do we love our children?
  - i) By touching and hugging them.
    - (1) Luke 15:20
    - (2) When parents are affectionate toward their children, and are properly affectionate toward each other, it can help protect their children from sexually immoral relationships.
    - (3) Children need to understand that in order to be huggable and lovable, that they do not have to be into sexual intimacy.
    - (4) Hug them often, hug them affectionately, hug them supportively, hug them tenderly, hug them playfully.
    - (5) Parents, let your children see you hug one another.
  - ii) By blessing them.
    - (1) By simply, lovingly telling our children that we bless them in the name of the Lord.
  - iii) By comforting them.
    - (1) When little children hurt, their pain is real.
  - iv) By listening to them.
    - (1) One of the finest forms of communication is saying nothing, but simply listening.
  - v) Steadfastly and consistently.
    - (1) They need to know that their parents love them regardless.
    - (2) Give them time to go through their different stages.
    - (3) We need to love them and show them love consistently.
  - vi) We need to love them through our prayers.
    - (1) We must prayer for our children by name and pray for them often.

## 3) BY LIFTING OUR CHILDREN

- a) Wise encouragement is better than lavish praise.
  - i) Parents need to learn the difference between praise and encouragement.
  - ii) Colossians 3:21
- b) Praise is not wrong or bad, but children also need encouragement like plants need water.
  - i) Children need to be encouraged over and over again.
  - ii) Catch them doing something right and let them know through your encouragement that you believe in them.
  - iii) Let your speech affirm them; be positive.
- c) Encouragement is twice as powerful as praise.



- i) For instance, praising a child because they made good grades, or cleaning a room.
  - (1) This says to a child, "You get approval when you do something good."
  - (2) Children think they can earn approval.
  - (3) "When my performance is good, my approval rate goes up; when my performance is bad, my acceptance goes down and my self-image goes down with it."
- ii) Praise says, "You are great because you did something."
  - (1) There is nothing wrong with praise.
  - (2) We do not need to only praise children without encouraging them.
- iii) Encouragement says, "It is great that something was done, and I really appreciate it."
- iv) Encouragement values the child, not primarily for what the child achieved, but for who the child is who is achieving the task.

#### 4) BY LIMITING OUR CHILDREN

- a) It takes firm restrictions to set children free.
  - i) As parents, it is our responsibility to liberate them by limiting them.
  - ii) 1 Samuel 3:13
    - (1) Eli did not set limits for his children.
  - iii) Our children need limits.
  - iv) In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve everything they needed, but He also set some limits.
- b) When we set reasonable limits for our children, our children will test these restrictions over and over again.
  - i) If those limits move after being tested, the child will have no security.
  - ii) But, if the limits are firm and reasonable, and you love, when they push against those rules and they do not move, then they have security.
    - (1) Josh McDowell: "Rules without relationship bring rebellion."
  - iii) If parents do not place limitations or restrictions upon children, to them it implies rejection.
  - iv) Inwardly, we all desire limitations.
  - v) If parents do not conquer their child's will, someone else will.
- c) Setting rules is one of the toughest and most needful things we are to do for our children.
- d) According to a Josh McDowell Survey:
  - i) For the most part, our children, church kids, echo the world's view.
  - ii) 57% of youth cannot say that an objective standard of truth exists.
  - iii) 85% of kids are liable to reason, "Just because it is wrong for you, does not mean it is wrong for me."
  - iv) 55% believe that everything in life is negotiable.
    - (1) Their idea of distinction between right and wrong is fluid and subject to change.
- e) Psalm 11:3
- f) Ted Koppel said in a speech to graduating students:
  - i) In the place of truth, we have discovered facts.
  - ii) Moral absolutes have been substituted by moral ambiguities.
  - iii) We communicate with everyone and say nothing.



- iv) We have reconstructed the tower of Babel into a television antenna.
- v) Thousands of voices making a parity of democracy, where everyone's opinions are afforded equal weight regardless of substance or merit.
- vi) Opinions of real merit tend to sink with barely a trace in television's ocean of banalities.
- vii) What Moses brought down were not ten suggestions, they are Ten Commandments.
- viii) The brilliance of the Ten Commandments is that they codify in a handful of words, acceptable human behavior; not just for then or now, but for all time.
- g) According to a Hollywood producer, for any television script to be commercially successful, it must violate at least three of the Ten Commandments.
- h) Situational Comedies (Sit-Com's) are designed to make us laugh at things.
  - i) When you laugh at something, you can no longer take it seriously.
  - ii) We have a generation that is laughing their way into Hell.
    - (1) They are being systematically seduced.

## 5) BY LEADING OUR CHILDREN

- a) Proverbs 22:6
- b) To teach our children without training them is to fail in our task.
- c) The emphasis today is on: sports, grades, physical health, popularity and ability, but not on character.
- d) We need to show our children how to live and love God, not just tell them.
  - i) Show them and train them how to be:
    - (1) Content
    - (2) Courageous
    - (3) Courteous
    - (4) Discerning
    - (5) Fair
    - (6) Friendly
    - (7) Generous
    - (8) Gentle
    - (9) Helpful
    - (10) Honest
    - (11) Humble
    - (12) Kind
    - (13) Obedient
    - (14) Orderly
    - (15) Patient
    - (16) Persistent
    - (17) Self-controlled
    - (18) Tactful
    - (19) Thankful
    - (20) Thrifty
    - (21) Wise
- e) Parents need to compliment character more than talent.

**6) BY LAUGHING WITH OUR CHILDREN**

- a) Our homes should be filled with joy and happiness.
- b) We need to learn to laugh in our homes.
- c) The Bible says many wonderful things about a merry heart.
- d) The human species is the only creation of God that can do three things:
  - i) Laugh, weep and blush.
- e) God made us in His image, and He gave us the gift of laughter.
- f) Psalm 2:4
- g) Genesis 21:6
- h) Luke 6:21
  - i) Jesus tells us that laughter is a blessing.
- i) Our children need to see us laugh
- j) Our children need to see us laugh, not at our sins, but at our mistakes.
- k) We need to learn to laugh at ourselves.
- l) Serious situations call for a lot of laughter.
- m) Let your children bring their friends over, and let your house be known as the happiest place.
- n) Our children should be able to see us laugh in times of trouble because it means that God is over it all.

**7) CONCLUSION**

- a) The first step to begin to be honorable to our children is by, first of all, honoring our Heavenly Father.
- b) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- c) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
  - i) Romans 3:23
  - ii) Romans 10:9-10
  - iii) Romans 10:13
  - iv) Acts 16:31
  - v) John 3:16





# Has the Nuclear Family Bombed?

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Would you take God's Word this morning, and turn to Exodus chapter 20 and I want us to look, if you will, in verse 12. Exodus chapter 20 and verse 12, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." And this, as you know, is the first command, the first commandment with promise. "Honor the Lord, and honor your father and your mother that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God has given to you."

Past Vice President Dan Quayle was speaking to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, and he was talking about families. And Vice President Quayle began to talk about the problem of absentee fathers. And in the midst of that address to the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, he inserted a little paragraph. It wasn't very long, but you've never seen such a violent reaction to a little paragraph. Now he was talking about the rise in crime, and the terrible disintegration of the home, and then this is what he said, and I want to quote what he said. This is what brought a fire storm. This is what caused the media to come down on him like a junk yard dog would attack somebody coming into places that were off bounds. This is what he said, "It doesn't matter when prime time television has Murphy Brown, a character supposedly who epitomizes today's intelligent, highly paid, professional woman, mocking the importance of fathers by bearing a child alone and calling it another lifestyle choice." By saying that, they said, "He's antiquated. He's idealistic." And they made him look like a fundamentalistic buffoon. Why was he treated with such scorn? Well, I'll tell you why; because of the values of Hollywood. What he said ran antithetical to their values and the values that they are trying to cram down our throats.

It's always been an amazement to me when they say, "These evangelical Christians are trying to cram their values down the throats of other people." Of course, I want to ask this question; who was it that has redefined when life begins, or who is it that is doing that? Who is it that has changed the way Americans think about premarital sex? Who is it that is telling us what is decent and what is not decent? Who is it that is helping us to decide who lives, and who dies, and when you can pray, and when you can't pray? We have people out there who are trying to remold and remake society in its image, and it's time God's people said, "Enough is enough." Now, Amen.

God created the nuclear family. We have to ask, "Has the nuclear family bombed?" I mean is there hope? And there is. Why did God give us families? Well, first of all **for living**, so we could live together. Your family is a little part of the Garden of Eden that we have carried with us, and children need families. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that.

But not only for living, but **for learning**. These Ten Commandments were given primarily to the home, not to the school, not to industry, not to government. They apply there, but they're given primarily to the home. As I have told you before, we need to stop complaining about the Ten Commandments not displayed on the classrooms of public schools, or the walls of the classrooms, if we ourselves don't display them and teach them in our very own homes.



The home is given for living, the home for learning, and **for lasting**. He says that you may live long in the land. Look, if you will, in Exodus 20 verse 12, “That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” When the home begins to decay, it follows as night follows day, the nation begins to decay.

I want to talk to you today, not so much about honoring your father and your mother, as to being the kind of fathers and mothers that the children can honor. Because very frankly, I cannot, from this pulpit, teach your children to honor you. That’s your responsibility. So I want us to look at it, primarily from the parents’ point of view, how parents can honor their children so that the children might honor their parents. I want to talk to you primarily about being the kind of mom and dad that is worthy of honor. Now whether you’re worthy or not, there’s a sense in which all children ought to honor all of their parents, but, oh, how much better when we live honorable lives before them.

And I want to say a word, just put a little caveat here before we go more deeply into the message, and relieve you from the burden of perfectionism. Let’s just go ahead and admit it. There has not been a perfect parent on this Earth since Adam and Eve, and they failed. Don’t get the idea that you have to be a perfect parent. You’re not a perfect parent, and your children are not perfect children.

And I want to say something else. You cannot guarantee the way your children will turn out. Some people have almost put themselves in an early grave because they’ve had a wayward child. And they have prayed, and sacrificed, and loved, and taught, and that child has done wrong and somebody has taken Proverbs 22 verse 6 and beat that person over the head with it. Said, “Doesn’t the Bible say, ‘Train up a child in the way that he should go and when he’s old he’ll not depart from it?’” Friend, that is a proverb. If you read the book of Proverbs and try to turn the proverbs into promises, you’ll lose your faith. A proverb is a proverb. A promise is a promise. A precept is a precept. A parable is a parable. A prophecy is a prophecy, and when you understand the Bible correctly, it’s a wonderful book. But you better be careful. I mean, there’re proverbs that tell you the way to be wealthy. Does that mean that everybody who follows one of these proverbs is automatically going to be wealthy? Then why are there godly people who are not wealthy? A proverb is a general principle, generally applied, brings a general result; even our normal, natural proverbs. You know what a proverb is, it’s a short sentence, based on long experience. We use proverbs today like, “Early to bed and early to rise will make you healthy, wealthy, and wise.” Well, I suppose that’s true, but you might get hit by a truck. I mean, it’s a proverb. It’s a general principle. Now indeed it is a promise that this is a principle.

I’m not trying to say the Bible is not true or not to be taken seriously. It is, but you have to understand this, that God gave your child a will. God had two children in the Garden of Eden, and they didn’t turn out too swift. Why? Because God gave them a will. That’s the reason that you ought not to have goals for your children. I don’t have goals for my children. I have desires for my children. Do you know who I have goals for? Me, for me. Why? Because I can’t control them. I can control me, by God’s grace. So my desire is that I will have godly children. My goal is I will be a godly dad. You understand the difference? I will, God helping me, I will be a godly dad. I have a desire for godly children, and I do believe there is a principle, a proverb, that if I will, “Train my child in the way that he should go, he or she will not depart from it.” I’m not trying to put you under a guilt burden today. Really, I’m trying to encourage you, but in it all you must understand that your children do have a will of their own. And I want to relieve you from the burden of perfectionism to think if your child fails, it’s because you weren’t perfect.



Well, then if their success depends upon your perfection, they will fail because none is perfect. I'm not. You're not. It is of the grace of God that any of us survive this thing called parenthood. Amen and Amen. And about the time we get enough experience, we're out of a job. I mean we enter the thing totally inexperienced and then when we get the experience we're unemployed. So, thank God for grandchildren. Play it again. When we get a second chance, I'm so grateful that grandparents can teach parents what to do.

But, don't pretend to your children you're perfect. Number one, they already know you're not; they already know it. They don't want to know are you perfect; they want to know are you real. Are you real? Are you genuine? If they know you're real, and they watch you handle your mess ups, and your failures, and your problems, they will learn far more from that than they'll learn from your phony perfectionism. But now the Bible says we're to, "Honor our fathers and our mothers."

Well, how do we live in such a way that our children can give us honor? Let me give you some ways. Number one; and I'm going to give you about five ways, number one; **by loving them**. But now listen carefully. **Love is not giving your child what he wants or what she wants, it is giving to the child what that child needs.** That is love. Let me say again. Love is not giving to the child what the child wants. It is giving the child what the child needs. Now let me tell you how to love a child, and you're looking at a bonafide granddaddy, right here. I mean, I am a grandfather. I've got the credentials and the scars. I can prove it.

All right, now, let me tell you **how to love a child**. Number one; **by touching them**. I like the bumper sticker that said, says, "Kids need hugs not drugs." That's a good one, and don't get the idea that you're not supposed to touch and hug your children, even your grown children. I was reading about the prodigal son when he came home, and in John chapter 15 verse 20 the Bible says, "His father fell on his neck and kissed him." Now this is a grown man and a grown son, had been away living in riotous living. "His father fell on his neck and kissed him," and Jesus gave that with approval. That's the way a father is supposed to do.

Do you know how to keep your girls and your boys from growing up to be sexually impure? Hug them often. That's one of the ways. Don't let them get the idea that Hollywood has given, that the only way to get hugs is sexual intimacy. Hug them often. Hug them affectionately. Hug them supportively. Hug them tenderly. Hug them playfully, and even when that old teenage boy acts like, "Oh, Mama!" He still wants you to do it. Just go ahead and hug him, and dads hug him. And let the children see the parents hug one another. Joyce and I were locked in a tight embrace when our grandkids walked in the kitchen. They just stood there and looked a while, then walked away. Oh well, you know. What are they up to? Well, that's okay. They need to see us loving one another. They need to understand that in order to be huggable and lovable, they don't have to be into sexual intimacy.

Charles Swindoll said this. He said, "Many a young woman who opts for immoral sexual relationships does so because she can scarcely remember a time when her father so much as touched her. Unaffectionate dads, without wishing to do so, can trigger a daughter's promiscuity. All of this leads me to write with a great deal of passion; dads, don't hold back your affection. Demonstrate your feelings of love and affection to both sons and daughters, and don't stop once they reach adolescence. They long for your affirmation and appreciation. They will love you for it. More importantly, they will emulate your example when God gives them their own family." Now you love, therefore by touching them.



You love them another way **by blessing them**. Did you know the Bible teaches that we have an awesome weapon? It's called a blessing. We can bless our kids with such an incredible way. When you give children the gift of the blessing, there are few things in life that give them more peace and confidence. They need strokes, not pokes. They need you to bless them, to say, "In the name of Jesus, my child, I bless you." Can you imagine what that does to a child when a dad just picks a child up, and puts that child in his arms, and says, "Billy, I bless you out of Heaven?" They'll never forget it. "My daddy blessed me."

I wonder how many children have been blessed by a daddy, by touching them, by blessing them, by **comforting them**. Little children hurt. Don't ever laugh at their pain, when the doll is broken, or when the lizard dies, or the turtle does a bottoms-up and floats to the top. Hey, they hurt, and their pain in their world is just as real as yours. We've had several funerals for dogs in our family. I mean the full thing. We're out there, flowers and everything, bury that hound, and you know, hold hands, and hey it's real to the child. Sometimes it's real to the adults if we would admit it. And we need to give comfort to these, and pick them and say, "I understand and I hope it'll feel better later," and kiss away those tears. I know what it is to hold a grown child in my arms, and when her heart was so broken, and my heart was broken, both of us cried like babies.

Tell you another way to love them, that's by **listening to them**. We think we listen. I wonder how many times do we ever let them get a full sentence out of their mouth before we begin to tell them, "Now here's what you need to do. Here's what you need to do. Here's what you need to do." We don't listen. One of the finest forms of communication is saying nothing, but just simply listening. And if you have a teenager, you have to wait till the right time. Because I'll guarantee you there comes a time when they just clam up and close up, and generally it's when you're so sleepy, you want to go to bed. About eleven o'clock they'll start talking. Let them talk. Just say, "I'm going to pay the price, if I don't sleep. I'm going to sit here. I'm going to listen." And especially if that teenager has a problem in his or her, quote, love life, end of quote, or if they're having problems about their own feelings about themselves. Sit down and listen.

**Love them steadfastly and consistently.** You know they need to know mom and dad love them regardless. And folks, listen, give your kids time to go through all these different stages. They're in all kinds of stages. We live in an age now where we want everything and we want it now. We've got computers and fax machines, and call waiting, and everything else. Give the kid time. Just be consistent.

Love them with your prayers; pray for them, pray for them, and pray for them some more. So the first thing I'm saying, number one, is this; you must love them. You show you're the parents worthy of honor by loving them.

Number two, all that's number one, number two; **by lifting them**. Number one; by loving them. Number two; by lifting them. Listen to this verse, Colossians 3 verse 21, "Fathers provoke not your children to anger," now listen to this, "lest they be discouraged." Wise encouragement. Here's the principle. The first principle was; real love gives them what they need, not what they want. Here's the second principle; **wise encouragement is better than lavish praise**. Learn the difference between praise and encouragement. A lot of people think there is no difference, but there is a vast difference between encouragement and praise. Children need encouragement. Children need encouragement



like a plant needs water. Let me say that again, children need encouragement like a plant needs water. They need it over and over again, and you need to catch them doing something right, and let them know through your encouragement that you believe in them. And let your speech affirm them. Be positive and constantly affirm them.

“Pastor, what is the difference between encouragement and praise?” Well, encouragement is twice as powerful as praise. For example, if your child comes home and he has straight A’s, and you say, “Oh, that’s wonderful. You’re brilliant. You’re a hard worker. You did all of these things. Daddy is so proud of you, because you got straight A’s.” Or, “Mama’s so proud of you because look how clean your room is. I can see the rug.” Some of you mamas need a riding vacuum cleaner. “I can see the rug. Look how clean you cleaned your room. I’m so proud of you. You did so good. You cleaned your room.” Do you know what that says? It says, “I get approval when I do good. I can earn approval. If I will do good, then they will approve of me. When my performance is good, the approval rate goes up. When my performance is bad, then my acceptance goes down, and my self-image goes down with it.” Praise says, “You are great because you did something.” Now there’s nothing wrong with praise, but I’m just saying that encouragement is twice as strong as praise. Praise says, “You’re great because you did something.” Encouragement says, “It is great that something was done, and I really appreciate it.” Now, there’s a real difference there. Listen, encouragement looks at a child, and values that child, not primarily for what the child achieved, but for who the child is who is achieving it and saying, “You can do it. Thank you. I’m so grateful for you.”

It’s a fine line, but you think about it, how are you worthy? By loving them, by lifting them, thirdly, **by limiting them**. Now here’s the principle; it takes firm restrictions to set children free. Hello! **It takes firm restrictions to set children free**. It is your responsibility to liberate them by limiting them. First Samuel 3 verse 13, here’s what God said to Eli, “For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” He didn’t set limits. Your child needs some limits. When God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He gave them all that they needed, but He also gave them some limits. God said, “There’re some things you shall not do.” Now when you give your child limits, these limitations will be tested over and over again. The restrictions that you give your child will be tested by that child. He’s going to push against them, and if they move, that child will have no security. But if you set limits, and those limits are firm and reasonable and you love. Remember what Josh McDowell says. He said, “Rules without a relationship bring rebellion.” But they know you love, you’ve got those rules, they push against those rules and those rules don’t move, then they have security. If you don’t place limitations on your child, to the child it implies rejection. Now let me tell you something. We all inwardly desire limitations. We want them, and if you don’t conquer your child’s will, somebody else will. I’m telling you. If you do not conquer them, they will allow someone else to conquer them.

Now society looks upon setting rules as something bad, but I want to say for most families it’s one of the toughest and one of the most needful things to do. And do you know what’s wrong with many of our church kids today? I’m talking about in evangelical churches. There are no more, “Thou shalt’s,” and, “Thou shalt not’s.” Today we think perhaps we’ve gone past the Ten Commandments.

Here’s what Josh McDowell said. I was reading a book that he’s written about, *The Right and Wrong*, and he said this. He tested, they’ve surveyed the kids in evangelical churches, and he tells about this survey, and I want you to listen to it. He said, “We included seven statements in our study of church



youth about objective standards of truth and morality.” Now notice this is church youth, your kids. “We included seven statements in our study of church youth about objective standards of truth and morality. Their responses indicate that for the most part, our children echo the world’s view. For example, 57% of our young people cannot even say that an objective standard of truth exists.” That’s church folks; that’s church kids. 57% did not even believe there was an objective, fixed standard, and 85% of our kids are liable to reason, just because it’s wrong for you, it doesn’t mean it’s wrong for me. Do you see what a job has been done on our kids? And then Josh went on to say that, “Over half, 55% agree that everything in life is negotiable. Their idea of distinction between right and wrong is fluid, something that is subject to change.” Now Psalm 11 and verse 3 says, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” If we don’t have foundational truth, that’s the reason that we’re preaching this series on the Ten Commandments of God.

Ted Koppel, was addressing the 1987 graduating class at Duke University. And if he never ever says anything else that’s right, he said a mouthful to those students graduating from Duke. I want you to listen to what Ted Koppel said. I’m talking about the idea of limiting kids. Listen to what he said, he said, “In the place of truth, we have discovered facts. For moral absolutes, we have substituted moral ambiguity. We now communicate with everyone, and say absolutely nothing. We have reconstructed the Tower of Babel, and it is a television antenna, a thousand voices producing a daily parity of democracy in which everyone’s opinion is afforded equal weight, regardless of substance or merit. Indeed, it can even be argued that opinions of real weight tend to sink, with barely a trace in televisions ocean of banalities.” And then, here’s what he said, now listen to this, “What Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai were not ten suggestions; they’re commandments. They are and not were commandments. The sheer brilliance of the Ten Commandments is that they codify in a handful of words, acceptable human behavior; not just for then, or now, but for all time.”

Now keep that in mind, and I think what Ted Koppel said there is brilliant. But, there was a Christian, who went out to Hollywood, and he was a Christian in that business. And he was listening to Hollywood producers talk. And these were producers of situational comedies, what we call sit-coms. And he said, and this is his report, he said, “One of television’s most successful producers stated his sincere conviction that in any television script that is to be commercially successful, it must violate at least three of the Ten Commandments.” I mean it’s built in. He said, “If you wanted to be successful;” isn’t the devil clever? Do you know what a situational comedy is? It’s to cause you to laugh at something. Now when you laugh at something, you don’t take it seriously anymore. And if the devil can get you to laughing at the transgression of the Ten Commandments, you see what he’s done? He says you don’t have to take that seriously; that’s comical. And so we have a generation that’s laughing it’s way into Hell, and they’re being systematically seduced. Listen to that again, systematically seduced. “Can a man take a fire into his bosom and be not burned?” You need to set some limits in your home. They need to be reasonable.

But, how are you an honorable parent? By loving them, by lifting them, by limiting them, and by **leading them**. Here’s the next thing. Now again, let’s go back to that proverb that I mentioned to you. Proverbs 22 and verse 6, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he’s old he’ll not depart from it.” What is that word training? Now what is the key word? It’s train, to teach. Here’s the principle; **to teach without training is to fail in your task**. Can anybody learn to play football by reading books? No. What happens when a man goes to training camp for football? Do they all go to the library? I’ll





guarantee you not. Watch a man as he trains his hunting dog. It's amazing. We train our dogs and don't train our kids. Then we tie the dog up at night and let the kids run wild. We are to train them. Listen, lead them.

What do you want your children to be? Do you know what all of the emphasis is today? It is on sports, and grades, and physical health, and popularity, and ability, but not on character. Let me give you some words: contentment, courage, courtesy, discernment, fairness, friendliness, generosity, gentleness, helpfulness, honesty, humility, kindness, obedience, orderliness, patience, persistence, self-control, tactfulness, thankfulness, thriftiness, wisdom. Who is teaching those things? Mom and dad it needs to be you. Learn to compliment character more than talent. Train them.

We have a member of our church, he has two fine boys. They are two of the most godly kids I know anything about, and one of the most godly mamas in this church beyond the shadow of any doubt. But one of those boys kind of lipped off to his mother, and that dad said to that boy, said, "Son, I want to tell you something. When you lipped off at your mother like you did, you sinned against God. Because God says, "You're to honor her," and you're going to have to answer to God for that. And not only that but you sinned against her. She went down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring you into life. How ungrateful you've been to speak to your mother that way, and you're going to have to answer to your mother for that." Said, "I want to tell you something else. Not only is she your mother, she's my wife. You're not going to talk that way to my wife." And he just said, "You are not going to talk that way to my wife. And now not only do you have God to deal with, and her to deal with, you've got me to deal with, because you have disrespected my wife." What kind of a lesson is that to a kid? I think it's one of the greatest I have ever heard in my life, to see a husband come to the protection of his wife even if he has to take sides with her against his own child. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife." Mark 10 verse 7. That's the kind of teaching that I'm talking about. That's the kind of training that we have.

Now here's the last thing, and I wish I had more time, not only by leading them, but by **laughing with them**. Oh, I hope that you will let your home be filled with joy, and let it be filled with happiness. We need to lighten up. We need to learn how to laugh in our homes. The Bible has so many wonderful things to say about a merry heart. God puts laughter, God puts joy, God puts sunshine in the home. Did you know that the human species is the only creature of God that can do three things: laugh, and weep, and blush? Think about it. Animals don't blush, animals don't weep, and animals don't laugh. God made us in His image, and God has given us the gift of laughter. And the Bible says in Psalm 2:4, "He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh." Of course there it speaks of the laughter of irony, but it is God that has that wonderful sense of humor. In Genesis 21 verse 6, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh." Jesus said in Luke 6 verse 21, "Blessed are ye that hunger now. For ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now. For ye shall laugh." And what Jesus is saying is laughter is a blessing. Thackeray said that, "Laughter is like sunshine in the house." Let your kids see you laugh. Let them see you laugh at yourself, at your mistakes. Here's the principle that I'm talking about right now, friend, when I'm saying laugh. **Serious situations call for a lot of laughter.** That's the principle. Serious situations call for a lot of laughter.

Back in 1953, Eddie Fisher was singing a song. It was called, "Oh, My Papa." How many of you remember that song? You kids, you don't know. But here's what Eddie Fisher was singing. It was the



most popular song. “Oh, my papa. To me he was so wonderful. Oh, my papa. To me he was so good. No one could be so gentle and so lovable. Oh, my papa. He always understood. Gone are the days when he would take me on his knee, and with a smile he’d change my tears to laughter. Oh, my papa so funny and adorable, always the clown so funny in his way. Oh my papa. To me he was so wonderful. Deep in my heart I miss him so today. Oh, my papa. Oh, my papa.” And everybody was singing that song and loving it whether or not their dad was laughable and the funny clown or not. That’s the dad they wanted. Let your home be filled with fun. Let your children bring their friends to your house. Let them raid the refrigerator. Let them mash down the couch. Let them put fingerprints on the wall, and thank God for it. Let your home be the happiest place. Let your house ring with laughter. Let your children see you laugh at yourself. Let them see you laugh in time of trouble, because it means that God is over it all. And there is a God in the glory.

I’m finished, but in 1993 the workers in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown were doing some remodeling, and as they were moving a cabinet they found down in a crevice, somebody had slipped a note. It wasn’t a part of the display. Now this is the Baseball Hall of Fame. They found a hidden photograph, and it was beneath a display case, and that photograph was a picture of a man with a bat on his shoulder and his uniform said at the front, “Sinclair Oil.” Now this is the Baseball Hall of Fame. And his demeanor was gentle and friendly, and stapled to the picture was a note. It was scribbled in pen, “By his adoring fan,” and this is what it said. Now this is in the Baseball Hall of Fame. “You were never too tired to play ball. On your days off, you helped build the little league field. You always came to watch me play. You were a Hall of Fame dad. I wish I could share this moment with you.” And somebody had slipped a picture of his dad down in the crevice, said there’re all these other guys making millions playing baseball, but you, dad, are in the Hall of Fame.

You know I’d like to be in that Hall of Fame. Wouldn’t you? I’d like to be the kind of a dad, and I know you’d like to be the kind of a mom that when the Bible says, “Children, obey your parents. Honor your parents.” I’d like to make it a lot easier for them to do just that.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed, and eyes are closed. Now you know how you begin to honor your earthly parents, and do you know how you begin to be honorable to your children? By first of all honoring the Heavenly Father, by being saved. If you’d like to be saved, you can be saved right now. And I want to lead you in a prayer. And in this prayer you can invite Jesus Christ into your heart as your Lord and Savior. If you want to be saved, I want you to pray right now this prayer, “Dear God, I know that You love me and that You want to save me. Jesus, I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe that You paid my sin debt with Your blood on that cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. Now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Come into my life, forgive my sin. I turn from my sin. Forgive me, cleanse me, and save me. And Lord Jesus, begin now to make me the person You want me to be. I’ve got a lot of growing to do. I’m weak, but You’re strong. So now, Lord, I yield my life to You. Begin to make me what You want me to be, and, Lord Jesus, give me the courage now to make this public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. Help me to make it public. In your name I pray, Amen.





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