

# THE BATTLEFIELD UNDER OUR ROOF

## Power Struggle Series - Part 9

### Dan Burrell

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Good morning Life Fellowship. So today is my last day up at bat for this series on spiritual warfare. Lord willing, next week Pastor Ben is going to be back and he will close out this series. And then after that we are going to be starting a new series on the book of Ecclesiastes that we are calling 'Tragic Hope.' And we will take that up to the holiday season, and then we will observe the holidays. So that is kind of where we are at for the rest of the year.

You know as Ben and I discussed the final areas that we felt we still wanted to touch on as we conclude the series 'Power Struggle,' we both agreed that a conversation of spiritual warfare that takes place in the home might be a good thing to do as we kind of conclude this series. Ben and I jokingly, well we were kind of serious, decided this was going to be our final series ever on spiritual warfare. We feel like we have lived this in many ways this year, and I think some of you have as well.

We plan our series a year in advance, and actually the seeds for this series were sown last year about this time when we were near the Ashville area at Ridgecrest with our staff. We were doing some planning and some team building and thinking about all the things we were going to do in 2020 and all the opportunities that 2020 was going to provide. So we were doing kind of a brainstorming session about where our church was, any issues, things that they may have been struggling with, and where we might be able to encourage, teach, train, and build, And the staff immediately came back with the idea of spiritual warfare. Many of our folks are struggling in their work, or in their homes, or in their personal lives, so at that point we began putting this series in place. Then in December we really started fleshing it out pretty seriously.

But since we started this series Ben and I periodically will pop into each other's office and say, '*Why are we doing this?*' And that is because it seems like when you pick a target Satan comes in on it. But hey, wouldn't we expect that in spiritual warfare? That is exactly part of it. For many of us spiritual warfare seems to become very, very personal. And there is no position other than the privacy of our own hearts perhaps that it gets more painful and more personal than when it visits us in our homes, and most specifically in our marriages, and with our children.

Now why would Satan perhaps be interested in introducing spiritual warfare under our roof, and into our own homes? Well, it is a pretty simple answer, because there is no more sacred or incarnational example of the gospel, or the Christian's relationship with God, of Christ's relationship with the church, than what we have in our homes through our marriages, and through our children. These are sacred images that God established first in the Garden of Eden. And He has reinforced throughout history as He reminds us that we, the church, are the bride of Christ, that we, the redeemed, are the children of God, and that we are under constant attack by the enemy of God which is Satan.

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So because of this we ought not be surprised that Satan would like nothing more than to insert warfare into those relationships that model the gospel, our marriages, and that which we have with our children. Christian homes have never been more under attack I believe than they are today. Whether it is through a divorce rate that is way too high, or whether it is the very definition of what constitutes a biblical marriage. And just for the sake of clarity, because we have so much debate and confusion and twisting of this, the biblical definition of marriage is one man married to one woman within a covenant relationship that is intended to last an entire lifetime, so that there will be a healthy environment for the raising of children with which God blesses the home. That is the biblical definition of marriage - two becoming one, serving one, for the glory of God and the good of those under their roof.

Culture, society, politics, educators, whoever wants to change that definition need to be countered with an argument that says - culture should be interpreted through the lens of the absolute truth of the Word of God. We do not revisit the Word of God and change it to fit the common culture. And that is what is happening too often in our world today. And a biblical worldview begins with this as our foundation.

Maybe you are thinking, '*But times change.*' But we know that God's Word does not change. We know that throughout history culture has demanded the sacrifice of babies as well as the sacrifice of virgins. It has denounced marriage. It has introduced polygamy and bestiality. All different kinds of things have happened because there is no sin that is new under the sun, and Satan, as the author of sin, is constantly trying to cause chaos and disorder where God has put design and order.

And so we must be very clear and unapologetic. It doesn't mean we are unkind, it doesn't mean we are unloving, it doesn't mean that we force our will on others, which is impossible to do because the submission of the will begins with the heart, not with a fist. We understand all those things; however, many of us have fallen into the trap of self-censoring when it comes to biblical truths. And as a result we fail to have an impact on our culture. We fail to have an impact as salt and light in a world today that is spiraling into darkness.

So we need to be clear, we need to be compassionate, we need to be careful, but above all we need to be biblical, because this is war. And the war that Satan wants to introduce into your life and into my life is often found under our own roof. We need to make sure that we understand that. The battle for our families is a real battle and at its core it is a spiritual battle as well.

I want to give you a few statistics before we turn to Deuteronomy Chapter 6 this morning. I want to give you some statistics as it relates to the generations that are taking place in our country and just as a kind of overview, because I don't want to get too egg headed and schoolish today. But I think sometimes it is important to kind of set a foundation, a framework or a context in which we will teach biblical principles. There

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are basically at any time in a human's life about five generations that are either passing off the scene, are at full bloom, or are just emerging.

In our country today those five generations have been kind of labeled by people who study these things. There is the generation that would be those in their mid-seventies and above, people that were alive in 1945. They are sometimes referred to as 'the greatest generation,' but it is known in demographics as 'the silent generation.' As they get older and as they pass away obviously their voices are not amplified the way they once were. So these are people that were born up until 1945. There are a few of you in the room and we praise the Lord for you. Your voices are very, very important, you represent something both to this country in terms of its character and in terms of its history, but also in terms of its experience and its wisdom.

Then from there until about 1964 a generation was born and we have often heard the expression called 'the baby boomers.' In fact today they have kind of reduced it and turned it into a pejorative term and just say 'boomer.' And if you have teenagers, or know millennials, and you say something that is kind of old school, they will look at you and say, '*Thanks, boomer.*' And it is intended to be something that irritates. I just usually give it right back and say, '*You bet, millennial.*' So it is fun and it is not going to bother me a bit. I happen to just barely be in that boomer generation. The reason it is called 'boomers' is because after World War II and after the Korean conflict all the guys that came home wanted to get married and start families. So there was a big population explosion and it was called 'the baby boom,' and then later it was called 'boomers.'

Then the next generation from about 1965 or so through 1980 is 'generation X.' And those are the folks that are now at this point entering their middle age. They are perhaps experiencing the joys of raising teenagers, or maybe some of them are already adults. You are kind of in that stage with high productivity and high influence.

And then from 1981 to 1996 is 'the millennial generation.' And the reason they call them millennials is because they came of age after the year 2000. So they started taking positions of influence after the year 2000. And this is perhaps a generation that sadly a lot of people pick on. There are a lot of jokes about millennials and millennials respond and make jokes about boomers and so forth. Unfortunately many people think of millennials as anyone younger than them and that is not accurate. There is another generation after the millennials. And the millennials are very bright, they are very educated, they think critically, and they are very assertive, so there are a lot of things about millennials that are important.

Then there is the generation that is emerging right now and these are young people that were born after 2012 and they are called 'generation Z.' And generation Z are folks that are very, very into the Internet and technology and those kinds of things. So those are just a quick overview, and I want to talk primarily about the millennials and

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the generation Z because it is these folks that we interact with most, either as our adult children or our children who are growing up and are still in our homes.

So values are changing at lightning speed. For instance, take the idea of same sex marriage, which I just briefly touched on a moment ago. In 2001 fifty seven percent of Americans opposed the idea of same sex marriage. By last year, less than a generation, sixty one percent of Americans approve of it. So it took less than a generation for those numbers to more than flip. So today if you are talking to a young person they are going to say things like, '*We shouldn't judge who someone chooses to love.*' That would be a characteristic, or they may say, '*Who are we to say, love is love,*' which is another phrase that they often will use. And that is kind of part of their mentality.

Now make no mistake, this didn't happen accidentally. This happened because of a change of attitude that began when these kids were in school, through the media, through the technology, through their school teachers and through the arts and entertainment. It was an indoctrination that changed what basically had been for 6,000 years of recorded human history in terms of what a definition of marriage was and flipped it over to what we are experiencing today.

Seventy percent of teens never, or rarely, have a conversation about religion or spiritual things with others who do not already share their same beliefs. They would prefer to be silent on the topic of religion, not because they are unaware of it, but because they feel like it is irrelevant. They do not feel like it applies to them today. They believe that it can cause conflict and they would rather not do that. They also believe that it is judgmental to have religious beliefs, so that if you talk about it you are in danger of appearing or sounding judgmental, which for that generation is a big problem.

Generation Z is twice as likely to identify as atheists compared to all other generations, and it is the least religious generation that has ever been recorded since they began asking questions about religion. Interestingly, children who have some weekly engagement with the Bible, either they go to church, it is read in their home, or they read it personally, are far more likely to attend church at least once a week. So two out of three who have a Bible that is regularly a part of their weekly interaction, will probably be attached to a church. Whereas those who have no clue, no contact, no interest in Scripture at all, only about two out of five of those would have some kind of regular religious attendance.

Forty two percent of Generation Zers who became less religious said that they simply lost interest, or had no reason why to choose religion, or to study religion, or to believe in anything religious. In other words they are just drifting away. They are not angry, they don't even say that they have been hurt by the church; they are simply apathetic toward the church. In other words, no one has ever given them reason to

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believe. No one has ever explained to them why faith is important, that there is a God, and that He matters.

Generation Zers are looking for both a voice and an audience, and that drives them to the logical place where they can have both, and that is social media. Many of Generation Zers, according to the research, have a dual presence on social media, one that is known and one that is anonymous. The anonymity can be in one of two different ways. Sometimes they will have dual accounts, where there will be one that perhaps mom and dad know about, and many of their friends know about. Then they will have a shadow account that is using a different email, or some kind of different identity where they can kind of stroll through the Internet without someone actually knowing who they are. It is a very dangerous practice, but a very common practice among Generation Zers.

A reason that computer designers want the ability to have anonymity, and let's face it the reason that they want anonymity is not generally for anything but nefarious reasons, is so that they can do, or say, or visit, or go places that isn't really right and they use what is called an incognito or a private mode on their browser.

We had a rule in our family, and I believe it is a good rule, that if you ever go in and open the browser and see that it has been erased, then that is a problem and we are going to have to talk about it. Because that is the sign that someone has been visiting places and they want to cover their tracks. In order to keep that from happening certain Internet designers and software engineers designed it so that you could flip a tab and make it what is called incognito. That is the term I believe Apple uses, and other browsers have different tabs for private.

Another rule we had was that if I walked up behind them and noticed that the privacy mode was on, again we had a problem, because there is no need to have it on privacy unless you are trying to hide what you are doing. I suppose someone will want to make a case that they may have been doing their banking or something like that, but even that is going to be problematic. There is really no definitive need to be in those areas because you are headed for trouble, or making yourself vulnerable to trouble. And that is something parents may want to be aware of that I think is kind of important.

Let me go back to the voice in the audience thing because social media allows them to have a voice and the drawing of an audience becomes very important. This is done through 'Likes' on Facebook, or 'Follows' on Twitter, or on Instagram it shows the number of followers and how often you get a click or a heart or a like. On Snapchat it can be several things such as how many followers you have connected, or just simply how many consecutive days in a row you have corresponded with someone.

Now you say, *Well, you know I am in my 40s and I don't understand all this newfangled stuff. That's all just kids doing that kind of stuff and I just don't understand it.* May I say to you that ignorance is no excuse for delinquent parenting. So if you

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don't know about it, then figure it out. Figure out how it is done. Go to it, learn it, because if I can do it at my age then I guarantee you that you can do it also. This is important because this is where your kids are living.

And by the way kids, if that just irritates you because your mom and dad are that way and they are checking on you. Maybe they have a Snapchat account and they are making you be friends with them on it, and they are also checking up on you by walking behind you whenever you are on the Internet. If your parents are doing that I know it may seem frustrating, it may seem irritating, and it may even feel oppressive, but it is also a signal that your parents absolutely love you. They love you, they care about you, and they are actually doing their job.

And right now it may feel oppressive but eventually you are going to get to the day where you are going to thank God for that. And the day will probably happen in your own life when you are going to say something like this to your parents: *'Mom and dad, can you show me what you did when I was a kid, because I am a little concerned about my kid and I need some advice on that.'* Right now you are angry and upset and feel violated, and that is to be expected.

We are not going to deny you feeling that way, we are just going to say in spite of your feelings it is still important that mom and dad do that. And if you have a mom and dad that does do that, I know it may irritate you, but give them a hug because they love you. If they put Covenant Eyes on your computer, and you can't get to stuff, and it is frustrating because you don't know the codes to the Netflix account and other things, just understand that it is mom and dad doing their best to do what mom and dads are supposed to do and that is to parent and protect their kids.

There is a co-relation, by the way, to the amount of time spent on the Internet and the likelihood of a teen to report that they are sad, anxious or depressed, because the average teen today is online 7.5 hours per day. In the 1980s they watched television about 8 hours per day, and today they are online instead. About two hours per day for the average teenage is spent on social media. Ninety percent of kids thirteen to twenty years old have some interaction on a weekly basis with the Ap Snapchat. The recent Snapchat is problematic is because you get to see it and then it disappears. You may be able to bring it back up one more time but after that it disappears and you can't get to it again. This is where a lot of young people are exchanging pictures of themselves unclothed or in provocative positions. And if you are a parent and aren't aware of that, you need to be, okay? It is happening. And it can come to your child without your child asking for it to be there, because all another person has to do is send it to them and if they are connected they open it up and there it is. That is already a problem.

By the way do you understand that according to John Maxwell at a recent conference that I heard about, he said that the average young person today has been exposed to pornography for the first time between the ages of four and six years old. And

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understand that your kids do not have to go looking for pornographic images, the pornographers know your kids address. They are looking for them. They are walking about as a roaring lion seeking to whom they may devour. This is spiritual warfare.

A study found that the average attention span of today's teenager is eight seconds. That was not a misspeak - eight seconds, because they are looking at memes, they are looking at gifs, so all of these things are happening just like that, and it is rewiring and reprogramming their minds. When they get a 'Like' they get a little surge of dopamine, and it creates an addiction for some young people. One billion hours of YouTube content are viewed daily and over 500 hours of YouTube content are being uploaded to YouTube every single minute - every single minute.

Sixty percent of Generation Zers say that YouTube is their preferred method for learning. Sixty six to eighty percent say that they enjoy learning with people in a collective sense, but they like to do it through social media. So maybe you are wondering why all these statistics? I want you to get just a tiny taste, and by the way I could do this for hours, but I want you to get a tiny taste of what Satan is doing. He is coming after your kids.

He is coming after your marriages. The anonymous man who at night has sent his wife to bed and is sitting up in the blue flicker of the screen scrolling through websites that are pornographic in nature is allowing Satan to enter the door of his heart so that eventually there will be a crisis in the marriage, a crisis in their relationship that will lead to breakdown and conflict. It will lead to a point where potentially the husband and the wife are not living together and the kids suffer and Satan is saying: '*I got another one.*' We have to be serious about this. This isn't about being legalistic; this is about being conscientious. This is about understanding what is at stake.

So let's look at Deuteronomy Chapter 6 and verses 1 through 7. Deuteronomy is a book of law. It is what God gave to Moses to give to the children of Israel in which He was offering them these guidelines so that civilization could be in order, so that they could be protected and so that their values could be shared. These were important.

Sometimes we miss interpret what is going on in the Pentateuch and in Deuteronomy in particular, because there are multiple kinds of laws. There is civil law, there is religious law, and there is ceremonial law. And one of the arguments that the world likes to give, because they are theologically ignorant, is that they try to make them as if they are one, and they are not. What the issue is, is that there are laws for certain aspects of society, laws for the home, laws for government, laws for worship, laws for kings, and all of these are broken down in the Pentateuch. If you take time to study it rather than to get your theology off of Reddit, or off of the Internet somewhere, you will find that there is a very, very easy way to distinguish the differences and what their purposes and intentions were for.

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In Deuteronomy Chapter 5 you will find the Ten Commandments. That comes as a shock to a lot of people who haven't read Deuteronomy. And I know if you are like me many times we plan to read through the Bible every year, so we go through Genesis and Exodus, and then by the time we hit Leviticus it gets to be like running in mud. Right? It is difficult. And by the time we hit Deuteronomy we are like skipping through it so we can get to one of the good books again. And I understand that, but you know the Ten Commandments are a part of the culture of Israel, as well as the commandments and laws of God to His people, to His believers. So the Ten Commandments are also found in Chapter 5 of Deuteronomy.

Now in Chapter 6 we kind of have a challenge that is being given to the parents. So look if you would in verse 1 through 7 where it says this: "***Now this is the commandment.***" By the way it is not a suggestion, it is not counsel; it is a commandment and that is important. "***The statutes and the rules,***" they are very specific, they are delineated and they are laid out. "***That the Lord your God commanded me (Moses) to teach you, that you (the children of Israel) that you may do them in the land (Israel) to which you are going over, to possess it,***" (to occupy, to govern, to civilize it.)

Verse 2: "***That you may fear the Lord your God,*** (remember what the Bible says: '*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and fools despise knowledge and instruction.*') "***That you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son,*** (multiple generations there - you, your kids, and your grandkids), "***by keeping all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.***"

Verse 4: "***Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.***" By the way this is known as the greatest commandment. The first and greatest commandment is that we love God with all of our being. Now if you look in verse 6 it says: "***And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently.***" Now I want you to notice this especially. "***You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.***"

Let me read verse 7 again: "***You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.***" And folks, let me just tell you this easy outline is given to us by God Himself for how to generationally transfer values to our children. It is simply this - note the four key times that are essential. The first time is in your house. I believe that one of the ways Satan enjoys attacking our families is to get us out of our house. Have you noticed what the culture does to us all the time? You are not a good

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parent if your kids aren't in dance, having music lessons, playing soccer, going with travel teams, in play groups and the list goes on and on.

Apart from Covid we were running ourselves nuts. You know one of the good things about Covid has been we have learned to spend time with our kids again. And when you spend time with your kids you might just like them. Now some would say it causes conflict and fights, but that is your family. We used to have a joke in the Burrell family that is hasn't been family game night until somebody has cried. That was us. It just wasn't family game night without that, and usually I was the guilty party, because I am a little competitive. It is a joke, but it is real, and we have all been there. If you have never flipped over a checker board game in your life, you are not doing it right because at some point it is just going to happen.

But here is the reality. In those moments bonds are being built, conversations are being had, and values are being transferred, because you are spending time with each other. And the reason why Satan wants to make you busy is because it is the strategic way to make you bad. Charles Stanley said this one time while I was having breakfast with him. He said, '*Dan, I have learned this about Satan. If Satan can't make you bad, he will make you busy.*' And I was like, '*Whoa, it is so simple, so profound.*' And if Satan wants to get in your family, before he will make them bad he may make you busy. So busy you don't have time to pray. So busy you don't have time to train. So busy you don't make church a priority. So busy that someone else is educating your children in the way that they should go.

So 'in your house.' Notice it said 'when you sit in your house.' Now when do we usually sit? For me I rarely eat standing up, okay? And this has been a good thing with Covid because you have been sitting with your family. So when Covid ends let's not stop doing this. We haven't been able to go out to eat the way we used to because many restaurants are closed, so we are eating at home. And it is better to eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich at home with your kids talking about their day than it is to eat a five course gourmet meal at the fanciest restaurant you can find somewhere else. Enjoy the privilege of sitting with your family.

Secondly - during your commute. The verse says "***when we walk by the way.***" They didn't have the minivan in the days of Scripture, they walked wherever they went. And basically what the Scripture is saying is 'don't walk alone.' Pastor Jason has this thing that I love because he takes his kids to school in the mornings. I can't remember the exact phrase he uses, but it is something like this: '*I am teaching my kids not to be idiots' time.*' They may listen to a podcast and then discuss it, or he may have a topic and they discuss that.

If you know anything about Jason you know he also enjoys taking walks through a nature preserve near his house. And he almost never goes alone. Whenever I see him post something on social media, or when we may be talking later, I see he always has one

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of his boys with him. And yeah they may be running around, or riding bikes, but they also stop and look at the frogs, and they look at the baby turtles. Jason has one in his office right now. But they look at all the different things that are going on. He is making jelly out of weeds and he is teaching his kids. And this is valuable, this is important. It is about spending time.

The third time is at bedtime. By going through this I realized that I regret this. I am not the perfect parent. I didn't do it perfectly I will tell you for sure. And if you don't believe me, just ask my kids. One of the things I can remember is this and that was knowing for a fact that the last thing my kids heard before they went to sleep was something like this: *'If you get out of that bed one more time....'* Isn't that a wonderful thing to drift off to sleep with?

Now, by the way if you have children, at some point you are going to utter those words or similar words because kids are kids and parents can be cranky. But in the end those moments before bedtime are essential moments, and this is why I have always been an advocate for staggering bedtimes. If you have twelve kids you can space them out every five minutes for an hour or something, but figure out a way to stagger their bedtimes so you can spend a few moments with each kid privately before they go to sleep.

Number four is first thing in the morning. I don't know about your house but in our house it was bedlam in the morning. It was, *'Where is your book bag? I told you to get things ready last night. How many times do we have to look for your shoes?'* Do you all do that at your house? We sure did that at my house. And one of the solutions to that may simply be getting up fifteen minutes earlier, or having a solution at night. So you can get up, read a verse of Scripture, eat your Lucky Charms or whatever (Lucky Charms is the heavenly cereal) so you can have that before you go off for the day. Why is it important for even five minutes? It is important because God Word says it is important.

He gave us a strategic plan, and we need to find a plan that will allow you to teach your values to your children and be strategic about it. This is what the Scripture was saying. Let me show you three areas of defense before we close. There are three areas of defense. And by the way Proverbs Chapter 22 and verse 6 is a verse that I think is really, really important. It says this: ***"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."***

Now I want you to understand something. This is a proverb; this is not a promise. There are some people who want to twist proverbs and make them into promises, but I will tell you that not every child that has been trained up in the way he should go will choose to go that way. They have a free will, they are independent, and they are going to make decisions as adults. And so sometimes it doesn't work out. The word that we have here 'train' is the Hebrew word '*chanak*.' And the word '*chanak*' literally means to train like you would a flower on a trestle.

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I have morning glories that I planted this year, and I had never raised them before so I didn't know what I was doing. I had a little tiny trellis, and let me just tell you that didn't work out. They are climbing all over the place and they just started hanging off everywhere. So I didn't do a good job and now they are scattered everywhere. But if you are a good gardener you know that a trellis allows you to train the plant so that it can present its glory in perfection.

The other word that '*chanak*' is sometimes used for is when you are starting a race. If you watched the Kentucky Derby a few weeks ago they brought the horses in and they '*chanaked*' them. They put them in a gate, and then at the signal they dropped the gate and the horses were off. And that is what we are to do. We are to try to get our horses, our kids to go in the right direction, to form the right style. And this is a biblical thing so that when they are older, when they are not thinking clearly, when they are confused, when they are hurting, and when they are fallen and broken, that their reflex muscle says, '*I need to go back to how I was trained.*'

That is the purpose of that verse. We are to give our kids a spiritual compass whereby when they get lost, they know which way is home. And that is why having them in church, reading the Bible with them, teaching them the precepts, spending time with them, walking, talking, laughing, playing, sweating, and crying with them is so essential, and there is no one who should be doing it more, or better, or more intentionally than you are.

So here are three opportunities. Number one is the opportunity of modeling. The most powerful influence that parents have is that of modeling. A survey was done several years ago with people who had matured in homes of varying kinds and they asked them who the biggest influence had been in their lives. And what they determined was that they were probably going to hear classroom teachers because teachers spend more time with kids than parents do on average. But that wasn't the answer. It wasn't coaches, it wasn't favorite uncles, it wasn't best friends; the number one answer that people chose as their biggest influence was always mom and dad. That is why it is important that we be present and proactive in the lives of our children.

Several years ago I had the privilege of listening to Ben Carson speak, back in the 90s at the National Prayer Breakfast. And I will never forget what he talked about. He talked about the impact of absentee fathers on the black community. And he gave statistic after statistic in a way that only he could give. He said if you do not have an active male role model in your home you are far more likely to commit suicide, be arrested, or go to prison. The list of negatives was a mile long.

Men, understand this - I know the culture wants everyone to think that you are toxic. I know the culture wants everyone to think that men are overbearing oppressors. I know the culture today wants to make men look like buffoons, but you are God's appointed leader in the home, so let's suck it up and let's do it. Your children need you.

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Your children need your influence. Your children need your presence. And the ministry of presence in the life of the home is something that every man needs to embrace and invest in. And if you have a dad, or if you have a husband who gets that, call them blessed because that is what they are. Dads are busy trying to earn a living, there is grass to mow and cars needing to have their oil changed. Dads can have a thousand things going on, but the time that you spend with your kids is the most valuable time you will spend each day apart from the time that you spend with the Lord.

By the way if you spend time with the Lord, it will impact your kids, and it will be good for them as well. So modeling is more important than education, than material provision, or structured conversation, and it requires time and availability. Years ago there was a statement that people kept saying that drove me nuts. *'It is not the quantity of time you spend with your kids that is important; it is the quality of time you spend with them.'* And the theological term that I like to apply to phrases like that is this: *'Hogwash.'* Now I don't even know what hogwash is, but I have heard it all my life, and I am pretty sure that it means *'baloney.'* It is not just about the quality of time; it is also about the quantity of time, because our kids are not going to schedule their crisis when it is convenient to fit into our calendar. We have to be available.

The second thing is protecting. One of the most essential aspects of parenting is protection. Yet it is something that is almost always under attack. Protection is not about isolation. Protection is not about over control. Protection is not abusive. Protection is about preparation. Until a child is prepared to face the world and its realities, he or she needs to be protected from the dangers of the world.

Many years ago people would say to me, *'You know you can't put your kids in a greenhouse.'* That is true, you can't put your kids in a greenhouse. If that were possible I would have tried it. However I want to say this, I love to garden, I enjoy gardening. What do you put in a greenhouse? You put young, vulnerable plants. They are not ready to take the full heat of the sun. They are not ready to fight the elements, pests and predators that would like to weaken them before they can get started. So we put them in the greenhouse until they are stronger.

Here is another thing you may not be aware of unless you have accidentally done this. If you take a plant right out of the greenhouse and stick it in the garden what will happen is it will get sunburned, or it will blow over. There are windows in greenhouses which are to expose the plants to more and more light, and more wind until their resistance is built up. So when your kids get a certain age many parents may say, *'You know what, since you are now 18, so off to college you go.'* But if you have not prepared them for that you have taken a very vulnerable, sheltered child and put them in a situation where they are going to have incredible temptations. And the wise parent understands that.

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At the same time we don't take our young vulnerable kids and throw them to the world and expect them to just sort it out. Don't let your five year old have unfettered access to social media and to a Smart phone. That is not smart. Build a greenhouse around them. They will eventually need those things and when they do walk with them, journey with them, so that they can learn and be able to stand and resist those things that are for their destruction. I wish I could go on more about this, but I just simply want to say, parents, we are doing our job when we protect our kids from wrong influences. And I am not talking about being an overzealous parent, because that is something that very few parent do. In fact most parents are more laid back than overzealous. *'Here's your phone now don't bug me.'* And that's the problem. Don't buy into the world's definitions for your family. Know God, know your kids, and talk to your spouse to make sure that you are protecting wherever possible.

Number three is equipping. Equipping always involves three things - physical, emotional and spiritual. Education is about it, training is about it and parenting is about it. It is what we know, what we do and what we believe. And it is really easy to tell people what they should know, it is pretty easy to model what they should do, but convincing them to believe is between them and God. That is why part of equipping is praying. Part of equipping is partnering with other spiritual leaders. Part of equipping is asking God for His impact on their lives on a daily basis. Satan would love for you to be negligent in equipping your kids.

I knew I wouldn't be able to get through all of this sermon, but I didn't even get close. I realize that this really wasn't a sermon; it was more of a seminar. But here is what I want you to do. I want you to use this as the launching point for you to talk about with your family. I think parents ought to be honest and ask their kids, *'How are we doing?'* *'Do we have enough time together?'* I mean talk to them. You may find out your kids are a whole lot smarter sometimes than you give them credit for. If you give them the opportunity they will tell you the truth, and sometimes when they tell you the truth it will hurt. So when it hurts, don't over react; listen to them. Ask more questions. You have to take the time to engage because if you don't have enough time for them, Satan does. And the greatest battle some of us are fighting is the battle under our own roof.

We have a great opportunity in this generation. This generation is brilliant. They are smart. They are engaging. They are hilarious. There are so many things I love about this generation. I will tell you that about a year and a half ago because of things going on in my calendar I had to step away from making an investment in this generation which I have tried to do since I was a middle school teacher years ago. And I stepped away from my Life Group with kids out of high school and into their first few years out of college. And I have been talking to Brad Milks about it and I want to reengage with that age group again because I believe that the hope of this nation isn't with guys who are getting gray hair; I believe it is with young people who are smart, who love Jesus, who are not

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ashamed of it, and who have been trained in the Bible. And those kids when they go against the flow will be salt and light.

Some of you young people in here I need you to understand that I believe in you more than you believe in yourself because I see how smart you are, I see how hilarious you are, you are witty and sarcastic, and you have it going. But not until you give your life fully to Jesus will you fully reach your capacity. And at some point you are going to have to decide whether you believe this stuff that Ben and I and your mom and dad talk about all the time. You are going to have to believe it. And the fact that you are here this morning makes me proud of you. Last week we had over 70 kids in the midst of the pandemic in Student Life. Pastor Justin gets it, and he understands it. He and I did two more podcasts that will be on this week and I hope you will listen to them as we talked about this even more. We did it on purpose as a follow up from this message.

Talk to Pastor Justin, read the book, be in your Life Group and discuss it. And understand that the future is yours, and quite frankly my generation blew it. We need you to step up to the plate. We need you to love Jesus better than we love Jesus. We need you to be courageous, to not be silent in the face of wrong, but to take a stand for right, to talk to others about uncomfortable subjects, to take a stand and say no sometimes when you need to. I believe in you. Your mom and dad believe in you. And I know sometimes it feels like we are down your neck constantly, but I want you to understand that you are the future and if you will step up to the plate, and trust God, you will go places that we never dreamed of, and you will see things that we have never seen happen.

Satan has a strategy for your defeat and my defeat, and often it begins right under our own roof.

*The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.*