



SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Scripture: Ephesians 6:1-4

TITLE: The Key to Influence

Let me shock you for a moment. Reading parenting books is useless. Attending a seminar or sermon on parenting or family life is useless. Reading the Bible about parenting or family is useless...that is, unless you are willing to apply what you learn.

Today, we are nearing the end of 2 months in the book of Ephesians - two months of listening to the Apostle Paul about the reality of our faith - and throughout, we've had this choice: Do we apply what we learn, or do we keep doing what we've always done?

Today, Paul is going to challenge both children and parents to live with wisdom. And Paul tells us, that with that wisdom we hold the key to influence. What does that mean?

Paul writes in Ephesians 6:1-4 (NLT):

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. ²“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: ³If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

One of the reasons I love the Bible is it's timeless and applicable to all generations.

Paul gives some straightforward advice: “Children, obey your parents”. Now, chances are you are not a young child living in your parent's house. So how does this apply? Well, first off, you can obey your parents when you're around them. How can you honor them? Be a helper. Be a son or daughter who brings life to their home. Speak the truth. Give love. Show grace and mercy. Offer forgiveness. Seek to build them up while bringing them the Gospel—so many ways to honor and obey, whether you're 6 or 66.

Paul also says, “Fathers, don't provoke your children to anger; instead, train them with discipline and instruction from God”.

If I were to put a Pastor Nat spin on this, it would be: “Dads and parents, seek understanding with your kids. Try to understand who they are, and what's going on in their minds and lives, before being a nag or overbearing.

Kids live in a messed up world, with access to information and worldviews that are destructive and confusing. So take time each day to know your kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids. If you're not a parent, guess what? You can apply this to anyone you know. Seek understanding, instead of being a complainer or criticizer.

But then, if you are a parent, remember, once understanding is achieved, discipline or correct them – shape them in the Word of God. This is both done in what you say, but really, more importantly, in how you live. Children – people - want to see and know authenticity in faith. Let's give it to them.

Here is my challenge for you today: If you're a parent, take 10 minutes to talk with your kids and know them better. If you're not a parent, reach out to someone who is different than you, and ask them questions to know them better. Then, show them – teach them - who God is in your life, and in the Bible.