

Do Something Great With Your Life

How to Make a Difference in Your Kids' (& Other Kids') Lives

Edited Transcript

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Well, welcome, guys. This is the best place to be on a Friday morning. I'm really glad to be with you this morning. We're continuing our series on **Do Something Great With Your Life**, and as we've been talking about, the great thing that you can do with your life is to be a faithful servant. We're going to talk today about how can you be a servant in your home as a dad, or a granddad, or a mentor? What does it look like to be a ... to have a great life as a faithful servant as you lead in your family and influence others around you?

Before we get into that, let's do some shout outs. All right. Our shout out today goes to a group from Voorhees, New Jersey. This is Albert McCullough's group, and they are called Men's Group. I like it when you just keep it simple, right? Like, "Where are you going?" "Brothers of Valor and Fire ... no, I'm going to Men's Group." "Oh, all right. Now we know what that is, right?"

They're at Men's Group, a group of 10 guys who meet on Fridays at 9:00 in a private dining room using the video bible studies. So let's give those guys a big welcome. All right, and then our shout out for our area director's going to go to Jim Boetjer, who's our area director in Idaho in the Treasure Valley region. Jim's been around a long time, and is a wonderful guy. He's passionate about being an area director, because he has the opportunity to help a large number of pastors and leaders in his area establish discipleship pathways for all the men in their churches. Effective discipleship to men changes everything.

Jim's a retired cop, and he's seen a lot in his life, and really has seen the negatives of men not being disciplined, right? So now as an area director, he gets to help churches reach men, and help avoid some of those things that he's seen.

Here's our topic for today: **How To Make A Difference In Your Kids And Other Kids Lives**. How To Make A Difference In Your Kids And Other Kids Lives. A couple of notes before we start. First of all, you might be sitting here thinking, "Oh great, another fathering session. I don't have kids at home anymore." Or, "I've already screwed my kids up so bad, there's no hope." Or, "I don't have kids yet."

The principles that we're going to talk about today really apply to you in three different roles. We'll talk about those at the end, but in three different roles as a dad, certainly, but also as a granddad. These principles, in fact, may even in one sense be more powerful for a grandpa than they would for a dad who's sort of in it all the time.

Also, if you're a mentor to someone, and if you don't have kids at home, and you don't have grandkids around that you can influence, I would really encourage you to be a mentor. There are many, many kids that don't have a dad.

The second thing is that when you do talk about a topic like this, there's a lot of times where I'll have guys say, "Well, that's great. Thank you for pointing out all the things I screwed up. Now I just feel guilty. I walked in here feeling bad about myself, but congratulations, you've taken me down a notch during this bible study."

I don't want you to feel like that. This topic can certainly bring up guilt over past failures, and so if you're worried about that this morning, let me share a couple of verses with you just to start us off. These are good reminders for us anyway.

Romans 8:1 says this, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life has set you free." The first thing I want to say is if you're feeling guilt over past failures and you are in Christ, there's no condemnation for the past. Once those things are confessed, and you're repenting, and you're moving towards being the kind of man that you know God wants you to be, the kind of dad that God wants you to be, there's no condemnation that comes from Christ. You can condemn yourself, but there's really no reason to think that God's condemning you, or even your brothers.

Then moving over to Philippians 3, so this is sort of what do you do with that? Philippians 3:13 says, "Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do," listen to this, "forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead." What was behind Paul? Murder.

Paul murdered believers, and he's forgetting what lies behind, because he knows what God has for him ahead. So guys, focus ahead. When you feel like there's a topic in church or at a bible study that's convicting to you because of past sin, you confess that sin, and then you have to realize that you have to forget what lies behind and press on to, "the great prize," the next verse says, that God has for us.

Let's press on together this morning. We're talking about making a difference in your kids' and other kids' lives. Are dads important? Are dads important? Yeah, dads are important, right? We know that a child that grows up without a father is five times more likely to repeat a grade. He's five times more likely to get arrested. He's five times more likely to have mental health issues. He's five times more likely to live in poverty. It doesn't get much worse than that, than those ramifications, those social ramifications of what it means to live without a dad.

We know that 40% of kids in today in America, 40%, a little over 40% of all kids are born into a ... out of wedlock, into an unmarried household. Interestingly, 30% of kids, maybe 31% of kids, live without a dad. There's a lot of kids living with unmarried parents, which is better than living without a dad, but what we have, is we have a lot of kids growing up in unstable households, and we see the ramifications of that in the lives of men.

There's tons of statistics out there, you can go research it, on the issues that men face in our society where there's less men in college now than women. Google just announced they are going and they are repairing the gender discrimination in Google. They are repairing it by paying people. They've gone and looked and figured out there's some people have been paid less for doing the same work as other people by gender, and so they are paying reparations to the men. That's the first I've ever heard of that, that a big company is recognizing they've actually been paying the women more than the men to do the same thing.

Let's not get all holier-than-thou about it. Women have faced that for a while, but let me just tell you, there's been 20 or 25 years of concerted effort to some would say raise the status of women, but in a large way, the way that that's been done is not by raising the status of women, but by pushing the status of men down. Unfathered men are particularly susceptible to this.

Psalms 78 talks about the importance of men. Turn to Psalms 78 and let's read this chapter together. Well, not the whole chapter. Psalm 78:1-8, "Give ear all my people to my teaching," so this is talking to the people of Israel, "to my teaching. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable, and I will utter dark sayings from of old, things that we have heard and known that," who has told us? "our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from our children, but tell them to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel when he commanded our fathers to teach ... which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children that the next generation might know them, even the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

Even from the very beginning, God has set the role of a dad up as important to remind the next generation of who they are in Christ, to give them the confidence of what it means to live as a son or a daughter of God, to protect them from false gospels, from false teaching, protect them from enemies, protect them physically from harm. That's the role of a dad in a family. That's what we're going to talk about today.

Here's our outline. We're going to talk about ... first of all, I'm going to give you a rubric of what we call an open versus a closed system. We're going to talk about focusing on a kid's heart rather than his behavior as a effective method of making a difference in your kids' lives. Then we're going to talk about three things that every kid needs, and then finally, three roles that every man can play.

A lot of the stuff that I'm going to talk about today actually comes from some work that we've done in conjunction with The Gathering, and we've worked with them to develop this workbook, this bible study called Dads That Make A Difference. A lot of the material that I'm going to talk about today comes from this bible study, this six week bible study, called Dads That Make A Difference.

If you're watching online and you're like, "Wow, this is great. I'd love to dive into this topic deeper," you can even have a Dads That Make A Difference seminar from Man in the Mirror, and then this is the follow-up bible study to that if you do the event. You don't need to do the event, you can just use this as a six week bible study.

If any of you are in your churches here locally and you're thinking, "I've got a group of guys that I meet with at Panera on Thursday mornings, and we're all dads. This would be a great thing for us to go through." We've got these at Man in the Mirror, and you can get them and walk through it.

OPEN VS CLOSED SYSTEMS: HEART VS BEHAVIOR

What we're going to start with is talking about this idea of an open versus a closed system. What does that look like? Well, in the bible, let me give you a couple of examples of a heart-focused reaction versus a behavior-focused reaction.

Do you remember the time that the woman who had committed adultery was brought by Jesus, and all the Pharisees and the religious leaders were going to stone her, and they were going to kill her according to Old Testament law? And so Jesus could have very easily said, "Well, that's the law. She did the deed. You do the crime, you do the time."

But Jesus didn't do that. What he did was, is he looked at the hearts of the leaders and at the heart of the woman. He looked at the hearts of the leaders, and he said, "Great. You know what? You go ahead and fulfill that law. Whichever one of you is following the law perfectly, you can impose the consequences of the law on this woman. So whoever's perfect, you get to throw the first stone."

And of course they all sort of stared at their shoe laces ... well, sandals, and dropped their rocks and walked away. Jesus looked at her, and he said, "There's nobody left to accuse you?" And who was there left to accuse her? Jesus was left to accuse her. Was he perfect? Absolutely. Did he pick up a stone and throw it at her? Absolutely not.

Instead, what he said was, "Repent. Change. Become the kind of person that God made you to be, and I'm not going to accuse you anymore." This is an open ... this is a grace-based response to a wrong, to a sin, versus a behavior-based response.

Another great example is Peter goes into the courtyard. "I'll never deny you, Jesus." Right? Three times he denies him, and so the very next time that Jesus interacts with Peter, he brings it up. He says, "Now, Pete, we got to talk about this. You promised me you were going to do this, and you didn't do it, and I'm really disappointed in you. Now I need you to go ... you got to go to confession, and you got to do penance." That was Jesus' response to Peter.

No, what did he do? "Do you love me?" Like, "I know what you did, but let's talk about your heart, Peter. Where's your heart at right now? I don't have to tell you that you are guilty, you know that you're guilty. What we need to talk about is let's take the shame out of this. Let's forget what lies behind. Let's strain forward for the prize. But Peter, what I need to know, is where's your heart at? Do you love me? Do you really love me? Seriously? Are you sure? All right, then I got a big job for you to do, man. You're going to lead the church. You're going to feed my lambs, and you're going to die for it."

That's a grace-based, an open system versus a closed system. When you think about an open system versus a closed system in a household, so an open system is emphasizing safety over fear. For instance, when I was a kid, I remember in the street in front of my grandma's house, there was a sewer lid right in the middle of the intersection. It wasn't a super busy street, but it was a busy street.

What I see on TV that I thought was really cool, was I saw police officers standing in the middle of an intersection, and stopping cars, and waving cars on. My four-year-old mind thought, "That looks really cool, and that sewer lid right in the middle of that intersection, that must be what it's for. It's the circle for the cop to stand on. So I'm going to go do that. I'm going to go stand on the circle, and I'm going to direct traffic." Now, what did my parents told me to never do?

Go out in the street without them, and I went out on the street. If my parents had reacted out of fear ... my mom was a very wise woman, my dad too, but my mom was a very wise woman in this situation. She sees me standing out in the middle of the street gesturing like a four-year-old cop, and she comes out, and first thing she did was she came and got me. She didn't yell at me from the porch, she came and got me, because she was more worried about my safety than me being afraid of her.

Then she brought me to the curb, and then she didn't whack me. She could have. She didn't whack me, she said, "Why were you doing that?" She knew. I was like, "Well, Mom, I was being a police officer." Now, if my mom had overreacted in that situation and had, "What are you doing? That's so stupid. How many times have I told you? You think you're a cop? That's stupid." Think about what that would have done to my little four-year-old heart. It would have put a little shell around it, right?

But instead, she acted with grace, and explained to me why she didn't want me in the street, and told me that if I went in the street again, there would be more physical ramifications. But she met me where I was at, because she was more concerned with my safety than she was with me being afraid of her.

An open system focuses on support and encouragement, not criticism and shame. I coach. How many of you coach youth sports? How many of you have seen parents on both sides of this equation when it comes to the parents of the kids that you coach?

Some parents, all they want to do is, "Why'd you do this? Why'd you do that?" They're constantly criticizing their kid, yelling at them. Why? Well, because they're living vicariously through their child, most of them. They failed, so they want their kid to succeed. A parent that's more interested in the child and the kid is going to be supportive and encouraging. "Hey man, I know you got out of position on that play and they scored a goal. You're going to do better next time. What did you learn from that? How can you do better next time?"

I had a football coach in high school that was like this. He could scream his head off at you, but it never came across as criticism. He was encouraging, he was supportive. Even as he was screaming at me, what was the difference? Because somehow in his heart I knew that what he really wanted was for me to be better.

I've seen coaches that get upset with their kids for losing, or for doing something wrong because they think it reflects on them as a coach. When you're a parent and your kids are out there and they do something wrong, and you feel shame or embarrassment for yourself. "Oh, people must think I'm a bad parent." You're in a closed system.

But when your kid fails out there and you think, "Oh, what has that done to their heart? How can I help them learn from this? How can I help them do better?" For them, not for you, that's an open system. That's a grace-based system.

An open system is focused not on getting kids to obey blindly, but really on learning and critical thinking skills. "Why doesn't my mom want me in the middle of the street? Because she said so." How many of you said, "I will never say, 'Because I said so,'" when you were like ... You're a kid, and you're like, "Well, when I'm an adult, when I have kids, I'm never going to say, 'Because I said so.'" How many of you said that? How many of you said it anyway? Yeah, me too.

There are times. There are times, when in the immediacy of the situation, you have to say, "Because I said so," but it's always good to come back and explain why you said so. Help your kids learn to think critically so that they understand why you're giving them the parameters you're giving them, because then they'll begin to set parameters for themselves.

Then finally, an open system is focused on the heart. It's focused on internal transformation rather than behavioral conformity. The closed system focuses on getting kids to do the right thing. An open system focuses on getting kids to want to do the right thing.

Let me give you a really powerful ... I think a powerful example of this. I used to run a juvenile detention shelter. One of my first jobs out of college was I ran a juvenile detention shelter in New York. We ran a 10-bed, co-ed, non-secure detention shelter, boys and girls, ages eight to 18. All right? I don't know what the State of New York was thinking. Like do a boys' shelter, do a girls' shelter. No, no, no, co-ed shelter.

There were three shelters in the system, and I was very young, so I didn't know what I didn't know, which was helpful. In my house, we set up a system that we called a point system, and so the kids knew the behaviors that were expected every day: make your bed, do your homework, be on time for breakfast, don't be disruptive in school, and they could earn points. The more points they earned, the more rewards they got. Then there were negative behaviors that they knew that they could lose points for, and if they lost too many points, then they lost privileges.

Here's what we did. We set up the parameters, they were clear, and then this is what we said to the kids, "You're in control. You decide how many points you earn. You decide how many points you lose. This is not arbitrary, this is completely up to you. You don't want to point for making your bed? Don't make your bed. You don't want the point for being on time for breakfast? Don't be on time for breakfast."

In fact, one of the things that I had to do with the staff that worked there, is that I had to help them stop taking everything personally. "That child's been late for breakfast four days in a row." I would be like, "So. He lost the point, he's bearing the consequences for it. Why are you taking the consequence for somebody else's behavior? Just let them take the consequence for it. Then when they complain to you, you just say, 'Look man, you're in charge. You made the decision not to come to breakfast. I didn't hold you down, and sit on you, and make you late for breakfast. You did that yourself.'"

Here's what happened over time. There were three shelters. The other two shelters were closed systems. They were very much based on a system of rules and punishment. In those shelters, and I had kids get transferred from their shelter to my shelter sometimes, and they would tell me this. In their shelters, they were always trying to get over on the staff. They were always trying to do stuff when nobody was looking.

In our shelter, what happened was kids would behave, and then if there was no staff looking, they would tap the staff on the shoulder, and then say, "Hey, look at me, I'm doing the right thing here," so that they could get the encouragement, and the support, and the praise that frankly, most of them had not gotten at home.

So you can run your home like this. You can be this kind of dad, or granddad, or even mentor, that focuses on support, and encouragement, and grace rather than obedience, and compliance, and punishment.

Here's a little quiz, and I'm not going to take time on this, because I'm running a little long here. Here's how you know if you have an open or closed household:

- Instead of giving advice or a quick reply, I always listen carefully to what my children think and feel.
- I allow my children to take risks and make mistakes, helping them experience the consequences for themselves.
- When I make a mistake with my children, I apologize and ask forgiveness.
- I discipline my kids to help them become what God wants them to be, not to make my life easier or avoid embarrassment.
- I regularly encourage my children by telling them, "I'm proud of you, and I love you."

There's a ton more of those in this workbook, ways that you can look at the way you run your household, and see, "Do I have an open or a closed system?"

THREE THINGS EVERY KID NEEDS

All right, so an open versus a closed system, looking at the heart versus the behavior. Let's talk about three things then that every kid needs, all right? So the first thing that every kid needs, is he needs **Protection**. He needs protection. So what does this look like?

Well, the first thing it looks like is discipline, right? It's discipline. Hebrews 12:11 says, "For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." You need discipline.

Then the second thing that you provide when you provide protection, is you provide it in love. Psalm 5:11 and 12 says, "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice. Let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exalt in you, for you bless the righteous, O Lord. You cover him with favor as a shield."

So what does protection look like in an open system versus a closed system? Protection is knowing more than just keeping a bad thing from happening to your kids. Biblical protection establishes the environment in which your children can become everything God wants them to be. An open system is uniquely suited to providing this type of protection.

For instance, while a closed system emphasizes behaviors, such as clothing, internet use, or spending, an open system deals with the principles, such as modesty, purity, or stewardship, that underlie the choices. This is not just getting your kids to behave, it's getting them to want to behave. It's changing their mindset, changing their heart attitude towards things. We need to protect our kids, and the way we do that is by providing discipline, and love, and boundaries, like we did with the point system. We clearly said, "This is the expectation, this is the consequence. Pick. Go for it."

Then it was amazing to see how ... And you know who benefited the most from the point system? I'm going to tell you: it's the worst kids, the kids who had the biggest issues, the kids that when the cops dropped them off at the shelter said, "Watch out for this one." They'd be just antagonistic, and annoying, and obnoxious for the first couple days until they understood what the system was, and then those kids flourished.

The social worker would come in like a month later, and they'd see the kids could earn levels of achievement, and those kids would always be at the top of the list. They'd be like, "What is going on? How is ..." I'm like, "Because this kid figured out the system. Once they figure out the system, they're

happy to operate within it. If you give a kid like that no system at all, then he makes up his own rules, and there's no boundaries, and he goes crazy."

The second thing kids need is to understand their **Identity**, understand their identity. The first thing that they need to understand is that they are a son or a daughter. When your children become believers, if they're children of the covenant, they are sons and daughters of the most high God, right?

Romans 8:15 says, "You did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry, 'Abba, Father, Daddy.' The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs. Heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we also may be glorified with him."

Kids need to understand their identity as sons and daughters of God, and then they need affirmation. We need to make sure that we're affirming our kids' worth and uniqueness. By intentionally affirming their worth and uniqueness, you help foster this sense of their individuality from you, so they're becoming their own person.

I know a lot of kids, me included, that at the end of childhood, I had to decide what I believed, because up until I was 17, 18 years old, I just went to church, because that's what my parents did and required, and I had friends there. I mean, I wasn't kicking and screaming, I liked church, it was fine.

Outside of the structure of my family, there came a point where I had to decide, "Well, what do I really believe?" Because my dad and mom had really fostered in my sister and I the ability to really think critically about our faith ... It took me a while, it took me a few years of fraternity life, to come to the point where I said, "You know what? This is mine. This isn't my parent's faith, this is my faith." Well, that's because my parents really helped me understand my identity growing up, and then had the patience to let me work that out for myself.

Then finally, understanding that we're saints and sinners. If a kid does not understand that he's a saint and a sinner, here's the problem. Too many parents tell the kids that they're saints, and never tell them that they're sinners. You know what that creates? Entitlement.

Some parents tell the kids they're sinners, and they never tell them they're saints. You know what that creates? Rebellion. When a kid understands that he's good, he's made by God, he's a child of the King, but he's also a sinner whose very heart and soul is tainted by sin, and that Christ provides redemption from that, when they really understand that, then you begin to have a confident kid moving forward in his life.

Which brings us to confidence. How do you instill confidence in your kid? Well, the first thing is consistency, consistency. You cannot be constantly changing the rules. You cannot be constantly changing the expectations. Don't keep moving the cheese, right? If you say you're going to do something, do it. If you say, "You're going to get this reward for this behavior," give it. If you say, "You're going to get this consequence for this behavior," give it.

We had some friends over once, and a young dad, and had their little kids, and their daughter was probably four or five years old. We found out that she liked strawberry shortcake, so my wife made that for dinner. We got to the end of dinner, and we put strawberry shortcake out, and she didn't want it.

Her mom was embarrassed, because she knew that we had made it for her. I mean, for everybody, but for her. So she said, "Honey, the Clemmers made this for you, you need to have it." Well, that was the wrong thing to say to this four-year-old, tired four-year-old at the end of the day. "I'm not having it, it's icky." Now they're really embarrassed, right? So my buddy, my buddy says, "If you don't eat that strawberry shortcake, you're going to get a spanking."

Then the look on his face after he said it was like, "Oh crap, I can't believe I just said that." Because he had put himself in an unwinnable situation. All right? So she wasn't going to eat the strawberry shortcake.

I mean, I got to tell you, everybody at the table knew it was the wrong thing to say. I talked to him afterwards, and I said, "What'd you do?" And he said, "Well, that was the lamest spanking I've ever given in my life. I mean, I basically patted her on the butt." Because he knew it was the wrong thing to do, but he told her what the consequence was going to be, and he felt like if he didn't follow through, that he was going to ... so he sort of came to a compromise.

I think he should have just took her in the other room and said, "You know what? Daddy said a stupid thing, and please forgive me. That wasn't the right thing to say." Probably would have been a better idea, but be consistent.

Watch your kids in their relationships. Watch your kids in their relationships. We live in a sex-saturated society, in case you hadn't noticed, and so you really need to be clear with your kids about their relationships. I took my son away when he was 12 years old, and we did this thing called Passport2Purity, it's from FamilyLife. It's a fantastic resource if you have boys and girls that are going into puberty.

The great thing I love about it is that it's Dennis and Barbara Rainey. Dennis does the boys one, and Barbara does the girls one. They say all the embarrassing stuff that you know your kids need to hear, but you really don't want to say it out loud. You can listen to the CD with your kids, and they say it for you, and then you and your kid can laugh about it together, but then you actually have the real conversation.

So my son and I went away for a weekend, and we went through everything. Trust me, everything. There's little object lessons and stuff, and at the end of it, I said ... We finished, and I said, "What do you think?" Literally, my 12-year-old son said, "Stand up, Dad." So I stood up, and he gave me a hug, and he said, "I am sure that that was really hard, but thank you, but thank you."

My daughter, I told her that when she started wanting to date, I said, "You can date, it's fine, but I get to interview your date first before you go out." She's like, "What are you talking about?" I said, "When a boy asks you out, he has to come pick you up, and then he's going to spend about 10 minutes with me first before you go." "No way, that's not happening." I'm like, "That's fine. Well, you're going to be celibate then. I mean, you're going to be a spinster, because that's the deal."

This went on for a year of her arguing with me. Every month or two, she would bring it up. Now, mind you, there was no boy. There was no boy. She just wanted to be able to say that, "I'm dating." So finally after about a year of this, she said to me, "All right, seriously, what are you going to say to him?" I said, "Oh, I thought you'd never ask."

I said, "This is exactly what I'm going to say to him. I'm going to say 'Son, when Cassidy was born, God put her in my protection. He gave me responsibility for her, for her physical safety, her mental safety, her emotional safety, her moral safety, and when you walk out the door with my daughter, I am giving you all that responsibility that God gave to me for the amount of time that she's with you.

When you come back, I expect that you will have safeguarded her physical safety, her emotional safety, her moral safety, and her spiritual safety, so if that's too much responsibility, that's fine, you just tell me right now, and I'll tell Cassidy that you're not able to go out with her. But I'm trusting you to do that. Is that something that you feel like you can do?" Cassidy went, "Oh okay, you can say that." She loved feeling the protection that she got from that, and it made her more confident to talk to me then about what happened on dates.

Then finally, build confidence by helping your kids love Christ. 2nd Timothy 1:7 says, "For God gives us a spirit not of fear, but of power, and love, and self-control." So your kids need to know God. Teach your kids and your grandkids that ultimately, ultimately, even though you will let them down, Christ will never let them down.

All right, real quick. Let's talk about our Big Idea here. So here it is, the goal of parenting and mentoring, the goal of parenting and mentoring is not ... excuse me ... is to develop godly adults, not well-behaved children. **The goal of parenting and mentoring is to develop godly adults, not well-behaved children.**

I was at a parenting seminar at a local church here in Northland a while back ... excuse me ... I'm going to have a lot of editing to do on this. I was at a local church called Northland at a parenting seminar, and the wife of the pastor, the pastor's Joel Hunter, and Becky Hunter was talking about her parenting things, and she raised three boys. They had three sons.

She said at one point something I'll never forget. She said, "I am not raising boys, I'm raising men." You see the distinction? Now, the boys were young at the time, but she said, "When I parent, I'm not parenting them to be good boys, I'm parenting them to be good men," and that's the perspective that we need to have.

THREE ROLES EVERY MAN CAN PLAY

All right, finally, these three roles that men fall into. The three roles that you can do is being a dad, being a granddad, and being a mentor. If you're a dad with younger kids, it's obviously easier to start, but it's never too late. If you've got like 17-year-old child at home that you've never been able to connect to, I'd really encourage you to think, "Have I been living in a closed system? Have I been focused on behavior, and not on heart transformation?"

It's never too late to sit down with your child and ask for forgiveness, and point out your mistakes, and talk about how you can make it better. It won't get better right away, but at least you can open the door to those conversations.

Then the other thing I just want to remind you dads, is that parenting, for the most part, parenting is a team sport, so you need to engage your wife. Your wife needs to be on the same page with you. It's wonderful the number of times that I've been heading right down the closed system route, and my wife has pulled me back, because I've been angry about something, my kids disrespected me. My wife's like,

"Get over yourself. They weren't disrespecting you, they were just doing what they wanted. They didn't even think about you enough to disrespect you." You know what I mean?

It's like we take things personally, and they're like, "Well, to be personal, I would have actually had to think about you, and how could I disrespect you? Otherwise, I'm just ignoring you." There's times when she starts to get riled up about stuff, and I say, "Hang on a second, let's look at what's going on here, about why our son or our daughter is acting like that." Secondly, if you're a grandpa, you know the best part about being a grandpa, right?

You get to send them home. So take advantage of that. Guys, listen to me. Play the part of the wise old man. Play the part of the wise old man. There is a reason that the wise old man is an archetype in fairy tales. So play that part. Be the little bit distant emotionally, not from the child, but from the situation that's got a child riled up. You can have some distance from that.

Be Gandalf. Be that third party objective grandpa that goes, "Yeah, I know your dad's being a jerk. Here's a lollypop. Now that you've calmed down, now we can talk about it." That's what grandpas can do. But also, be their parent's biggest fan, and encourage your kids to have an open system with their children.

Then finally, a mentor. Your disconnection, when you're a mentor, you're even more disconnected than a grandpa from a situation emotionally, which gives you objectivity that people don't have when they're in that situation all the time. One of the great things about being a mentor, is that you don't have to be emotionally ... you're not on the emotional roller coaster with them, you can be that steady person.

A lot people I hear like, "I don't know how to be a mentor." You have to do one thing, you have to buy the coffee. It's just about time. It's just about listening. I offered to mentor some guys at church, and a guy took me up on it. We met the first time, and he had like a stack of books, and he's like, "What do you want to do? What do you want to talk about? What do you want to study?"

I'm like, "Dude, put that stuff aside. Tell me the three things that are the most troubling in your life right now." He said, "Oh, well that's easy. My job, my marriage, and my kids." I'm like, "All right, which one's worse? Let's talk about that one."

Over the course of months, I just gave him a place that he could go and have a sounding board, and have some experience that I could offer. "Well, I made that mistake." "Don't do that." Or, "Here's why I think that's upsetting you so much." But just to be a sounding board with no big grand plan.

So just remember, the Big Idea is ... **The goal of parenting and mentoring is to develop godly adults, not well-behaved children.** To develop godly adults, not well-behaved children. Let me pray, and then we'll go to the tables.

Father, thank you so much for your Word, for the richness of your grace and your mercy, the example that it is to us of how to be great dads, and granddads, and mentors. Lord, I pray that you would bless this discussion time now, and that you would connect our hearts with each other as we talk about your Word and what you would have for us. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.