

SERIES: FAMILY ON PURPOSE  
PART 4: WHAT EVERY CHILD (ADULT) NEEDS

Good morning, CVCHURCH family. Most of you know that I spent last week with our son Benjamin and our grandson Brady. Kelsey and Olivia, who is just over 3 months old, went to visit her father in Oregon. Go Ducks. I was not prepared for the impact that Brady and Benjamin would have on me. First, I am so impressed with how Benjamin fathers Brady. He just simply adores his son. He communicates his affection with his words, abundant physical affection and lots of play. At 19 months everything becomes a game. Benjamin is a master at it. The result is that this little boy is one of the most passionate, energetic, dynamic, and intense little guys I have ever had the privilege to be around. With all these character traits, he runs very impatient when he doesn't get the preferred future he thought he could experience. From the moment he gets up he goes to his closet, and he starts going "uh, uh, uh," which means please get my shoes on me because I have places to go and see. He is obsessed with going outside and walking, running and playing. This is no joke. I walked close to two miles with this little guy, and he ran a good portion of it. He is absolutely full of life. But I fully realize it is because of how Benjamin and Kelsey are raising him. Realize Kelsey wasn't here this week. So, I didn't get to see her interact with him, but she is so good at sending us volumes of videos and pictures of both Brady and Olivia. She is such an elegant parent. She is so loving, calm, patient, persistent, and both of them are very intelligent. Here

is the question I want to raise this morning. Do parents have any important, long-term effects on the development of their children? Judith Harris Rich wrote a book in 2009 called, **The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out The Way They Do**, and she asserts: “And parents matter less than you think, and peers matter more.” You can tell by the title that her answer was a boisterous “no.” This kind of idiocy and lunacy is being taught in our universities and has flooded the minds of parents who have children and are having children. Judith is asking the wrong question. The more appropriate question could be “**Can parents have important and long-term effects on the development of their children?**” According to the Bible the answer is a resounding “yes.” As a matter of fact, Father God holds us responsible as parents, grandparents and relatives to have a positive impact and influence on each other.

Look at Genesis 1:27 in the ESV, “**So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**” When Adam and Eve were told by God to go fill the earth with His progeny, He was telling them, “I expect you to teach, train, and model how to live out your relationship with Me.” In Deuteronomy 6:1-9, God lays out clearly the responsibility and the impact that parents are to have on their children in teaching them who God is and how to have a relationship with Him. “**These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy,<sup>2</sup> and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the**

**Lord your God as long as you live. If you obey all His decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. <sup>3</sup>Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you. <sup>4</sup>Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. <sup>5</sup>And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. <sup>6</sup>And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup>Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and then you are getting up. <sup>8</sup>Tie them to your hand and wear them on your forehead as reminders. <sup>9</sup>Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”**

**I. Two truths that will help you develop your focus on your family:**

**A. When you realize how much time you have left, you can get serious about the time you have left**

If I had understood this truth, I could have done even better than what I felt I did with them. When I looked at Brady and saw just how much he grew in his own personality in just the week I was there with him, I thought it is possible for us to create an environment in our own homes and in our CVCHURCH family that will help us truly develop fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ who are sold out to Him

and to His Word, ways and will. As the father and mother of your children, it is your responsibility to model, teach and show your children how to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. How old are your children? You have till they're 18-21 to instill the values, ethics and a commitment in them towards Jesus and His Kingdom purposes for their lives.

**B. When you understand how much time you have left, you tend to value what happens over time**

Consistency, discipline, self-control are so important, because what and how you input to your children and the adults you impact will have an incremental impact on their growth.

**II. Two essentials the Bible says every child and adult need:**

**A. No one has the potential to influence a child like a parent**

I want to encourage you today if you're a father, mother, grandmother, grandfather—you have this unique potential and ability to influence a child, son, or daughter in a way that no one else really does have, because God has give you this distinct privilege of being connected to them genetically and biologically. They are your child. They are your grandchild. You have a God-given authority to impact, mold, shape, model, and disciple your children. Ephesians 6:4 has been a leading verse for me in my own parenting and now

grandparenting. Paul writes, **“Fathers, 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.”**

**How do we do this?**

### **1. Love/Time = Worth**

First, we know that God loves us because He has told us in His Word that He loves, and, second, He has modeled His love for us by sending Jesus Christ to die for us and show us how to live in a right relationship with Him. God proves His love for us over time. We all have stories of how God in Jesus Christ has pursued us in some of our darkest, most troubled times, where you didn't think you could get out of it, but you did because of God's Word, presence and purposes for your life. God loves you consistently over time. How do you love a child, a teenager? The same way. Over time. Love over time gives you a deep sense of worth, value and that you matter. You don't just have value because you're created in God's image, you have value because God has pursued you over the time of your life, leveraging time as His platform to prove to you that He loves you. Hear me parents, grandparents, uncles and aunties, the most powerful thing you have as a grandparent or as an adult leader or as a parent for kids is to understand His love and how they are loved and to give them a sense of worth by showing up in their world. By your physical presence over and over and over again, because that does something that nothing else does. This is why I

never get tired of saying to all of you who serve in Kids' Place!, EPICC, small groups—just keep showing up. As a leader you just keep showing up. As a parent you be there every day. Be there spiritually, emotionally, relationally, and physically. Be wholly there. Your presence will make a difference that nothing else can. Love over time gives your children a sense of worth, value and significance.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, **“And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup>Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.”**

## **2. Words**

Loving, caring, thoughtful, insightful words. I read recently that the average teenager hears one word of affirmation for every seven words of criticism. In this same article an educator wrote that you cannot over-affirm a middle schooler. Church, parents, there is this powerful opportunity you have with words, and most of us understand that words over time do something to the life of a kid or teenager.

Educational research with preschoolers teaches us that when preschoolers have been exposed to a certain number of words and conversations and dialogue with adults as they enter elementary school, they're set up, because their brain mapping is all happening as preschoolers. Whatever you think about Mr. Rogers, he had an amazing ability to have a conversation with kids in such a way that when they became

adults, they remembered it. They remembered how he made them feel with his words. Loved ones, words are powerful and impacting. It does matter what you say and how you say it and the look that is on your face when you communicate. Kathe reminds me of this truth weekly if not daily. Do you have an accepting, loving, caring look on your face, or is it stern, angry and rigid? Proverbs 18:11 says, **“The tongue can bring death or life; those who love to talk will reap the consequences.”**

### **3. Words/Time = Direction**

You give a child a true sense of direction when you work with them and have conversations with them in which they have a safe place to talk. You affect their relational, moral, and spiritual direction of life. This is why the greatest gift a church can give a parent, and the smartest thing a parent can ever do, is create safe places for their kids to have safe conversations. At 33, Benjamin and I had a lot of time together, and we had some very special conversations, and I could tell there was direction being gained both for Ben and as well as for myself. Benjamin and his relationship with Brady made a very profound impact on me. Words over Time = Direction.

### **4. Stories/Time = Perspective**

Reggie Joiner, an education expert, argues that we're wired to learn from stories not from information. In the Scientific Mind there was an articles a couple of years ago and it talked

about the way the brain actually receives information from stories versus the way the brain receives information from just facts and data and stats and principles. Something powerful happens when you engage someone in a story. One of the powers of storytelling is it can move people to experience empathy. You can experience how someone else feels and perceives life other than just yourself. Read Deuteronomy 6:20-25.

### **5. Work/Time = Significance**

Giving children an opportunity to serve creates a deep sense of importance, because they're making a positive contribution. This is why we have so many different opportunities for children to serve. Pastor Josh is working in tandem with Bryan Miller about a potential opportunity to serve in Mexico this summer. One of the most powerful experiences for Whitney was when she got involved with WOW Jam. She went to the inner city in New York and served in one of the more devastated areas of that city, and when she came back, she was glowing because of the opportunity serve. She spent the majority of her time picking up trash. Work/Time significance. See Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

### **Fun/Time = Connection**

Growing up with our kids, I didn't do the best with this truth. But I fully believe it and have done much better as I have gotten older. Fun over time equals connection. Proverbs 17:22 says, **“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a**

**broken spirit saps a person's strength."** When you take time to purposefully schedule fun times for you with your family and kids, it has the capacity to create the kinds of connection with your kids, spouse and family like very few experiences. Spending time with Brady took a lot of energy, because I had to focus my full attention on him whenever I was with him, and I spent a lot of time with him, but it created a great connection. In one of the texts that Kelsey sent to me about my time with Brady was this: "I'm so glad you were able to come out. I wish we lived closer to you so that Brady could be around you more. I had to email Brady's school today, and they commented on how much Brady loved being dropped off by you."

## **7. Fun over time authenticates forgiveness**

The two characteristics any home needs if you want kids to be running home, or you want youth who are in trouble to run to the church, are joy and forgiveness. Can you have fun with someone you haven't forgiven? No. When you have to discipline your child, or something is broken in the relationship and you want to rebuild it, start having fun with them again. Sometimes kids don't think we love them because we act like we don't like them. When you play with them, when you have fun with them, you are standing up for the integrity of your relationship with them. When you choose—even though there's been a disciplining situation or something's been broken, to have fun and enjoy them and they know you have made it a priority, it does something powerful in their soul. It says to them "I matter to Dad, I

matter to Mom, and they want to have a relationship with me. Have you noticed it's very hard to fake forgiveness? We must recognize that fun over time equals connection.

## **B. A parent is not the only influence a child needs**

### **1. Tribes over time**

What do I mean by that? We all want to be accepted. We're all naturally looking for a new tribe, but a kid or a teenager, especially as they move into middle school and high school, they're really looking for where they're going to connect and where they're going to fit. Reggie Joiner says, this, "There are three things that are true about your teenager right now. Number one is they care more about what their friends think than about what you think. Two is they care more about what other adults think than what you think. And three is they care more about what you think than anything else." You say, "You just contradicted yourself." I know I did, but they're teenagers. And all three of those things are true at the same time. I would encourage all parents here to widen the circle of your child's adult friends. You will want to invite and be intentional about connecting other adults in the life of your children, because as your child gets older, they will need the affirmation and approval from other adults besides just you, this is a very powerful principle. Jeff Harrison, Shant Assadorian, Rick Whitlow, Brad Rea, Bruce Horowitz all have had a powerful impact on Benjamin. Bryan Miller was instrumental in helping Whitney find her footing in the music ministry. Beth has been a champion of our children. You

cannot meet the needs of your kids by yourself. They need other adults that can speak into their lives. It prepares them to know how to network as they grow into adults and how to connect with others. I stand amazed at how well Whitney networks with others. So many of you would go to the venues she would sing at. You helped her to know she matters to you and that you valued her. Over time you need a wider tribe than just your own family. It was a great day when both Benjamin and Whitney went to some of you for advice instead of me. I would walk away with a smile on my face thinking, “Kathe and I have done our jobs.”

## **2. Tribes/Time = Belonging**

As you help your kids to be in relationship with other adults, it sets them up to have a different kind of trajectory in their lives, because the power of tribes over time equals belonging, and kids need to be known. If a child won't be known they will never have a deep sense of belonging. Loved ones, I have seen it here for 27 years. There are people who have been here for a long time, but they refuse to let others in. They will not be known by others. You can see how they handle themselves and how they are with others that they don't have a deep sense of belonging. This is why we have as one of our leading statements: CVCHURCH: A Place to Belong, Believe and Become.

## **3. Connect every child to more than one adult**

I have seen this in Kids' Place!. There were several children who were powerfully impacted when Ken Voelker died because they noticed the man that was always at the front door was no longer there. I can guarantee you Ken had no clue of the impact he was making in their lives. Matt Caress and Chuck Holler are mainstays in our Kids' Place! ministry. They are legends in how they relate to your children and to help them feel loved, accepted and cared for. Parents, this is your responsibility to make sure that your children have more than one adult in their lives. Obviously, you need to make sure they're quality adults, but the power of the local church being an important tribe in our kids' lives is important. But it won't just happen. As their parents and grandparents, we must take the time to do this.

Let's pray.