

Message Transcript

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND | I'VE GOT A WORD FOR YOU
CRAWFORD LORITTS | JUNE 20 & 21, 2026

Aaron Brockett:

Happy Father's Day Traders Point. I hope you guys get a chance to play some golf or grill some meat or something. But most importantly, I hope you get a chance hear from those you love how appreciative they are of you.

Our next guest preacher actually grew up in Plainfield, New Jersey, not Indiana. Crawford Loritts attended and graduated from Cairn University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree in the Bible.

He and his wife, Karen, met in college. They were married in 1971 and they now have four adult children and 11 grandchildren. He has traveled throughout the U S and much of the world speaking in churches, evangelistic outreaches, conferences, colleges, and he has been featured speaker at Super Bowls, the NCAA finals for chapel and the Pentagon with senior military officers.

Crawford has been a church planter serving for 27 years on the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ, and serving for 15 years as senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Roswell, Georgia. He's also the host of two national radio programs, the weekend program Living a Legacy and the daily program Legacy Moments. He's also the president and founder of Beyond Our Generation and is committed to encouraging and helping to shape the next generation of Christian leaders.

I have not yet had the privilege of meeting Crawford personally. But I've gotten acquainted with his son, Bryan, and I've been impacted by Crawford and his ministry for years. So, it is a real honor to have him here. Would you please give him a warm welcome as he comes to preach God's word today?

Crawford Loritts:

Well, good morning, good morning, good morning. You know one of the great problems of hearing that introduction several times, he keeps mentioning all of those dates back in the 70s. It makes me feel old as dirt, Jack.



It's so good to be here with you. Let me get this out of the way. My wife told me to tell you all, "Hey." Well, "Hey," from Karen. Tell her that I told you that. She is the absolute joy of my life. We just celebrated, last month, our 55th wedding anniversary. Yeah. Yeah. She deserves combat pay for being married to me that long. She is the joy of my life.

And we do have; we do have four adult children and 11 grandkids. And I tell our adult kids that at this point in their lives their only reason for existence is transportation for my grandkids.

But, you know when they come and visit us, they can stay for three days—the adults that is. Grown folks bring drama, but they can stay for three days. God can raise Jesus in three days; they can get out of my house in three days. Starting to say, "Just kidding," but there is an element of truth. And our grandkids can stay as long as they want.

By the way, Happy Father's Day gentlemen. Amen. Yes. Absolutely. Happy Father's Day for those of us who are biological dads or influencing the next generation—father figures, spiritual fathers. Thank you, thank you, thank you for what you do and all of the hard work that you pour into helping to be what God wants you to be in the next generation.

Say, we've got a long way to go and a short time to get there so if you have a Bible or a device or exceptional memory, turn with me to 1 Kings, chapter 2, verses 1 through 4. This is the text I'm going to walk through here in a few moments.

"When David's time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, 'I am about to go the way of all the earth. Be strong, and show yourself a man, and keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn, that the Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'"

Let's have a word of prayer together.

Father, thank You for Yourself. Thank You for Your love and mercy. Thank You for Your grace in our lives. Thank You that You have been so, so, so good to us. And forgive us, O God, for those moments in which we are ambushed by entitlement and we kind of get pushed into self-centeredness, perhaps a personal pity party and that kind of thing. And we magnify the current crisis without seeing that God is bigger.



I pray in the name of Your Son today that You will speak to our hearts. I am acutely aware of the fact that these folks don't need to hear my miscellaneous ramblings about anything. They don't need to hear my story. But, Father, we can't make it without a word from heaven.

So, Spirit of the living God arrest our attention and give us the ability to focus. Reign in our wondering thoughts so that we might not miss what you have to say to us. We love you, Lord Jesus. Thank You for what You are going to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Every child is born with two broad categories of emotional need. Now, I didn't say they have two emotional needs—two broad categories of emotional needs.

For example, every child is born with a need for nurturing and tenderness and affirmation and touch and presence with them. That's the role, not exclusively, but primarily of the mother.

Paradoxically, every child is born with the need for daily doses of discipline and self-denial and direction and accountability. That's the role, not exclusively, but primarily of the father.

If you trace biblical manhood, men are, primarily, the gatekeepers of the future preparing a generation for a time that they cannot see. All of life, all of life is about pouring into the future.

You might say, "Hey, I'm not into this legacy thing." Well, that's categorically irrelevant. We are going to leave a legacy whether we want to or not. The fact that you are breathing and vertical means that you are going to leave a legacy, you are going to brand the next generation. The question is: What will it look like? What will it look like?

All of us are just here for a brief moment—a brief moment. Someone once said life is a brief moment lodged between two vast eternities. Every day of our lives we've got to decide what we are going to do with our moment, because our moment matters. It matters. It matters for the future. We are benchmarking, we're influencing more than we can ever dream or imagine.

So, the issue is that we've got to live life intentionally. Someone once said, "If you want to leave footprints in the sands of time, then you have to wear work boots."

What is in our hand?



There is a legendary entertainer, I started not to use this illustration because I am aware of the fact that a lot of the younger crowd won't know, "What in the world is he talking about?" But there is a legendary entertainer by the name of Sammy Davis Jr., google it. And Sammy Davis had a huge impact on another man who became another legendary entertainer by the name of Gregory Hines.

Sammy Davis Jr. really loved Hines and Hines tells a story that when he was a little boy they used to sneak into the Apollo Theater there in Harlem to watch Sammy Davis Jr. and his uncles perform.

Fast forward, Sammy Davis is older and throughout his life he had almost adopted Gregory Hines as his own son. He poured into Hines. He'd even given him money when he was in between gigs and this kind of thing getting his career started.

So, Davis contracts throat cancer and he is dying. In fact, news comes to Hines that Davis only has a couple of weeks to live, if that. So, Gregory Hines hops on an airplane, flies to L. A. where Sammy Davis Jr. was living at the time, walks into his house, and as soon as he sees his father figure, his mentor, there he begins to weep because Davis, was always a slight man, but his body was totally emaciated. The cancer had just ravished him.

So, Hines sits down next to him on the couch and gives him a tribute and tells him how much he loves him and thanks him for what he has done for him. He leans over and he kisses him on the cheek and realizes that this is the last time that he is going to see him.

But an astonishing thing happened. As Hines was walking toward the door, he hears this shuffling behind him. And he turns around and lo and behold, there is Sammy Davis Junior barely able to stand up and he does this [motions him forward by extending his arms and hands, fingers extended, toward him].

What's in our hands? What are we intentionally passing on to the next generation?

This narrative that I just read, this incredible, emotional moment is amazing—what I just read. It is the story of David transitioning. David is dying. He is the most powerful king in the then known world—legendary. Nobody messes with David. All of his enemies have been put at bay. And here he is, he's prosperous, he's powerful, but he's dying.



Solomon is next. His son is going to assume the throne. He's going to be installed as king. David calls his son, Solomon, into his room. And although David is weak, his voice is weak, his message is extraordinarily strong. I wish I could have been a fly on the wall. Solomon comes in and basically what David does is he charges Solomon to make three core decisions. If he doesn't make these three primary decisions he does not have a prayer to be successful as Israel's newest king. He says, "Solomon, you've got to make these decisions."

And, by the way, let me say this. If you've heard me speak in the last five years or so, I've been quoting this often because the cold-blooded reality of life that we keep procrastinating and trying to get away from is when you are born, you look like your parents but when you die you look like your decisions. You become your choices. Or you become what you failed to decide.

So, David is laying there in his bed and it's almost as if, emotionally, he's reaching out and grabbing his son by the lapel and saying, "Listen to me, Solomon. You've got to make some decisions and your choices and decisions will determine the strength and veracity of your reign as king and how successful you are going to be." And he charges him to make these three fundamental, foundational choices and decisions.

He says, "First, Solomon, you've got to decide, choose—decide, choose—decide, choose to live courageously. Secondly, son, you've got to decide, choose—decide, choose to live obediently. And then, thirdly, Solomon, you've got to decide, choose—decide to live faithfully."

The very first decision, notice these words, this is pretty amazing. I know we get used to these Bible passages but this is dramatic, Jack. This boy's father, who is the greatest king in the then known world, is dying. And he's saying, "There are no other options, these are the options, Solomon."

And listen to these words:

"When David's time to die drew near, he commanded Solomon his son, saying, 'I am about to go the way of all the earth.'" Listen to this line, "'be strong, and show yourself a man,"

"Solomon, listen. You're going to have a position and what it's going to take to be successful is not just dreaming and sharing about your ambitions and your thoughts, and your ideas. They are terribly important. But somebody is going to have to pull the trigger. You're going to have to act on these things. You're going to have to show yourself. Show yourself and decide to be courageous."



I don't mean to sound like some locker room coach here, but I tell you something. Listen. Listen. Nothing happens in life apart from courage. Nothing. You can talk the best game possible, you can have all the dream sessions possible, you can tell them all about what you intend to do, but sooner or later you're going to have to face your fear, drive through, and accomplish it.

The reason why David is so strong here is because he knew that Solomon, in a very real sense, was totally different from him (David). Totally different. They were not alike at all. You know, David had these two amazing streams in his persona and in his life. On the one hand David was a musician. He was a poet. Read the Psalms. He was in touch with his feelings and this guy was really intuitive and all of this stuff. But don't get it twisted. David had another side to him. David shed a lot of blood. He said, "Don't let this harp fool you, now."

In fact, in fact, God... He wanted to build a temple. Right? He wanted to build a temple and God said, "Uhhhhhhh, David. Let that old business be new business for your son because you've shed too much blood."

David ran from Saul, hiding out in caves for 16 years. Strong. Solomon, not so much. By the time Solomon comes around he's been living in a palace, man. He's got a lot more cotton around him. A little bling, bling. And he's got the wardrobe. And things are easy, "What are we having for brunch?" I mean, not exactly.

You know, so David, he was saying, "Hey, look man. After I die and you are installed as king, you can ride on my coat tails for six months or a year, maybe. But after a while, these folks are going to take your lunch money, man." Basically he was telling Solomon, "Listen. You have to be what the position requires. Courage, buddy. Courage."

I have said to younger guys that I have mentored, "There comes a point in time, young man, when you have to decide to be a man, make up your mind." This is what David is saying. Now, look. I don't have a lot of time with the parentheses, come back next week. No, no buddy. Solomon, you have it. Show yourself a man."

Courage is not a product of a certain personality profile contrary to what people believe. Courage is not the absence of fear either. Courage is the determination to face down your fear and to do exactly what you are afraid of because the calling is greater than your discomfort. So, you press through. Decide.



But the second thing he said to Solomon... You can imagine that in that room, Solomon is looking at his dad, he ain't got much to say. And David says, "Number two, Solomon. Secondly, you're going to have to make a choice, make a decision: choose, decide. Choose to live courageously, but number two, Solomon, you're going to have to choose, decide— choose, decide to live obediently."

This is the crux of the matter. Look at what he says here in verse 3:

"...keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his rules, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn,"

He said, "Ho, ho, ho, ho buddy. Success is expensive." Success is expensive. Success requires—hear me, hear me on this. There is no sustained success apart from personal discipline. And he's saying, "You want the favor of God?" Anybody want the blessing of...? Everybody wants the blessing of God. Everybody wants to raise their hand. Everybody wants to feel... "You want that feeling, you want that blessing? Look, buddy. If you're going to dance you've got to pay the bin. You can't live your life any old way that you want to. You're going to have to obey God."

God doesn't exist to rubber stamp your ideas. You exist to carry out His plan and His will. And you can't ala cart pick and choose your obedience.

And there is a little bit of an ellipses here. Something is being powerfully said that has not been spoken. And what is being powerfully said and not being spoken, David felt it and Solomon knew it. Although David did not utter the words.

Solomon knew his daddy's history. And he knew that David became king because his predecessor was erratic in terms of his obedience. Saul disobeyed God. He sort of rebranded what God told him to do and this kind of thing. So, God said, "Enough, enough. I'm taking my hand off of you. David, you're next." It's almost as if David is saying to his son, "Hey, man. Don't be stupid, boy. Don't think that you are the exception."

The other thing palpable in the room, not said but they both realize it, it's almost as if David is saying, "You know what happened with me and your momma. Right? It's an open secret. Yes, we did the nasty. Alright? And I had your mother's husband killed. Right? Now, God forgave me. Nathan confronted me. I repented of that. God forgave me. And in His grace I am still on the throne. He's forgiven me."



"Ah, but son you need to know something. Let me remind you of this." David is not saying this, but when he charges him to choose obedience, I can't help but think that David said, "And you know you had three brothers who died prematurely. Now, because of my mess, yeah, God forgave me, you had three brothers die prematurely and also you understand that hell never left my household. Chaos."

Hear me on this. Please understand this. You can choose your sin. That's true. All of us, we can choose any sin that we want to do. You can choose your sin, but you can't choose your consequences. You are not going to control the consequences. You're going to be the most adroit, sophisticated hypocrite the world. You can be the greatest, simplicit person imaginable. You can be the biggest schemer, manipulator in any place, but you ain't going to control your consequences.

And again, it's almost that David is saying to his own son, "Hey, man. Don't think you are the exception. Don't think you are smart enough to get by."

Listen. Disobedience is always terribly convenient. Okay? But disobedience is always far more expensive than obedience. Do you want to solidify regret in your life? Do you want to institutionalize shame? Do you want to go around thinking about what could have been? Well, just do what you want to do. Go ahead. Do it.

Let me say this to you. David also, in charging Solomon to make these decisions wisely knew, as a father, that he could not be his son's will. Parents, I'm going to share a word with you. I know free advice is worth its price. But I'm going to say a word to you, parents. Okay? Listen. Particularly those of us who are high control and we tend to hover over our kids, that kind of thing. I'm going to say this to you. You cannot be your child's will. You can't do it. You can set the table. You can set the environment. Of course you can give them consequences, all that kind of stuff. But you can't be their will.

And David knew that he was going to die. He can't make decisions for Solomon, "Solomon, you've got to embrace this." In so many words he's telling his son that, "God has no grandchildren, Solomon. He only has children. He only has children. You don't get grandfathered in because I have a relationship with God. You own yours. You have to decide to be obedient."

Do we have those kinds of conversations with our kids who are teenagers? "I can't walk with God for you, buddy. I can't decide for you, man. Whatcha going to do?"



Man, in that room—I would have loved to be in that room when it happened. In that room David said, “Solomon, if you’re going to have a whisper of an opportunity to be successful you have to decide to live courageously. Boy, if you are going to make it you can’t pimp God. You’ve got to surrender to Him. You’re going to have to decide to live obediently.”

And then he says, “Thirdly, Solomon. You have to decide, choose—decide choose, it’s up to you, to live faithfully.”

Now, I get it, I get it. I do understand. Faithfulness, technically speaking, is a subset of obedience. But I want to parse it out a little bit. Look at this line here in verse 4. It says:

“...that the Lord may establish his word that he spoke concerning me, saying, ‘If your sons pay close attention to their way, to walk before me in faithfulness with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’”

Walk before Me in faithfulness. Faithfulness, Eugene Peterson famously said, “Is a long obedience in the same direction.” Faithfulness has to do with the non-glamorous, small life choices on a daily basis that are repeated. Faithfulness is not perfection. Faithfulness however is persistent pursuit. You just keep doing the next right thing, the next right thing, the next right thing. “Oops. I messed up. I screwed up.” What do you do? “I confess it to the Lord. I repent. And then I get up and do the next right thing, the next right thing, the next right thing.”

Faithfulness is terribly, terribly, terribly underrated in our culture. Gifts, talents, and abilities are over sold—grossly overrated.

I’ve got a little milage on me. You know how many gifted, talented people I have worked with and seen in my life? An extraordinary amount of gifted, articulate, charismatic—preach the birds off of the trees—powerful decision makers. You walked into the room; everybody’s attention is drawn toward them and this kind of thing.

But so many of them crashed and burned. Because they ride too high on the water, they had an image whose substance could not maintain. They had the charisma to walk into the room but they didn’t have the character to stay there. They had the gifts that would give them the platform and visibility but they had a short tenure. They put more on display but had nothing under the counter.

Faithfulness, faithfulness wins the day every single time. You all, faithfulness is the incubator for character and integrity. It is strength. It is substance. Faithfulness forecasts that you can be trusted. Why? Because they look and see a track record of moral predictability. You celebrate that.



I'd rather have people work with me that might be B-, C+ in terms of talent and ability, but they keep coming after it—they'll be more productive than the most gifted person who doesn't show up on time.

So, David was challenging Solomon and saying, "Look, look, look. Don't be just a bunch of smoke and mirrors. Okay? Don't be an empty suit. Don't be a mannequin without life, but you sure look good."

Faithfulness. Don't under sell it. Your family is built on that. It's what is done in private. And, by the way, faithfulness is its own marketing strategy. It's its own brand. It's attractive. It's what will bring hope and stability to every context in which it shows up.

Next to Jesus Christ, my father has had the greatest impact upon my life. A man with impeccable integrity. He's with the Lord. He died in 1995. He died July 4, at 2:10 in the afternoon, 1995.

He was the leader of the band. He was no big community leader, in fact, a very private man in many respects. He played baseball in the old Negro League. Lost his right eye in a coal mining accident in the off season. And raised his family. Everything I know about leadership I learned in principle form from my father. He taught me, "Never walk away from responsibility, boy."

Sayings like, "Son, all you have at the end of the day is what you say. If you make a promise, you break your neck to keep that promise. You screw up, you look that person in the eye. You don't make excuses. You tell them that you are sorry and you make it right."

Honorable man. Where did he get that from? You know where he got that from? He got that from his father. You know where his father got that from? His father got that from his father who was a slave, had been a slave. His name was Peter Loritts. Peter was my great grandfather. You say, "Great grandfather, don't you mean great, great grandfather?"

Well, you see by dad was born February 13, 1914, the youngest boy of 14 kids. So, it was my father's grandfather, Peter, who had been a slave. Peter lived to be an old man. My dad remembered him.

The old boy used to sit on the front porch of the homestead there in Conover, North Carolina and sing and pray and rock back and forth. Ask the family. The Lord knows. He was illiterate but he had memorized huge portions of Scripture. You say, "How did he do that?" Well, he used to make his children and grandchildren read him his favorite passages of Scripture over and over and over again. The old boy memorized it. He forged generations.



Several years ago my oldest son and I were speaking at the Billy Graham center there in Asheville, North Carolina which is only about 50 minutes or so down I 40 from where the family homestead is there in Conover. And I said to Bryan, "Bryan," we got some time off that afternoon, "you want to go and visit the old cemetery?"

Well, the old cemetery is on a plot of land behind Thomas Chapel in the Zion Church there in Conover, North Carolina. My grandfather gave the church the land to build the church on but the cemetery had already been there. About a third of the people buried in the cemetery are Lorittses. They are related to us. Peter is back there.

So, we drove down there, hadn't been there in a long time. Bryan hadn't been there since he was a little something. We got there. We walked through the cemetery and as we walked through the cemetery I began pointing out who these people were. I said, "Bryan, here are your great grandparents, Pop-pop's parents, my grandparents, Emma and Milton. And there is Uncle Widell, Pop-pop's brother. And his uncle, Emory, and Aunt Annie.

I began explaining who these people were and what they accomplished. And I got overcome with emotion. I began to weep. I said, "Son, nobody knows who these people are. I doubt most of them didn't get outside of Potapa County, North Carolina.

But these are salt-of-the-earth people. These were people who loved Jesus. They loved the Lord. And, son, we stand on their shoulders. Your great great grandfather, Peter, sang Setna from the porch across the street. Peter used to sing and pray. Pop-pop said he prayed for a time he couldn't see, for generations.

"Son, the books that you have written, the platform that God has given you, the crowds that I have spoken to, it's not about us. These people paid our tuition. They modeled what they wanted to see in the next generation and they did."

I'm so disgusted with the arrogance in our culture today. God places us on third base and we act like we hit a triple. The disrespect throwing people away, disregarding the sacrifices of others. It's not good—not good. If we are not careful we are going to produce a generation of obnoxiously arrogant but alienated people.

But the cross changes all of that. When we come to calvary we understand that our lives are not our own that we are in this world on mission. And God wants us to bring hope and healing and benchmark future generations so that the next generation of image bearers have the clarity to point back to and keep moving. To not quit. To live for what matters most. To make those decisions to live courageously, to make those decisions to live obediently, to make those decisions to live faithfully.



Why? Because we have a risen Savior and a cloud of witnesses. And we can keep moving. That's what life is all about. Right? "We want to give you what has been given to us and stand back and say, 'You can make it. Oh, yeah. You can make it.' Make the decisions."

Father, thank You for Yourself. Thank You for Your mercy. Thank You, O God, for those unsung people that nobody knows but heaven applauds who paid our tuition. Now, Lord Jesus, I pray that we won't fumble the ball, that You will use us to encourage and to bless and strengthen, to put wind in the sails of the next generation, to put our arms around them and say, "Don't run. Don't run. We're with you. But don't run. Don't run. God is faithful."

Lord Jesus, do Your work. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

