

Message Transcript

BATTLE PROOF PARENTING | EQUIP FOR BATTLE
BART SHAW | JULY 13, 2025

Amen. Amen. Church, this is why we gather, to worship the only One who is worthy of our praise. So, one more time at all of our campuses put your hands together and celebrate King Jesus. Amen. He is worthy.

Go ahead and find your seats. Thank you.

Traders Point it is always a gift and an honor to share with our entire church family. Many of you know me from our Carmel campus or maybe from some of our disciple making spaces around here. I'm so excited to share with you again today.

We just came out of a series this summer called Battle Ready equipping us with the armor of God. And last week we kicked off a brand-new series to build on that called Battle Proof. We're looking at how we take our most significant relationships and make them battle proof, reinforce them, make them more resistant to the attacks that will come our way.

Last week Pastor Ryan spoke more high level to our relationships—how prayer is the foundation of all of them. And I can't stress that enough. What I'll say today assumes that and will build on that truth.

Now, we shared with you last week an anchor verse and I want to share it with you again today. It comes from Nehemiah, chapter 4, verse 14. And here's what it says: don't be afraid of the enemy.

"Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!" [NLT]

And I don't know about you, but that gives me some serious William Wallace energy right there. If I were braver, I would use my Scottish accent through this whole thing. But I'm not that brave.

This battle cry was not just for the Israelite people, but also for us. It's with this charge that we want to best equip our church to be battle proof in our most important relationships. Can anybody use a little more help in their relationships today? Anybody? A few of you. Good. I think we all could.



And as we just saw it says, "Remember the Lord." Now, we've mentioned this many times here at Traders Point. So much of what it means to be a follower of Jesus is simply remembering, remembering what is true and reminding ourselves.

So, today we're going to look specifically at what it means for the family unit. I want you to walk away from here today battle proof in your parenting. You guys with me? Okay. Let's go.

Now, I know that some of you listening to me today are not parents. And you may be tempted to check out. But what I have found is that those who lean in always find more wisdom than those who don't. And there is plenty here for you today, I promise.

Some of you may become parents one day, not to mention that our church cares deeply about the next generation. And many of you are already investing in the spiritual growth and development of countless others. Now, I'm going to let you guys in on a little secret early. You guys ready for this? All discipleship is simply spiritual parenting. Whether you have kids at home or not, you are parenting other people spiritually if you are making disciples. Now, many of you are parents. So, if you have kids under your roof, I want you to wipe the bags from under your eyes, the Goldfish crumbs from your shirts, and let's lean in together.

I know that not all parents are the same. The way I see it, there are probably four different categories of parents who are listening to me today. There is the first phase which I will call the discipline phase. These are parents with zero to five-year-olds at home. You are the ones who are trying to teach your kids how not to die, how to stay safe. How many zero to five parents...?

Maybe some of you are ready to be a parent, your bellies are popping. I see them around Carmel all of the time. I have friends who are adopting. If you are a zero to five-year-old parent at any of our campuses I want you to put your hands together. We want to hear you represent yourselves. Come on. Let's go. Okay. That's pretty good. Not bad. I mean give them some grace. This is a tired group, guys. They are really tired.

The next phase is the six to 12-year-old parents. This is the group that I will call the training phase. You are training them on how to be human. How to put their pants on the right way. Basic education. So, if we have six to 12-year-olds in our home, let's hear from that group. Come on. A little more lively. I like that.



The next phase is what I'll call the coaching phase. This is our teen-aged years. This is the phase that I find myself in. You are teaching them how to become an adult, how to stop talking back to you. Right parents? Can I get an amen? Thirteen to 19-year-old parents, come on. These are my people. Okay. Okay. I feel you. There are a lot of us.

The last phase we'll call the friendship phase. These are parents in the room who are listening today who have kids 20 plus. That's the friendship phase. So, let's be honest, you can't be friends with an irrational three-year-old. And you can't be friends with an irrational middle schooler either. But you can be with 20 plus. So, let's hear from all of those 20 plus parents. Come on.

I'm curious. Anybody in all four categories? Do we have anyone? Oh my goodness, we do. God bless you and enough already. Please. You're putting us all to shame. We know you know how to make babies, let's make some disciples. Come on.

Today, I want to address our spiritual amnesia as parents. I want to help us remember a forgotten way. So, I want you to grab your Bibles. We're going to be in Deuteronomy 6 in a few minutes. It's near the front of your Bible. Go ahead and turn there. We'll dive in in just a moment.

Now, I know that you may not be a parent, but nearly all of us were raised by them in some form. And as we begin I want to address a big misconception that I think is out there about parenting. And the misconception is that parenting is hard. I'm going to disagree. Parenting isn't hard, it is impossible. Can I get an amen? Yes.

It's beyond hard. We have broken, sinful people attempting to raise other broken, sinful people. It requires divine assistance. Raising a child is not for the faint of heart.

Some of you think potty training your puppy is difficult. Just wait. I mean, it's not acceptable to throw a one-year-old out in the back yard yet. Some of you think it is the twos to threes that are the most difficult part. And that's pretty tough. I'll give you that.

I can remember back to that phase and we had one of our kids, who will remain nameless, who spent six months of his life in that phase only uttering the word no. I'm not kidding. And it wasn't just no, it was no [with an attitude]. "Do you want Gummies?" "No." "Do you want ice cream?" "No." "Do you want to go back where you came from?" "No." Mom also said no to that one.



But then you move on to the terrible 13s. Oh, the teen-aged parents know all about this. The emotions. Puberty. Relational drama. They are instantly more intelligent than you will ever be. This is next level stuff, guys.

And here's the thing. I don't even have girls. So, it's a good chance that it could be more complicated. I don't know. They told me it was in the last couple of services.

Brooke and I have two boys. So, I have to be careful with the stories that I share with you guys today because even if I leave this vague, there is a 50 percent chance I'm going to rat one of them out. And you are going to know that it was Camden who said no for six months of his life. Sorry, Cam.

We're getting to the end of the first big leg of the journey. We've been through many of those phases and now we're entering a whole new phase. In fact, in just the last month or so, we graduated our oldest, Bryce, from high school and our youngest, Camden, just got his driver's license. Is that crazy? Milestones all over the place in our household.

In fact, I have a picture here to prove that I'm not lying to you. They are real. They are amazing kids. They are also eligible bachelors—I'm just saying. Great dudes right there.

Now, we're not changing diapers anymore. We're not buying formula. I'm not paying a small fortune in childcare—all of which I was convinced at the time could not get any worse. But now, I'm looking down the barrel at college costs, I'm buying insane amounts of protein being a parent of teen-aged boys, you know? And get this. I don't have one, but two teen-aged boys on my auto insurance so I've got to wrap this up so I can go donate blood before the day is over.

The struggle is real guys; the struggle is real. We are trying to raise these kids in an increasingly hostile world. And parenting isn't difficult. It's impossible. The pressures that this generation of children face are incredible.

We hear so much about how difficult it is to be a child in this culture and this climate, and it is. There is a war raging for our kids over issues of identity, truth, sexuality, and morality just to name a few.

And if it's true that it has never been more difficult to be a child in this generation, which I believe it is, that also means that it has never been more difficult to be a parent to them in this generation.



Now, I've mentioned a few of the things and the pressures in the tasks that we face, but one area of added difficulty is the reality that those claps that we just heard a few moments ago, nearly one-third of them are single parents. That's right. Thirty-four percent of American kids are growing up in a single parent household.

Parenting is super challenging on its own and roughly one-third of us don't have anybody to tap out to. Let that sink in for a moment. There are lots of reasons for that. There is no shame. There is no condemnation here. But there is support, there's encouragement, there is love. So, let's just take a moment right now to encourage our single parents at all of our campuses. Let's let them know. Yeah. Maybe you're not a parent. Maybe you've been there done that. Find a single parent and encourage them. Love them. Bless them. Support them. They need it more than ever.

The family is not under pressure—it's under siege!

Here's the thing, church. The family is not under pressure—the family is under siege. We are in a battle. And as a church our mission is to equip you for the battle. If we don't take control of our home, Satan is glad to do that. He's glad to take control and to destroy our families, our closest, most God centered, God ordained relationships. And marriage and family are right at the top of that list. Here's the thing. You don't have to let him. If you want to become battle proof in a fire fight, what do you do? I'd wear a bullet proof vest, a helmet, and a shield—we've talked about those. I'd probably also run like a five-year-old child and scream my way out of there, but maybe that's just me.

The family is under siege. And if we want to be protected, if we want to be victorious, we need some clear instruction and equipping.

It was maybe about 19 or so years ago when I bought my first television on my own. It was a giant 42-inch plasma Panasonic TV. You guys know the type, those of you are my age. It was brand-new technology at the time. And I remember I got a 40-page manual with it. How to maintain it. Troubleshoot it. Prevent the burn-in, the half-life of the plasma cells. How to use these new HDMI cords for Blue-ray and video game consoles. I knew everything about that TV. And yes, I'm really that guy. I'm that nerdy that I read the manual to things I buy. You know who never gets enough credit? The manual writers. So, if you're a manual writer here, I see you, I love you. Thank you for your contribution to society.



But get this. Just a few months after I bought that TV and learned everything about it, Brooke and I headed home from the hospital with a brand-new baby boy. And I received no such manual whatsoever. It was more or less a pat on the back to say, "Hey, good luck. Hope it works out well with that thing."

Eighteen years later, the ironic thing is that we just got rid of that TV and now I'm getting rid of my kid. In a couple of weeks we're sending him to Arizona. I bought four tickets out there and only three to return. It's brutal, guys. It's coming for you. Even the Bible doesn't give us many instructions here. And sadly, when we look at the Bible, the families we read about are riddled with all kinds of problems: parents trying to kill their kids, kids trying to overtake their fathers, adultery, abuse.

Even Jesus' family had some issues. I mean, you guys know this. He was the original Kevin McCallister, left behind on his family's trip to the capital. But the Bible does give us a few clear, overarching principles and guidelines that can fundamentally change everything about how we follow God, raise our children, and spiritually invest in other people.

So, what does God say? Grab your Bibles. We're going to look at Deuteronomy, chapter 6, verses 4 through 9. What I'm going to read to you is one of the most sacred and foundational texts and building blocks in all of the Old Testament Scripture and all of the Law. The Jewish people have followed this so closely for 3,500 years—even to this day. It's known, very simply, as the: Shema

They all knew it. Every good Jew knew the Shema. They memorized it, they recited it daily, and they obeyed it.

Now, a couple of weeks ago we talked about the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. You want to be battle proof in a world screaming about its truth and definitions and morality and sexuality and identity? It starts with one of the very first commands that God gave His people—the Shema. Let's look at it together, verse 4:

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.

"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. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (NLT)



Let's talk about this together. I want to go through verse by verse and we'll just kind of unpack them. So, let's look again at verse 4. It says:
"Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone."

The Hebrew word Shema simply means listen. It means to hear and listen. It really connotes understanding and obedience.

You guys have to remember when they wrote the Bible, there were no chapters and no verses. We added those in years afterward to help us navigate it. So, what they would do to memorize Scripture is they would take a key word and they would say: the Shema. It's this whole section. They would do that with a lot of different Scriptures.

So, when we hear the word Shema, listen, here it means far more than to audibly hear. It implies action. This was a declaration that Yahweh is the one true God in a land of many other gods. It pointed to His oneness. It pointed to His supremacy over all things in life. And friends, this is where our faith begins, in the Lord alone. Verse 5:

"And you must love the Lord your God with," how much? "all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength."

That sound familiar to anybody? It should. The Shema was the Great Commission and the Great Commandment before Jesus ever repackaged them as such.

You guys know the Great Commission, right? Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded. That drives the church today.

And then the Great Commandment. Love God with all of your all of your soul all of your mind and all of your strength and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus boiled down 613 laws into one, two-part law.

They weren't new when Jesus gave them. Our spiritual ancestors followed a very clear mandate given by God over 1,000 years prior, only to be refined and reinforced by Jesus. And He drives this home here because they began to miss the point. They began to over complicate the clear and simple mandate that Jesus was now bringing them back to center on.



And we've been locked in ever since. Right? We haven't missed the mark at all. Not quite. But the Shema helps us to remember. It helps us to remember: God is not part of your life — He is your life

This is the idea behind the Shema. He is most important. This is where many of us often get into trouble. We fail to remember to follow in this forgotten way—to put Him in His proper place. That's why He goes on in the next verse, verse 6, to say this:

"And you must commit yourselves," what does He say? Wholeheartedly, "wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today."

Now, a lot of us are committed to a whole lot of things. And if I were to ask your friends and your family what do you think they would say? Not if I asked you. If I asked your friends and your family, "What are you committed to?" what would they say? Success. Your job. Money. Status.

Are you committed to a political party? Maybe they'd say golf or pickleball. There is no shame in that game. There we go. Pickleball it is. Maybe they'd say fitness. Even your kids.

Here's the thing about wholeheartedly. It requires, as we say around here, your first and your best. If something else getting your first and your best, God isn't? While it's clear here God is to be the most important, he doesn't stop there. God gives super practical instructions to all of us, and parents specifically.

We're going to look at those in just a minute. But before we do I want to ask a question to all of our parents listening to me today. What is your goal in parenting? Think about that one for a moment. What's the purpose? What is your goal as you parent your children?

Now, I know for the zero to five-year-old parents, it's probably survival and that's okay. I've been there, I've done that, I know that. But if we aren't clear on this we won't get to the same destination, we'll end up in a different spot making a different product—not disciples.

In 2023 the Pew Research Foundation did a survey of parents and they asked them the top priorities that parents saw as most important, very important for their children. And these are the things they found.

Most Important/Very Important
honest and ethical (91%)
become financially independent (88%)
jobs they enjoy (88%)



Most important was that their kids would be honest and ethical. Now, I like that. That's very biblical. I can get behind that. But here's what else they found. That they would become financially independent, that they would find jobs that they enjoy. These were, by far, the top things. Nearly nine out of 10 parents said, "This is most important."

And way down the list we found this one:
have their children share their religious beliefs (35%)

Parents don't forget your way. Don't forget your way. In other surveys I saw very similar things. They all kind of said the same things. Parents wanted their children to become contributing members of society.

Now, I wouldn't say that's bad, but I want to say, "That's it?" Is that what Jesus died for? Is that the best that we can do, contributing members of society? Parents I think we can do better. Anybody think we can do better?

The truth is we're not going to stand before God one day and have Him ask us, "Did your kids become contributing members of society?" He's not going to ask us if we helped them get a scholarship to college or how many sports and extracurricular championships they earned or if they became financially independent." I'm not sure Jesus checked any of those boxes.

So what should our goal be then? I want to offer you a question that I think can help you think through what that goal can look like for you. If you are taking notes, this is a great time to do it. I want you to jot this question down:
Is my parenting forming my child more into the image of Christ?

That's it. Is your parenting forming your child more or less into the image of Christ. And guys, it works for all relationships the same way: grandparents, boyfriends, girlfriends, friendships. Is what you're bringing to the table leading them more toward Christ or away?

Parents, our goal is to raise our children in God's image, not our own. We have to get that clear. We might not want to hear this, but it is no less true and it is has no less value. Parents, brace yourself. Our kids will not follow our advice. I know, I hate to break your heart. All of you who are teen-aged parents are like, "We know." All of the rest of the parents, maybe you're not there yet.

Your kids will not follow your advice but they will follow your example. You see, my kids are not going to love and serve God like I tell them to. They will love and serve God like I do. The intentionality that my wife and I build into our family, they are going to build into their family. So fight for your family. Love God wholeheartedly with everything you have.



Parents, if you only hear me say one thing today, I want it to be this:
You are the primary discipler of your children.

You. Nobody else. Whether you know it or not, you're not just raising kids, you're raising disciples—it's just a matter of what you're discipling them toward. And all of the non-parents in the room today listening to me, the same is true. We often replicate to others what we are.

Guys, this is the forgotten way that we have to reclaim today. Parents I want you to take a deep look at your heart. And if the success of your child is more important to you than the soul of your child, you've lost your way. We are to be the primary disciple makers of our kids. No one else. Not the school. Not the media. Not the culture. Not Bluey or Blue's Clues or any blue show that is out there.

Even the church, as good as that is, is not primary. We are here to partner with you, to empower you, to help you, to come alongside you. And guys, I want you to know that there is a wealth of resources available to you.

If you guys do not have the Traders Point app, I'm telling you, parents, download it. Click the more button and look at the parenting kids section. There is a ton of stuff there to help you engage in spiritual conversations with your kids on the daily, how to share the gospel with them. You should leverage those tools. But if you think spiritual parenting is dropping off your kids and the church is like a tutor that helps them in math or a coach that teaches them tennis, you have forgotten your way.

Parents, we are the primary disciplers of our kids. And I want you to hear this. If our faith is not real at home, our faith is not real. I don't say that with condemnation. Truly I say that as a pastor with love. And I want it to be a wake-up call, your faith has to matter most. So, fight for your family. Remember this forgotten way.

I know that every parent who is listening to my voice, in some way, wants to be a better parent. I talk to them all of the time. I am one. I fail all of the time and I want to be a better parent.

So, I'm going to let you guys in on a secret that will absolutely help you be a better parent. You want to hear it? Okay. I'm going to give it to you right now. Here you go.

To be a better parent, be a better disciple.



That's it. I mean, give me some kind of Nobel peace prize or something it. That's it. That's the rocket science you guys need to hear. To be a better parent, be a better disciple. If you look more like Jesus, so will your kids. To be a better husband, to be a better wife, to be a better friend be a better disciple of Jesus. Parents reclaim your role as a primary disciple maker of your kids. Ask the question: is my parenting forming them more into the image of Christ?

Here's a helpful way that you can think through it. Some of you might know the words of David Brooks. He's a commentator, a lot of great things he offers. This is one of them. He does a great job of packaging things up. He calls them eulogy qualities over resume qualities.

Now, we spend a lot of our time focusing our time and energy on resume qualities. These are skills, accomplishments, accolades, achievements. For our kids we should be more concerned with the eulogy qualities—things you want to be said at their funeral. Who they are. The fruit they bear. The character they display. How they loved other people.

Focusing on resume qualities is focusing on the things we accentuate, our strengths. Focusing on eulogy qualities build into the things that are our weaknesses. I want to say it a different way for you. It's the fruit that I work to produce versus the fruit that God's Spirit produces in me. See the difference? For so many of us the lion's share of our time and our energy goes into further developing resume qualities. Guys, remember we are stewards of these lives. And I don't know about you but I don't want to stand before God one day and have Him ask me how I stewarded the lives of my kids and have Him tell me I wasted countless hours investing and developing the wrong things. So, let us focus instead on instilling eulogy qualities into our children, the fruit that comes from the Spirit.

Three Questions:

I want to give you guys three questions that I think might guide you through these eulogy qualities in the lives of your kids. If you are taking notes, jot these down.

What do I want my child to know about God?

What a great question. If you think about the way you pastor and parent your kids what do you want them to know about God? His attributes. His qualities. The world that He made that they find themselves in. His promises.

Second question:

Who do I want my child to become?



These are eulogy qualities. What type of character do you want to instill in them? What attributes? How do you want people to know them and for them be known? Who do I want my child to become?

The third question is this:

How can I equip my child for battle?

Guys, that's the question our church is asking to help disciple you. You should be asking the same question for your children. How can I equip them in this world to be ambassadors of light, to be ambassadors of God's Kingdom? Those questions will help form and frame what it means to be a disciple maker of your kids.

I want to take a look back at the instruction that God gives us because it gets really practical. So, jump back in your Bible. We're going to look at verse 7 together.

"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."

Parents, alright, have you ever had to repeat yourself again and again? Anybody? A few of us. I mean, not me. I just tell my kids to clean their room and it's like miraculously clean. It's this incredible miracle. Not quite. If it matters we repeat it again and again.

You don't just say, "I'm pretty sure I told them to look both ways once before, didn't I?" No. You tell them again and again. Or, you don't say, "I think I told you I love you a couple of years ago, didn't I?" No. If it matters you repeat it again and again.

I don't know about you guys, if you can relate to this, but for me, oftentimes being a parent feels a lot like being an Old Testament prophet. You're always right and no one ever listens to you. Anyone identify with that?

"It's going to be cold. You should wear a coat."

"Nah, I'm good."

"That food is really hot. It's going to burn your mouth."

"Nah, I'm good."

Actually they usually tell me that. You guys get the idea?

Why do we repeat truth over and over again?

If you don't know the truth you will eventually believe a lie



That's why. If you don't know the truth, you will eventually believe a lie. This is where doubt and confusion begin to creep in. And if we forget our way we will eventually end up in the wrong place. If we fail to remember the instructions of the past it can ruin our future.

Some of you who are listening to me today are old enough to remember the 1986 NASA Challenger mission to space, a terrible tragedy. I was around maybe first grade and I remember hearing about it, but I don't remember exactly what happened.

But I do remember the story. Very tragic. After about one minute into launch it exploded, killing seven people on board. One of them was a schoolteacher who was supposed to be the very first civilian to space.

What made this tragedy even worse was that it was entirely preventable. They failed to remember. You see in the pressure and the hurry of multiple delays leaders of the project pushed through and they ignored and forgot the instruction and the warning of engineers that they had been given. Almost a decade earlier they had discovered that if it was very cold outside it would compromise the O-ring seal. One of the simplest, most inexpensive parts on the entire project.

And sure enough, on a chilly morning in Florida it did. As they made other things a higher priority for the pursuit of success and accomplishment, they disregarded the simplest, the most foundational thing. And some people paid the ultimate price.

Now, that's an extreme example. But if we are honest, parents, I think many of us are in the same boat. We're running and we're gunning, we're giving our kids every opportunity, we're putting them in every sport, every extra-curricular, hoping to get them ahead, hoping to get them to launch. And in doing so, is it possible that we miss helping them remember the Lord along the way by not prioritizing the little things that can make them a true success, daily to remember the forgotten way, a better way?

Thousands of years ago, God already told us a way. He said, "Repeat these truths again and again to your children when you are at home." Anybody ever at home with your kids? I know you are. "When you are on the road." Anybody ever on the road with your kids? I know you are. Reclaim those times that you already have. Put the devices away. "When you go to bed and when you get up." Anybody put their kids to bed?



Now, I know if you are a parent of a five-year-old, you're just praying that kids go to sleep. And I've been there. I know. I'm with you. But the ironic thing is that you get to my stage, and now it's the complete opposite. We're begging our kids to come out of hibernation from their rooms, "You guys want to play a game with us? You want to do something?" It's so wild how those things completely switch by 180.

But church, I want you to listen to me. You don't have to create a bunch of new things and do more. You simply need to reappropriate and reclaim the time you already have. That's the beauty in the simplicity of the Shema.

Scripture goes on to instruct us even further. Let's look at verse 8 and verse 9 together, God says:

"Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Now what the tattoo graffiti is going on here? That's a strange passage. It says to go get a can of spray paint and graffiti up your house with Scripture. I would not recommend that. Maybe tattoos.

I don't know what's going on here. But I can tell you a little bit about what was going on. The Jews would have what they call phylacteries. They were small, little leather boxes that they would literally take a small piece of Scripture and they would put it in those boxes and they would strap them to their heads. They would literally put Scripture right in front of their eyes. They would wrap them on their arms.

Now, that's different than what we are going to do today, of course. But I think the question is: how do we contextualize that? What is the equivalent of this today? You all have one of these [a cell phone], and I bet you look at it 100 times a day. What if you change the background to be Scripture instead of a picture of your trip to Cancun? What if you got the old What Would Jesus Do bracelet or something like that?

There are hundreds of alliterations to put Scripture in front of you. Maybe it is a tattoo. Maybe it's memory cards or an app that you have on your phone or just carrying your Bible with you. Simply stated: find ways to keep God's truth, His laws, and His promises in front of your eyes and ultimately in front of your hearts.

This is often why we talk around here about getting connected into groups, studying God's Word together, having your own devotional time, but then also processing with other people. The best way to combat lies is to know the truth. Build God's Word into your parenting and into the rhythms of your life.



Guys, as I waded through this text over the last week or so, and I looked through Scripture, at the Shema and other things, I began to see some things that I want to break down into—what it looks like to be a godly parent versus a worldly parent.

And I think there are some pretty clear markers. So, I noted them, put them on a chart and I want to look at those together with you right now.

Godly Parents

Prioritize spiritual development

Make child Christ-like

Teach child the truth

Equip child to interact in this world

Goal is to please God

Worldly Parents

Prioritize physical or intellectual development

Make child successful

Allow child to discover “their truth”

Allow child to become like the world

Goal is to please others

A godly parent prioritizes spiritual development in their children. A worldly parent prioritizes physical or intellectual development of their child.

Now, listen to what I’m not saying. I’m not saying that those things are not important. They are important. They are important to me too. But they are not the most important. It’s a matter of where your heart is, and priorities. And that’s the difference between a godly parent and a worldly parent.

Godly parents make their children more Christ-like. Worldly parents make their child look more successful. That’s a big difference—a trajectory.

Godly parents teach their children the truth of God’s Word. This is huge. Worldly parents allow their children to discover their own truth, whatever that may be. Godly parents equip their children to interact in this world. They understand that this is not our home and God has placed us here for a purpose. Worldly parents allow their children to become like the world. That’s a big difference. And then, lastly, godly parents’ goal is to please God. He is the audience that we are living for. But worldly parents’ goal is often to please other people and how they view them and seek their approval.



You guys can see the fundamental difference in all of these things. And the reality is that I know that I have been on the wrong side of that chart more times than I probably care to admit. And I'm guessing that some of you have been too.

But when I reflect on my life, on my parenting, the thing that I am most proud of is when people tell me how great my kids are. Not the great accomplishments that they make, necessarily, but who they have become, how they reflect Jesus, and the fruit that comes from the Spirit. It's those eulogy qualities that we are talking about. There is nothing better. Nothing.

In fact, I just received a message last week. I got a DM on Instagram from one of our difference makers here who was at kids' camp with my son, Camden, last week. He sent me this message and I'm going to read it for you guys. I don't know him. He doesn't know me. I met him today, incredible guy. He said: Hey, Bart. I serve at Traders Point Northwest in Kids' and I met your son, Camden, at camp this week and I wanted to share some things with you.

He was a phenomenal leader at camp. Camden was constantly plugged into the boys and making himself present. You can tell by the way that his group interacted that they respected him and I wholeheartedly believe that it's because he led with love and was intentional with his time with them there. I only saw him without his group when he was helping the Allendale staff by picking up trash and pushing a broom at the end of a meal. It was in those moments that his boys saw him serving them, just like Christ.

I did get a chance to chat with him a few times between activities before we left today and I shared with him how awesome it is to see him lead by example, even for his own generation. What a special kid you have.

Wow, eulogy qualities over resume qualities. Parent goal right there. And, to all of those parents who are in the phase of having kids say no for six months straight, there is redemption for you. Incredible. I'm so proud of my kids. I hear that about both of my kids all of the time. And I received three texts that week about Camden.

But here's the thing. I hear that about many of our leaders and that tells me a lot about our leaders too. We have incredible leaders investing into our next generation here at Traders Point. Yeah. Can we celebrate our next gen leaders? I've already told you guys this, all discipleship is spiritual parenting. These are the goals that I want to have in my parenting. And I believe you do too. For some of us today, this is a call back to center, a reclaiming of a forgotten way, a better way.



Here's the thing. Parents, you can make a choice. You can choose to leave this place the exact same way you came. You can choose to follow the status quo and cruise right on by. That's in your power to do. But you can also make the choice right here, right now, to leave this place differently than how you came, better than you came, more intentional than you came.

I believe there are people listening to my voice who are going to make a change that will literally change the way they parent, that will change their family tree, that will change their kids, grandkids, and other people they invest in. For those of you who aren't parents here today, I want you to know something about parents. We are really hard on ourselves. And moms are particularly hard on themselves. Amen? I know you are moms.

And there is a reason why. There is an enemy who wants to destroy your family, there is an enemy who wants you to believe lies that aren't true. And I just want to say today: enough is enough. He wants to tell us that we haven't done enough. He wants to tell us that we messed up too much, that there is no chance of redeeming our kids and we can't right the ship. And God says otherwise. He literally specializes in making broken things new.

So, let's let yesterday be yesterday. Let's let truth win over lies. And let's let today be a brand-new day. Parenting is not hard. It is impossible. It's why we need God's help. And that's why I'm thankful that He gave us this forgotten way, to make us battle proof.

Now, listen. Church, you will not be perfect parents. But you can be purposeful parents.

You know, I often get asked, as a pastor, by parents who want to know, "What are some recommendations of books we should get?" For grandparents who want to know what they should do, "Do you have any recommendations?"

I often tell them the same thing. I say, "Pick one." They are like, "What do you mean?" I say, "Pick one. Go to Amazon and pick one. It doesn't matter what book you choose because you've already told me everything I need to know about you as a parent. The fact that you care and are intentional is more important than the book title you choose."

You might be thinking, "This is all great, Pastor Bart. But what do we do?" It's the same thing here. Do something. Do something that you aren't currently doing to reclaim this forgotten way.

Maybe for your family you and your family recite the Shema every day as a family. Maybe for some of you, you become a better disciple by getting in Rooted and getting in a small group.



For some of you, maybe you redeem road time or bedtime or screen time. Maybe you find a way to put God's Word in front of your eyes and the heart of your family. Maybe you prioritize spiritual development over every other kind. You see, the Shema is an instruction and a declaration. Are you bold enough today to make it your declaration? There are four things that I see to sum up our message for today:

Commit wholeheartedly to God's commands
Repeat them again and again
Talk about them in regular rhythms
Keep them in front of our eyes and heart

We are to commit wholeheartedly to God's commands. We are to repeat them again and again. We are to talk about them in our regular rhythms. And we are to keep them in front of our eyes and in front of our heart.

Parents, we are in a battle. And if you want to be battle proof, you can be. Remember the forgotten way. Remember the Lord who is great and glorious. And fight for your family.

Some of you came in here today on the verge of tapping out, throwing in the towel, and walking out the door. No. Not today. Fight for your family. Fight for your children. You fight for your business. You fight for your bottom line. I see some of you fighting for your parking spot out there. Be honest. Let's fight for our families.

Church, what would it look like if every Traders Point parent repeated, "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength," rather than repeating, "Go out there and do your best."?

Or, if we took just one return trip each week from school, the game, the show, and we talked about how God is at work in us and through us rather than how we worked at whatever that thing was?

What if every parent invested the same amount of time and energy into our kids' spiritual development as we did their scholastic or athletic development? What if we taught our kids about the principles of giving God your first and your best with all of the resources that we steward, not just being financially independent or finding a job they like?



What if we reclaimed the forgotten way that could make us battle proof?
Church, it would change lives, it would change families, it would change our city.
Does anybody want a family like that today?

Church, my question to you is: Will you reclaim that forgotten way today?
If you are a parent and you want that today, I want that for you and I'm going to pray a prayer of blessing over you. So, I want to ask you right now to stand to your feet if you are a parent and you want that for your family. At all of our campuses, we're standing all around the room. Let's celebrate our parents one more time. Come on.

Parents, I want you to do one thing, just one thing—to obey the words that we read today. That's what it means to be a disciple. We obey those commands. You heard something today that you have the power to change. Change it. Reclaim road time. Reclaim bedtime. Redeem those things. Put God's Word in front of the eyes of your family. Invest in their spiritual development more than those other things. There you will find families who are truly battle proof. Let me pray for you.

God, I thank you for each man and woman who are standing, every child, every family that is represented here today. God, I agree with them that You would give them exactly what they need, the boldness and the courage to become the primary disciple maker of their children and their family. Lord, that we would reclaim the great Shema for our family, that we would acknowledge that You are the God of all things and that we love You with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Lord that we would wholeheartedly commit to Your commands and Your ways today.

God, I pray that You give them courage and that You give them encouragement to be the primary disciple makers of their children. God, our church needs it and our world needs it and our kids need it. So, give us the grace to do it. To give You honor and glory. We pray this together in Jesus' name: Amen. Amen. Let's put that declaration today into words as we worship. Let's proclaim Jesus over our children and our families.

