

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

LONG GAME PARENTING | THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT

LINDSAY + AARON BROCKETT | APRIL 16, 2023

Alright. Hey, I want to welcome all of you and everyone gathered across all of our locations and anybody joining us online.

Today we are kicking off a four-week series of messages we're calling *The Cumulative Effect*. And if that sounds familiar to any of you it's because about six years ago we did this series and God used it in some phenomenal ways. And we want to revisit some of those same principles for a couple of reasons.

Number one, it's been a minute. There is a lot that has happened in the last six years or so. And we just need to be reminded of some of these key truths that God spoke into the life of our church. And, a whole bunch of you weren't here six years ago.

So, all new fresh material but kind of the same concept. And the concept of *The Cumulative Effect* is simply this. When it comes to growth of any kind: spiritual, emotional, relational growth or really the Bible word after you come to faith in Jesus Christ...

We're saved by grace through faith in the finished work of Jesus alone—and then after that we put in some effort and we put in some work to grow in our formation as we grow to look more like Jesus. So we're not trying to earn salvation. We're not trying to keep salvation. We're trying to grow to look more like Jesus. That's called sanctification.

And sanctification or formation of any kind doesn't happen overnight. But it happens little by little in the small, daily decisions that we make that accumulate over time. So that's what this series is about.

We're going to walk through a number of different topics over the next few weeks together. But today, my lovely bride, Lindsay, has joined me on stage to talk about parenting. So, give it up for Lindsay.

Now, don't tell her I said this, but you know one of the things that you just need to know about Lindsay is that she, this woman right here, I don't have a ministry at Traders Point without her. In my lowest of lows, she keeps me in it. She speaks necessary truth into my life when no one else will or when I don't want to hear it. She just keeps me in it. She is full of so much wisdom and discernment and grace.

And you don't necessarily see her on the platform for a couple of different reasons. Now, she used to serve on the worship team around here. Some of you might remember that. And several years ago she decided to step away from that, primarily around her role and responsibility with our kids. That was one of several reasons.



And Lindsay, you actually did a teaching with me about 11 years ago. You were pregnant with our youngest, Kadence. Kadence is 11 now so that tells you how long ago it's been. And we did a message together on parenting.

At the time it was the most requested, downloaded message I'd ever preached. And I don't know, I'm not quite sure how I feel about that, honestly. But that actually will tell you the kind of wisdom and discernment she has.

However, public speaking and speaking from the platform really, if she were to be honest, is not her thing. She loves deeply. She would just prefer to love our church from back behind the scenes. However, two or three months ago we were talking about parenting. We were in the kitchen. She was just sharing with me some of the things that God had been teaching her.

And we were kind of processing that together and you said to me, "Hey, if there is ever a time when I might share some of these things with the church family, I'd be willing to do that."

So, Lindsay. What is it that God has been doing in your heart that led to that conversation between us?

Lindsay

Well, as you said this is not my favorite thing. So I appreciate your grace. I've been sensing lately that God is just pushing me to grow outside of my comfort zone. He's stirred a passion in my heart for parenting and He's just teaching me things that I feel I need to share with others.

In many ways being a kid is harder today than it has ever been. For all kinds of reasons: Social media, global events, pressure, and anxiety. Therefore being a parent is harder than it has ever been as well.

I've talked to a lot of people who are struggling with this. One of the primary callings on my life is to parent our kids really well. And I have a lot more work to do and a lot more to learn.

Aaron

Yeah. So do I. You know, one of the things that is such a privilege for me is that I just get this front-row seat to watch you mother our kids. And you are so amazing at it. So thank you for being willing to have the courage to come up and share with us some wisdom.

I know you're not a fan of being up here on stage so it means a lot.

Lindsay

Yeah. But I'm a fan of you.

Aaron

Oh. Gosh, you're making me cry.



Well, Lindsay and I, this June, will have been married 24 years. This woman is a saint because of everything she has put up with.

We started having kids when we were just kids. We were not ready for this. One of the most astounding things to me is when you get a job you go through certain training. When you get a driver's license, you have to take a test and pass. You don't have to do any of that to become a parent.

I remember we were living in California at the time, clear across the country from our families doing one of the hardest things we'd ever done in our life—plant a church, which just creates all kinds of stress and strain on a marriage relationship.

We weren't around any family at all and I'll never forget, it was a Wednesday, and you said, "I'm not feeling quite right," so you stopped and got a pregnancy test on the way home. You came out of the bathroom and you said, "It's positive." Ten minutes later I regained consciousness, because we weren't necessarily trying to have kids at the time. And we just weren't ready at all for any of this.

So we had our son, Conor, in 2002. Then shortly after that we had our daughters. We've made so many mistakes and we have stumbled along the way. And yet God has been so good and He's been so gracious to us. We really have great kids. They are not perfect but they are great kids.

Here's a picture of our family, just a recent picture. Lindsay is going to tell you who they are.

Lindsay

Conor is our son. He is 20. He is in his second year of college. Campbell is 18. She graduates from high school next month. Kennedy is 16. She is a sophomore. And Kadence is 11. She is in 5th grade.

Aaron

Yeah. It's wild. Even looking at that picture...

Thank you guys. Appreciate it.

Any of you who are parents, you kind of know this, you're looking at your kids and it's weird how they are such a mixture of the two of you. And I can look at all four of our kids and I can see a little bit of me and I can see a little bit of Lindsay.

My son and my youngest daughter probably favor me a little bit more. Is that fair to say?

Lindsay

Yes.

Aaron

And then our two middle daughters, they favor Lindsay just a little bit more. And you just look at all of that—it's the dynamics around parenting—it's just so wild to look at that.

But honestly, our kids really are great kids. They love the Lord, not because of us but in spite of me, because of her.

And you know, as we say all of that just to introduce this topic and our family to you, I just want to acknowledge this. I remember before I became a dad, long before I even thought about being a parent, if I were to come to church and hear a message on parenting here's what I'd be tempted to do. I'd be tempted to check out. I would be like, "This doesn't have anything to do with me. This doesn't apply."

Some of you might be single adults. Maybe some of you don't have kids, aren't ready for kids. Maybe even in a more painful season some of you would really like to have kids and you're in a season right now where that's not happening. Or maybe your kids are already grown and gone and you're an empty nester. And I just want to acknowledge that you're in the room.

In fact, this last week I invited somebody to church and then after I got done with the conversation I was like, "He doesn't have any kids and we're going to be talking about parenting this week."

So, I just want to thank you for being willing to listen to this and don't check out. Here are a couple of reasons why. Number one: God's Word is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword and it penetrates. And speaking from experience, oftentimes those passages on those topics that I don't think have any immediate application for me, God's got a word for me and God wants to speak into my life.

One day when you are a parent, or maybe you'll never be a parent, however, there is still application for your life, One of the things that we're going to talk about is that a big thing that impacts so much of our parenting is what we might call our family of origin where past baggage or trauma ends up impacting the way we parent our kids. And I would also say that impacts your interpersonal relationships so there is something there that you can learn.

The other thing I would say is this. I have learned more about the theology of God's grace by becoming a dad than I have from any books, or sermons, or classes that I have taken. So there's some things here just around our vertical relationship with God that God wants to teach us from some of these parenting principles that we are going to talk about.

But here's one of the big things that I just want to lay out for you. It's going to be a real paradigm shift for so many of us, regardless of whether you have kids or not.

Your greatest accomplishment might not be something you do but someone you raise or influence.

Your greatest accomplishment may not be something that you do but it is somebody that you raise or you influence. Relationships are so vitally important. And your biggest



contribution to this world may not be the money that you make or the thing that you produce or sell, but it's the person that you impact.

Some of you may not have kids, but you have nieces and nephews. Some of you may not have kids but you have a student ministry life group that you are going to lead or you're going to be a sponsor at a CYI trip or maybe one of our Kids' camps and God is going to use you in that way to impact them.

Regardless, our church wants to lift up and to invest in the next generation. And so, you're influencing someone in your life right now.

A couple of key passages of Scripture... Lindsay and I were sitting down walking through this talk and we really want to lay the foundation for this with Psalm 127 and 2 Corinthians, chapter 12.

So Lindsay is going to read Psalm 127, verses 1 through 3.

Lindsay

"Unless the LORD builds a house, the work of the builders is wasted. Unless the LORD protects a city, guarding it with sentries will do no good. It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives rest to his loved ones. Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him."

Aaron

And those three verses do such a great job of summarizing the times in which we live. For so many of us the pressure coming against our homes is just the pace of life. Our calendars are so full. The pressures and responsibilities of work, all of the extracurriculars, and we can just get so loaded down that we end up not being fully present with our kids or our family. We check out. We numb out because of all of these pressures that are coming our way.

Verse 3 says, "Children are a gift from the Lord," they are a reward from Him. That is something you just don't hear from our society. Our society sees kids as an inconvenience or something that is a distraction. But we just really want to come back to this truth that children are a gift from God and they are a reward.

And every single one of us is never fully ready for this task. All of us feel inadequate to a certain extent. And that's why we need the truth of 2 Corinthians, chapter 12, verse 9. Paul writes these words. He says:

"...My grace is all you need." And then he says, "My power works," what? "...works best," it works best how? When I recognize that I'm weak. "So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."

Every single one of us have weaknesses, parenting in particular. We've got weaknesses as a parent and that is an opportunity, that is an opportunity to invite the power of God in to

that, “God, I’m inadequate in this. I’ve tried, and tried, and tried. It’s not working. I’ve said all of the things. They are not responding. I feel like a failure.”

That is an opportunity for us to invite the power of God into the midst of our weaknesses. His grace covers us. And we need that because right now, as Lindsay just said a minute ago, it has never been harder, we believe, in the history of the world to be a kid. There is so much anxiety, so much pressure—I think there are a number of things that would try to explain as to why that is.

I kind of look back at our childhood. I was largely oblivious to what was going on around the world. The only way I knew is if my parents had one of the three news channels on—we only had three. Remember those days? That was amazing.

Now everybody is... There are talking heads all over the place giving us commentary around the world.

And if my parents had one of those on, I would over hear in the background. But largely, I was just kind of unaware.

Now a days kids are exposed to the pressures on the other side of the world all of the time and it’s just creating all of this anxiety and pressure. So it’s never been harder to be a kid, therefore it has never been harder to be a parent of those kids.

Last week, if you were here for the Easter survey, one of the questions that we asked, a fill in the blank one was: Right now what is one of life’s greatest challenges for you? And we haven’t processed through all of those surveys just yet, but my team came to me, I think it was on Wednesday, and they said, “Hey, we just want to let you know that a large percentage of those answers or responses was parenting.

A lot of you are saying, “The number one challenge for me right now is knowing how to parent.” And statistics just back this up. Some of the latest statistics say:

–56% of parents lack confidence about their parenting.

So, if you’re here today and you’re like, “Man, I’m trying to do the best that I can, but I’m not quite sure how I’m doing.” Then you are in good company. Well over half feel that way.

–71% of parents struggle to find the time to enjoy activities with their children.

–80% want more information about how to improve their relationship with their kids.

This next stat from George Bama, I honestly think is really, really tragic. He reports that 62% of parents that they interviewed defined successful parenting as having done the best they could, regardless of the outcomes.

So it’s this idea like, “I’m going to cross my fingers, close my eyes, take a deep breath, and hope they turn out despite my best efforts. And while we cannot control the direction of our kids’ lives and the decisions that they make, we can be a little bit more intentional than that.

I think when it comes to parenting, we feel so inadequate and at a loss. Lindsay, where do you think these feelings of inadequacy come from as a parent? Both personally and for us collectively.

Lindsay

For me, personally, parenting teenagers is like holding up a mirror. I've had to recognize that my past experiences in life are profoundly influencing how I interact with and parent our kids.

I've learned so much from Adam Young on his podcast. There is a link between our failures as a parent and unaddressed parts of our story. Every parent knows what it is like to lose it with their children. We've all said and done things that hurt our children unintentionally. Most parenting failures are a result of what we might call dysregulation in the parent, which is caused by some sort of processed trauma or harm from your past.

Our child says or does something that pushes up against us and then we react to it emotionally rather than respond to it. If we haven't grieved the emotional losses we experienced as a little girl or boy, it will be reenacted in our parenting.

So when we become dysregulated we will usually do whatever it takes to become regulated again. When we lose it with our kids, that's what we're doing. We're using them to regulate ourselves, which then causes them harm. We cannot be a safe space for our kids if we are not curious about why we react instead of respond to them.

Aaron

I remember the first time you said that to me, you brought that up, and I just had this immediate flashback to when I lost it with our son. It's only happened once or twice. I'm just joking.

You said that to me and I remember... You remember this? Conor was like maybe eight or nine and he was traveling with me. It was a Sunday afternoon. And this is back when we were in Saturday night services. So I think I just preached four or five times that weekend. I was utterly exhausted.

We go to the airport. Conor and I get to the gate. We've got these bags with us. And he says to me, "Dad, can I go to the candy store and get some candy?" And honestly, I was so annoyed. I was like, "Fine. I don't even know why you need it." I give him the cash. I didn't want to leave the gate because we had our seats right next to the door and we had our bags and everything.

So he leaves, goes to the candy store, comes back. We're getting ready to board in just a few minutes. And he walks up to me with all of this candy and he stops and he looks at me and he goes, "Oh, Dad. I forgot to pay."

And, immediately, I lost it. I just started laying into him. This was just the last straw for me. I'm sitting there just kind of chewing him out and all of a sudden I hear this lady, she

was sitting right next to me. She goes, “Sir. Sir.” She said, “It’s going to be okay.” She said, “I’ll watch your bags. You take your son to the candy store, sort things out.”

And immediately, as soon as she said that—just like what you said with the mirror—it was as if she was putting up a mirror in front of me and I realized how ridiculous I looked and sounded. The next thing that I thought was, “I really, really hope she doesn’t go to our church.”

I’m being really honest, man. I’ve had so many of those moments where it had nothing to do with my son. That was a thing in me. That was an unprocessed thing in me that I needed to get really curious about.

Even now, at times, whenever Conor and I are at the airport, we walk past that candy store and I’m like, “By chance you don’t have any memories around any of that do you?” And he’s like, “No, Dad. I remember.” And I’m like, “Oh, man.”

Every time I walk by that candy store... I’ll be at the airport tomorrow, I’ll walk by that candy store and I’ll just get this emotional wince. I just totally messed that up. And I think that is going to be the norm for so many of us as parents.

You’re going to lose it with your kids. And I think at that moment what you do next is so important. It’s important to get really curious about why you reacted that way instead of responding. It’s important to do the clean up with your kids and to say, “You know what? That had nothing to do with you. I am so sorry that I responded that way. Would you give me some grace?”

And you know, Lindsay, one of the things that I just admire about you as we’ve had kids over the last 20 years is just that you are so much better at this than me, both naturally and you’re a student of it. You just do such a great job of learning how to connect with each one of our kids in the way they need connection. So, talk to us a little bit of what God has been teaching you about that.

Lindsay

We are all created in the image of the triune God. Therefore our greatest need as human beings is connection. As parents we need to ensure that our child feels felt. You feel felt when another person is attuned to what you are feeling on the inside and you have a sense that they are then with you. This is empathy.

When our children have big emotions, they need you to join them in that feeling. Connection is about your presence with them far more than your words. What your child needs more than anything else is an emotional connection with you. When they feel and receive this then it leads to a secure attachment and emotional health.

I really like this quote from Daniel Siegel, author of the book *Parenting From the Inside Out*. “The key to staying connected to your child, even during discipline, is to align yourself with your child’s emotional state.”

Helping your kids feel felt is not about giving them what they desire, it's about helping them know that as their parent we understand what they are feeling inside of their body. So as a parent we can empathize with our child's desires without agreeing to give them what they want. Your facial expression and tone of voice lets your child know you are feeling something of their sadness or their anger.

Aaron

That's so good. And probably one of those things that I know for me, man, I wish I would have taken a class on that or learned that or read that book before we had kids. And all of us can probably have that emotional lens where we recognize we've done that with our kids.

So what type of encouragement would you give to parents who are sitting out here? Maybe they've got little babies at home, toddlers, teenagers, or kids who are grown and gone and they are sitting there going, "Ah, I've had my own candy store moment. I've had my own moment when I just blew right past the feelings of my child." What kind of encouragement would you give to them?

Lindsay

Every parenting failure can become an opportunity if we are willing to do the work of repair. The goal of parenting isn't meant to never mess up or cause harm to your children. We are all imperfect and broken human beings. If we never do harm, then we would have no need for the cross.

The goal of parenting is to repair harm when you do it while releasing the shame you may feel because of it. Repentance is something that we get to do without shame because our failures as a parent have been nailed to the cross. God can use our failures for good.

I love what it says in Joel 2:25. "God can restore and give you back what was taken."

With God's grace we can repair, with the hope that God will redeem what we have messed up. It's never too late. Jesus delights to heal our kids in the places where we have unintentionally hurt them.

Aaron

Amen. So good. Some of you need to receive that today. Um, receive that. If some of you don't want to because you are condemning yourself, you're shaming yourself, you're beating yourself up, you need to receive that. Your heavenly Father wants to give that to you.

I think about all of the jobs I've had in my life. You know all of them, the longer I have the job, the better I get at them because I just learn things along the way. Except for one. Being a dad. The longer I'm a dad, the more I realize what I don't know.

And here's, I think, part of the challenge. When our kids were babies, I got pretty good at it. And then it changed. We added another one. It's kind of like the Jim Gaffigan thing. You want to know what having four kids is like? It's like drowning and somebody hands you a baby.

It's that whole idea that you get kind of good at the toddler thing and then they become middle schoolers. And you get pretty good at that and then they become teenagers. And then the gloves come off. Like, welcome to the jungle trying to figure it all out.

It kind of reminds me of Pastor Larry Osborne. He was joking about this and he was reflecting on 40 years of preaching on parenting. And he said this.

He goes: "My titles of my sermons on parenting have changed over the years." So he said, "Way back before I had kids the title of my sermon was *Ten Rules for Raising Righteous Kids*. And then we had a child and the sermon title got changed to *Seven Guidelines for Raising Godly Kids*.

"And then we had child number two and the sermon title changed to *Three Strategies for Raising Good Kids*. And after the third child it was just *Three Suggestions for Surviving Parenthood*."

You know, I'm just speaking for me personally. But I think all of us need to look at this to a certain extent when it comes to our careers and what we do for a living and how that impacts our kids. All of our careers do.

If you're traveling a lot, or have a high stress job so you come home and you are tempted to numb out and you're not fully present with your kids, or you're working at home and you don't know where the boundaries lie, 6 o'clock comes and you're still working—there are all of these challenges with our careers.

I think for me one of the things is that, as a young man, I felt called by God into ministry. I was 19 years old. It was before we started dating and long before we ever had kids. It did not even cross my mind how what I do might impact my wife and kids.

That's something to think about. Some of you are preachers' kids. You have the secret handshake. We know who you are. And I just need to think about raising preachers' kids and what that means.

Now, here's the thing. That has come with tremendous blessings. Our church has been so good to our kids. When we moved here our kids were really, really little. Conor was maybe four or so. And Campbell was two. Kennedi was maybe one, less than one. Kadence wasn't even born yet. They've grown up here and you guys have been so good and so gracious to them.

It's not that I have to worry about you, it's about what other people who know who they are will say to them that maybe creates a certain set of expectations. All of my kids have come up to me and said, "Yeah, Dad. Just because of what you do they think we

know the Bible inside and out. And so they will ask us hard Bible questions. And we don't know." That's pressure.

Or maybe things that they say to them that we didn't even know about when they were younger and as they become teenagers they kind of open up a little more about that.

One of my favorite examples of this is, I think it was back in 2015. We were traveling. We were on the road. We were heading out. We were on the west coast somewhere. I think our kids were like 10, eight, four, and one.

We were at an IHOP. We were sitting at a booth. We'd been driving all day. I'm exhausted. And they were being really rowdy and loud.

And those of you with big families, you know what it's like to go to a restaurant with a big family. We become a spectacle. And everybody is looking at us like, "Four kids. Do they know how that happens?"

So we were sitting in a booth and our kids were being loud. People are giving us looks. And so I shushed them right as the waiter walked up (I feel like your respect level for me as a dad is going down the longer the sermon goes. Dad of the year right here).

So I'm shushing them as the waiter comes up to us. And here's what the waiter says. He leans in and he looks at our kids and he goes, "Hey, guys. You be as rowdy as you want. I don't see a preacher around here. Do you?" Our kids immediately looked at me and I'm like, "Shut up."

So I think just one of the things that would be so helpful is just acknowledging your career—the pressures of your career and how that is shaping your kids. Just acknowledge that.

One of the things that I think is the most helpful thing here as our kids have become teenagers is that I've just started to say things like this to them, "Hey, guys. I volunteered for this. You didn't. I signed up for this. You didn't. You got born into this and so that comes with responsibilities and blessings. Is there anything I can do to help carry the weight of that? Is there anything I can do help alleviate some of the pressure that you feel?"

I think our kids have responded well to that. It's meant a lot to them.

You know, there might be something today as we've been talking about this that was said and immediately you may be feeling some shame and some guilt and some inadequacy. You wished you'd heard some of these principles a little bit earlier.

Some of you right now, you're just kind of feeling like you've blown it. And what we want you to know today as we begin to wrap up our time is, it is never too late. God's grace covers over our shortcomings and failures as a parent.

And right now I want to teach you, as your pastor, to learn to discern the voices in your head. So right now there is something called... When we open up God's Word and we begin to share, there should be something that you feel.

So right now there may be a voice that we might call the *still, small voice*, the voice of the Holy Spirit that is speaking. And the voice of the Holy Spirit can sometimes speak some uncomfortable truths into our lives. It can make us squirm a little bit. And that's a good and healthy thing. That's called conviction.

And when you feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit, man, you embrace that, you lean into that. You know that God's grace covers you so that way you can run after who God wants you to be. Maybe you're not there yet.

There is another voice though. And that's the voice of our enemy. And the voice of the enemy does not speak to bring about conviction. The voice of the enemy speaks to bring about condemnation. Those are very different.

I know right now there are a lot of parents who are listening to the voice of condemnation and are feeling utterly defeated. We can put a lot of pressure on ourselves in the midst of a society that puts a lot of pressure on us and we compound it.

Maybe you've walked through a divorce. So you're carrying the guilt and the baggage of all of that. Maybe you've lost a job or you've got an addiction. There is all of this pressure on you.

We live in a social media world where you look at your friends and their families and the vacations that they are giving their kids and the clothes that their kids are wearing and where their kids are going to school and it's just all of this mounting pressure. And we all can just feel, potentially, like failures.

I think that much of this has been contributed to a psychologist by the name of B. F. Skinner. His philosophy was like this.

Good environment = good children

Children are blank slates, therefore a good environment will always equal good children. So if you had an environment that wasn't so good, then you only have yourself to blame if your kids are bad. And that is just a bunch of garbage.

As Christians we've sort of bought into that. We've even hijacked a verse for it. Proverbs, chapter 22, verse 6. Some of you know the verse, "Train up a child in the way he should and when he grows older he will not depart from it."

That is a great verse. I believe in the wisdom of that. I believe that it is true. However, we oftentimes, as we quote it or read it, fail to remember that that is coming from the book of Proverbs, not the book of promises. The book of Proverbs is a list of wisdom principles for how life generally works out, not a recipe or an equation for how life always works out.

That equation of good environment always means good children, that didn't even work for God.

Here's what I mean. God's first kids, Adam and Eve—here's the equation.

Perfect environment (Garden of Eden // no sin nature) + Perfect Father (God) = rebellion

They were in a perfect environment in the Garden of Eden with no sin nature plus a perfect Father. Nobody did this better than God, He's God. It still equaled rebellion.

So what the Bible is showing us is that your kids are sinners just like you. And they've got free will. So you can do the absolute best job possible and they may still grow up to make poor decisions and maybe even veer away from God. And it doesn't necessarily mean that you did anything wrong.

Some of you right now, maybe you thought that you did everything right. And you thought you raised them in a godly home and you did the devotions and you thought you were doing all of the things you should do. And then they grew up and they made poor decisions. Or maybe they've even veered away from you. And now you are like, "I don't understand what happened there."

I think that when it comes to grace... Here's the other thing. Some of you raised kids in the exact same environment and they turned out dramatically different. So I think one of the things that we've got to lean on is to recognize that we need the grace of God.

I want to speak some words of good news into some places of despair. Moms and Dads your kids don't need you to be their Savior. They already have One. His name is Jesus. He's already done everything to redeem. And your child's salvation is not dependent upon how good a job you do, it's dependent upon what Jesus has done. So you do the best job that you can to cultivate the soil and try to set up a way for them to have a real, authentic relationship with Jesus. But at the end of the day much of that is outside of your control.

If you need another example, Jesus didn't have any kids, but He did have 12 disciples who acted like kids. And Jesus had three years where it was His full-time job investing into them, pouring into them, discipling them. And we have one of them who went completely rogue, off the rail, sold Jesus out and then he committed suicide.

And then we have the others who either very specifically denied Jesus or they inadvertently denied Jesus, but all of them failed in a tragic way.

Now, here's the question? Did Jesus fail as a disciple maker? And we would say, "Well, no. He didn't because at the end of the day they had to make some of their own decisions."

And your children don't need perfect parents. What they need is authentic parents who are willing to do what Lindsay pointed out. Get really curious about why you reacted instead of responded, to lean in and say, "Man, I'm broken. In what places is my

brokenness affecting my kids?” And to confess your sins and to own up to your mistakes.

Some of the most powerful words that I think you can say to your kids, especially as they get older, is you just walk in and you say, “Man, I really messed that up. Would you extend some grace to me? I’m stumbling myself through this as well.”

Our job is not to be a perfect parent, our job is to introduce them to the only perfect parent there is and that is their heavenly Father.

I would simply say this to you today. Especially if your kids are older and they’ve veered away from God. I love what Reggie Joiner says about this. He says, “Above all else preserve the relationship because out of relationship you can have influence. You have no relationship, you have no influence.”

What the Bible is showing us as parents is that we have less control over what our kids do with their lives and decisions that they make, but we have more influence over them than anyone else. And that’s how I want you to see yourselves.

Your primary job as the parent of your kids is not to provide for them, even though that is really important. Your most important job as a parent is not to give them the childhood you never had, although that would be a nice thing. But it’s not your primary priority. Your primary priority as a parent is not to see that they excel at travel sports or get into the right university. Your primary priority as a parent is to disciple your kids.

It’s not to drop them off at Kids’ Ministry and outsource discipleship. It’s not to say, “Hey, you know what? The Student Ministry will take care of that.” No. Our job in Student Ministry and Kids’ Ministry is to come around you and to equip you to do what only you can. And that is to disciple your kids.

Right now we’ve got a whole bunch of staff serving this upcoming generation. The generation right now who are ages 12 to 17, Bama is calling that the open generation. They are the most open to the gospel of any other generation that we’ve seen in recent history. That should be good news.

And right now the age group of 10 to 12, that set of students, they were asked who are the top spiritual influencers in your life? Do you know what the number one answer was? Their parents.

I’m Generation X. My parents were like number 20 on the list. We were a very jaded generation. You can pray for us. They were not number one on the list.

Number two was their pastor, which I felt kind of shocked by—just given all of the suspicion around those in authority now a days. Number five was the Internet. Praise God. They are going, “Nah, the Internet is number five.” It’s on down the road.

Right now, this generation is eager for the Word of God. Um, I’m so thankful for digital Bibles and our friends who have produced them. But, ages 12 to 17 are saying, “Well, we kind of prefer paper Bibles.”

So our Student Ministry, at the beginning of the year, purchased enough student paper Bibles to give out for all of 2023. And we had given them all away by the end of January. That's how hungry this generation is.

So there is good news. There is a silver lining around all of this. The next generation is waiting for us to pour into them and speak blessing into them.

Can I just say this? Those of you, whether you are a parent or not, you see a younger person who is serving in a way that you look at that and you're like, "Man, they are kind of serving in their wheelhouse. They've got a gift. God is using them," don't keep that to yourself. Speak that blessing over them.

You see them in the hallway... In fact, I say this to Ryan Bramlett and Kyle Riley all of the time. I'm like, "Hey, guys. You know that somebody is going to take our place one day. And the next lead pastor of Traders Point might be a kid in our Kids' Ministry." Find that kid and speak blessing into his life.

So, as a church we want to pour into the next generation, which means we need to bind up our wounds. We need to confess our sin. We need to do this hard work of God, saying, "God, would you please bring healing into my life so that I can do this?"

We want to give you a resource:

Learn more at tpcc.org/parents

You can go to that link. It's a live link right now. We're going to continue to update that throughout the year. Parents, right now, say that the top three challenges in parenting their kids are around: mental health, that's no surprise; technology; and sexuality. And we want to provide resources and tools to help you be conversant with your kids in those three areas.

Listen. If you don't disciple your kids, the world will. And they already are in each of those areas. So we need to talk about those areas because they are learning it from someone else. So we can come around to do just that.

What I want to do right now is I just want to pray a prayer of blessing over you. Lindsay, thanks for joining me and sharing your wisdom with us. Can we give it up for Lindsay one more time? Appreciate her.

I've asked my wife just to pray a prayer of blessing over you as we wrap up our time together.

Lindsay

Father, we come to You today with grateful hearts. You are such a good God and kind heavenly Father. Thank You for the grace You provide when we fall short of Your glory and standard.



I just want to lift up all of the parents listening to this today. I pray that You would silence the voice of the enemy who wants to accuse them, discourage them, and shame them.

I pray that the Holy Spirit would minister to any hurting hearts today. None of us are qualified to do this sacred job of stewarding the minds of the next generation.

We need Your help, Your wisdom, and Your grace. I pray that You would pour those out today on those who need them. Give us strength where we fall short and the courage to grow.

I lift up this next generation of kids and teenagers to You. They face so many pressures and challenges.

God, thank You for the cross of Jesus Christ, which tells us that there is always hope. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

