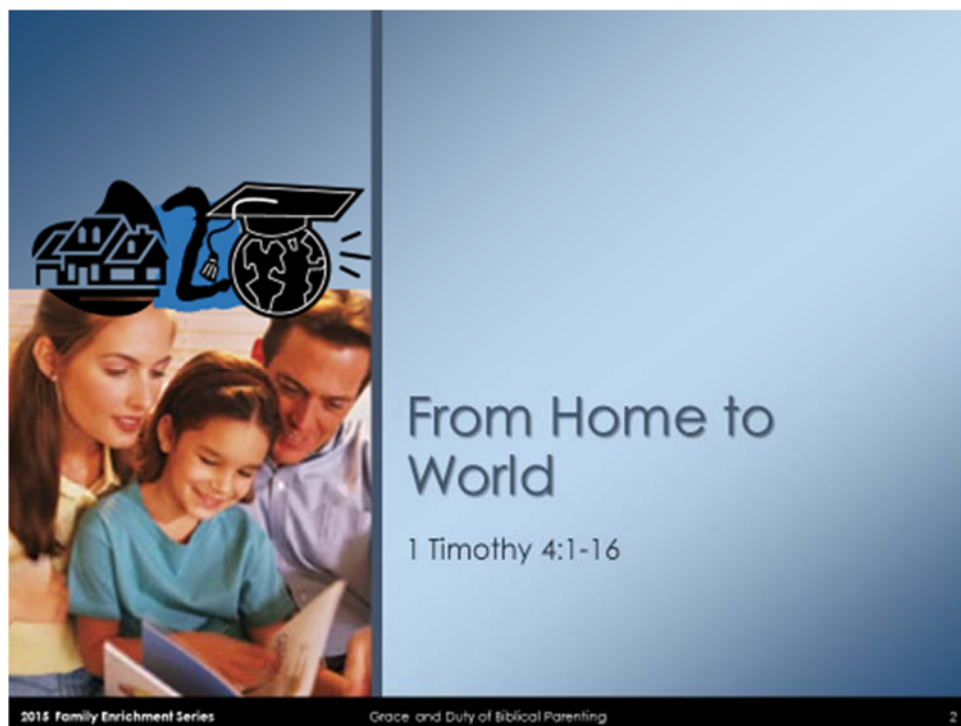
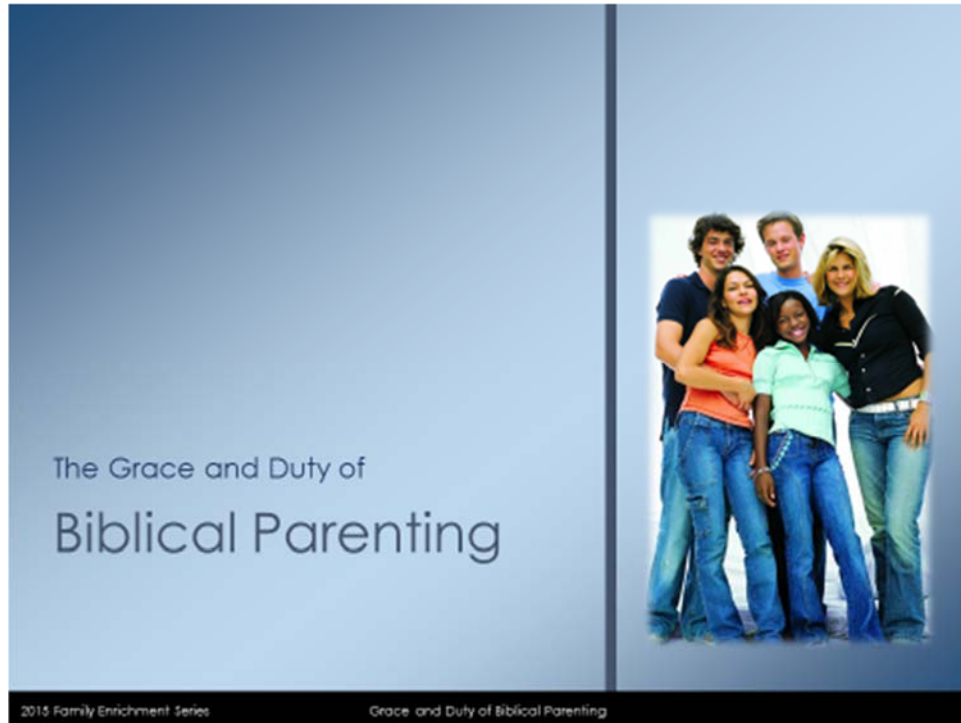


From Home to World

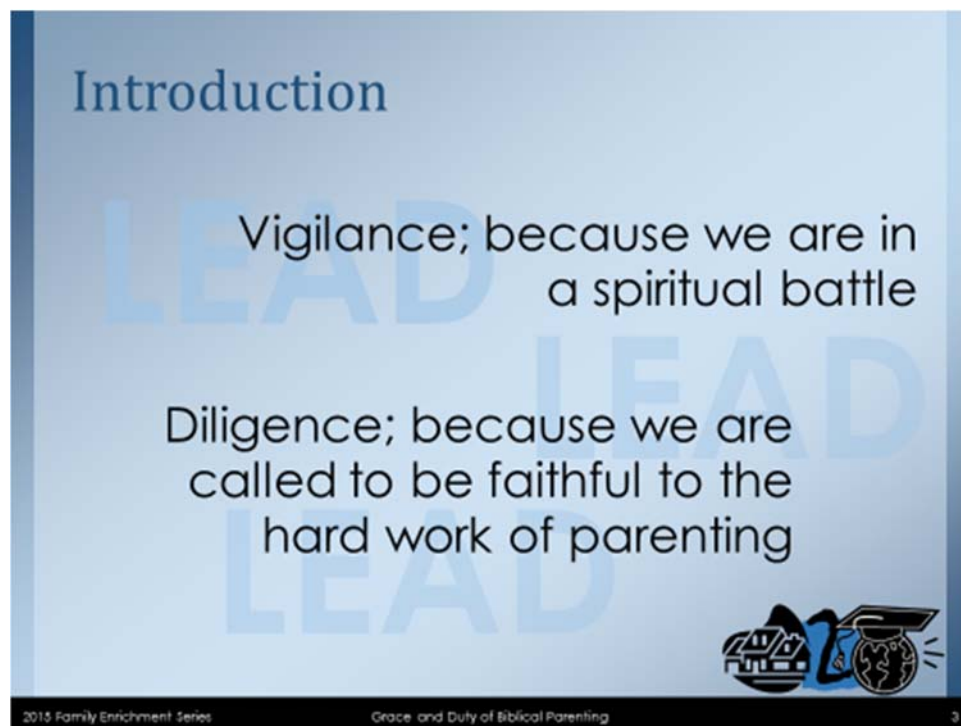
1 Tim. 4:1-16

Jan. 4, 2015 PM

Speaker: Pastor Mark Schindler



A home is a terrible thing to waste. I can tell you from experience. Looking back on over 25 years of parenting I can see the many times and opportunities squandered for the sake of personal ease and avoiding the hard work of parenting. Not that any of us are perfect parents. But our imperfections should never be an excuse for inaction. And trusting our children to God's sovereignty does not mean we simply sit back and let go.



For those of you with younger children, let me remind you that these days are precious. Ask any of us who have seen our children go from crawling to careers faster than we ever imagined. We look back and see a blur of images and memories; as days turned to weeks, that turned to months, that turned to years. Each day with each child is a precious gift as they make their journey from our homes and into the world. If it is your desire to lead your children through this transition, let me encourage you to lead them with equal parts of vigilance and diligence in your homes.

I say vigilance because I believe that scripture warns us that we are in a spiritual battle. We must lead as parents with an awareness that what is at stake is nothing less than the souls and eternal destiny of our children. As believing parents, we are to be the watchmen who stand alert and aware of a hostile world that surrounds our homes. We must understand that we live in a world that has great power to attract our children. We must understand the power of sin to deceive and blind them to deadly consequences of sin. Ultimately, we cannot may not prevent our children from engaging with and in the world; nor should we isolate ourselves. But be aware of how the world is entering your home and help our children understand it and interact with it a way that is righteous and wise.

And I say diligence because I believe that scripture calls us to be faithful to the hard work of parenting. We must understand that it is often a difficult task there are no guarantees for godly

or believing children. When Proverbs 22:6 speaks of training up a child, it should be read more as a warning than a promise. A child who is trained or left to go according to their own way will not depart from it when they leave home. So we must lead by striving to be godly parents as is pleasing to the Lord and relying upon God for the outcome. Scripture teaches us that task of raising children is to be done primarily in the context of our homes. And while we raise our children in the community of the church, it our role as parents to take that primary responsibility; even when it comes with help and guidance from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

This evening, it is my hope that I can provide a biblical context to helping and serving parents, grandparents, and potential parents as you consider leading children as they journey from home to world. My purpose this evening is to provide a framework for teaching and preparing our children as they move from the care and instruction of our homes to living independently in the world. To be sure, this is a 'big picture' kind of message. But I believe that having a foundational structure and approach is essential to living it out in the day to day opportunities that I know God will present each of you with as you raise your children in biblical wisdom and love.

[opening prayer]

1 Timothy 4:1-16

- ❑ A warning (v. 1-5)
- ❑ Two Instructions (v. 6-16)
 - ❑ Teach faith and sound doctrine
 - ❑ Toil and persist as faithful examples
- ❑ God places the primary context of teaching our children in the same place that our failures are most often exposed to others

2015 Family Enrichment Series Grace and Duty of Biblical Parenting 4

The passage for tonight's message in our series on the Grace and Duty of Parenting is found in 1 Timothy 4:1-16. In the greater context of this letter, Paul is addressing Timothy not only as a son, but as an Elder in the church. I believe in these instructions to Timothy on equipping the church, we can find application to equipping our children in a hostile and unbelieving world. In these verses Paul lays out themes of teaching and toiling, addressing Timothy's responsibility to care for his spiritual children.

One of the problems I find with topical messages is that you often do not have a single passage that compressively addresses the breadth of the subject. So it is with tonight's topic. I would also like to note that while this message is largely aimed at parents, young and old; I encourage teens to listen carefully as well. Join with your parents as they equip you to live well in the world. So that you may be mature both spiritually and individually as you prepare to live on your own. Look for ways to help them help you.

Let's turn to God's word. Please follow along as I read I Timothy 4.

"¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, ² through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, ³ who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer. ⁶ If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. ⁷ Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; ⁸ for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹ The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ Command and teach these things. ¹² Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³ Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. ¹⁴ Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵ Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. ¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Paul begins this section of his letter with a warning to prepare believers for maturity. In the first five verses Paul expresses concerns that before Christ's second coming there would be difficult days when false teachers will come and lead some astray. These teachers subvert the truth and seduce those who they can lead to doubt God and His word. Paul notes that some will depart from the faith. He warns Timothy that some of those in their midst would walk away from what they had been taught to follow after those who teach deceit and lies. There can be no doubt from the words "spirits" and "demons" used here that this was some form of a spiritual battle for the souls of those in the church.

As parents, we should heed this warning. Just as Timothy was to prepare the church for maturity, as parents, our role is to prepare our children to be spiritually mature. Despite the care of church and homes, some of our children will fall away. And if they are not led astray, they will certainly be tempted. They will be lured in by a world and a culture that will teach them to worship anything but God. Just like the prodigal son, some will forsake their family and abandon their faith to pursue a life of rebellion and self-satisfaction.

But even more dangerous to our children are those who masquerade themselves as purveyors of truth. They corrupt and dilute the gospel and truth of God's word having seared their own consciences to the truth. Parents, if you do not see the world as a spiritual enemy to your children then you need to biblically rethink how you engage it. In an age of electronic babysitters and devices capable of connecting our children to the worst of the world, now more than ever we must not underestimate what we are up against and what is at stake.

Please understand the seriousness of this warning. If you embrace or just ignore the world and the lies of a hostile culture, you will make it very hard for your children to embrace and sustain true faith in Christ. If your children do not understand the spiritual battle they will fight when they walk out of your home, they will be ill-equipped to deal with the temptation and half-truths they will face.

The last section of verses address the warning of the first five verses. In essence, it answers the question of how we keep from falling away from the faith. Here we have the heart of the passage and Paul's instructions to Timothy as he leads in the church. Verses 6 through 16 contain a number of instructions. But I want to focus on the two primary themes Paul highlights. The first of these is training and the second is toiling. We are commanded to do these two things as a church to keep the "some" from falling away. Let's look at the instructions from this passage that address these two themes.

First, let's look at training. Paul makes a number of points. In verse 6, he says we must be trained or taught in the words of faith and good doctrine. In verse 7 we are to be trained for godliness, which holds value both in this life and for eternity. In verse 11 we are to train by commanding and teaching these things. In verse 13 we see that we should be devoted to the public reading of scripture, exhortation or proclamation of truth, and teaching. And lastly, in verse 16, we are to take the responsibility of training seriously. Because the best way to counter error is to know the truth and be trained in it.

Second, let's look at toiling in this passage. Again, Paul gives several instructions. In verse 11 he notes that we toil and strive in this endeavor because of the hope we have in our God to save. In verse 12 we are to set an example so that our words are not undermined by our actions. In verse 15 we are to practice these things to the point of being saturated in them so that all may observe the way of our lives. And in verse 16 we are to persist and pursue these things that through our labor and love God will save us and others.

I would submit to you that we must follow this same approach as we prepare our children to engage the world while they are still in our homes. We must both train and toil for the sake of their souls. We do so with biblical wisdom and out of a deep love. The sense I have here, is that as parents, we make teaching a priority and then work hard at being faithful examples. And perhaps more importantly, there must be a visible connection between what we teach and what we do in our lives. In other words, our walk must reflect our talk. These two aspects of our parenting are inseparably linked. If we only talk and do not live out these things, we show that we really do not believe what we teach. If we only toil and do not teach, we fail to connect "why" we do with "what" we do. Our children will see only our actions and not our hearts.

Whether we are aware of it or not, our children do listen. They may not always respond the way we would like, but they were created to be listeners. So teach and instruct them well regardless of the outcome. But perhaps more importantly our children are watchers. They watch what we do. And they will often learn more from us by our actions than from our words. Because if they see great inconsistencies as we engage the world around us, they will learn that it does not matter for them as well.

And let's not forget that in the context of the home we tend live more as our true selves than outside the home. We can put on appearances at church or work. We can be at our best at social events. But home is where we most often let our guard down. Let's face it, other than our spouse, our children often see us at our worst. There are spiritual battles that go on inside our homes just as much as there are in the world. Let us work hard at making our homes a place of biblical counsel, forgiveness and grace, and an evident love for our Lord.

It is interesting that God places the primary context of teaching our children in the same place that our failures are most often exposed to others. Ok, it's not just interesting; it is often painful. But it is by design. God puts our children in a front row seat for us to teach, train, and instruct so that they mature and learn to engage the world under our watch and care. Yet from those same seats they also observe our weakness and failings as we engage with the world and others. And so it is our privilege to provide them many, many opportunities to see the gospel and its transforming power lived out before them. Both in our successes and maybe even more so in our failures.

Let's also acknowledge that we often view our success as parents by the righteousness of either our own or our children's behavior. That is, we measure our success by our ability to meet a certain standard or set of accomplishments as a parent or those of our children. This can be as simple as wanting our children to behave in public or at church so that we look like a good parent to others. Or wanting our children to be academic and professional successes so they can take care of themselves. We must guard against this natural, human tendency toward legalism and fully prepare our children to grow and go into the world with spiritual maturity.

It's not that good behavior and individual responsibility are bad, but they are not a biblical measure of success as a parent. Nor are we truly preparing them to live a life of faith on their own. We must always place the priority on the heart when training and toiling over the souls of our children. When we look to man-made standards and rules as a measure of success, then we have become parental legalists. We have become more concerned about appearances than the heart of our child. In the context of a home, our children will quickly see that appearances matter more than reality. This leaves them open to temptation, deception, error, and falling away from the faith as they begin to explore and engage the world on their own terms.

To biblically and effectively prepare our children to make the transition from home to world we must focus on the heart. Training our children to live by a set of rules is shallow ground for developing a spiritually mature child who understands the power of grace and a desire to obey out of love and gratitude. They must understand and observe the gospel in our homes so that they can defend themselves against the attractions and dangers of the world. That is, in our homes, they must be taught sound doctrine and see their parents living it out each day as they

live life together. Not only does this please God as we parent for His glory, but it prepares our children to stand strong in their faith as they move out of the home and into homes of their own.



So what are some practical ways in which we can prepare our children to engage the world? Let me address this question in the remainder of my message. As I noted in the beginning of my message, what we will cover in the time remaining is a foundational way of thinking about our engagement with the world as follower of Christ. This framework is not a replacement for training and toiling as we have already covered. But use these as tools to help you as lead and instruct your children about how to engage the world.

The key to helping our children transition from home to world is teaching them to become biblically discerning. As parents, we can help our children wrestle with life as they question what they see in the world. We help them to understand God's sovereignty and see that good can come from evil and suffering. We let our children know that everything labeled "Christian" is not inherently good. We teach them to trust God's word alone and discern their engagement with the world out of a biblical context. For them to interact with the world well they must become **good** discerners. If you think about it, we all discern all of the time; sometimes better than others. But we strive toward a spiritual maturity that discerns and engages the world through a biblical lens and aligns with God's will and spiritual wisdom.

The overarching theme to our engaging the world is discernment. Keep in mind that the Bible's view of the world is largely negative and is hostile to the believer. An absence of biblical discernment will likely be a spiritual disaster for your child when they leave the home. So as your children engage the world, help them to discern and put their interaction with the world into one of three categories. Teach them to see their response to the world as to either withdraw, redeem, or embrace. These three form a spectrum of biblical responses made through

discernment and wisdom based upon God's word and will in their lives. Let's go over each of these separately.

Let's first consider withdrawal. By withdrawal I mean wisely removing ourselves from interacting from the world when to engage would be sin. It means withdrawing from the world where it is an area where we are commanded by God or the reputation of Christ is at stake. For example, if a friend at school asks your child to help them cheat on an exam, they discern that they cannot obey God by cheating and disobeying someone in authority. They gladly withdraw from this interaction with their friend no matter what it costs them, because they are called to obey God in this matter. Or there may be a group of teens gathering for a drinking party at a neighborhood home. But your child chooses not to go because they are concerned they will be associated with or are approving of drunkenness; even though they may not be drinking.

Like it or not, your children will be often challenged to disobey God's commands both in the home and in the world. And they need to develop the ability to discern when to withdraw from the world so that they do not sin. More importantly, as parents we must instill in them a knowledge of God's commands and who they are in Christ, so that they know why they withdraw while understanding the danger and consequences of sin. And as parents, we must be careful not to focus only on consequences such as "you're gonna hurt someone". Or trite phrases like "because I told you so". Yes, children are to obey their parents. But help them understand their identity in Christ and the underlying commands in play so that they learn and can obey God's word when they are out from under your authority and instruction.

The danger with withdrawal is that we take it too far and it becomes isolation from the world. That is, we vainly attempt to protect our children by preventing them from engaging with the world. There are several problems with taking an approach that tends to avoid contact with the world. First, the Bible does not call us to be isolated as believers. Quite the contrary, we are called to engage the world as light and life to those who are spiritually blind and dying. Second, by isolating our children we lose valuable opportunities to teach them how to engage the world wisely and prepare them to live on their own. As they become adults, they will begin to engage the world on their own. If they have not been taught how to handle their independence they are likely to be overcome or fall away, to be overly dependent upon their parents, or to be out of touch and unable to relate to the world around them.

At the other end of this spectrum of discernment is embracing the world. There is a sense in which we can enjoy and embrace the world as God's creation. Our passage touched on this in verses 3 and 4, where Paul reminds Timothy that God created the world to be received with thanksgiving for everything He created is good. Just as Paul wrote to the Philippians, we must teach that whatever is pure, lovely, honorable, true, excellent, or merits praise; these things are worthy to be thought of and embraced. Despite its corruption by sin, God is the maker of this world and it reflects the infinite wonder of His character. Kindness and love, the wonders of creation, and expressions of goodness and grace are all areas where we joyfully engage the world as a reflection of who we are in Christ.

We should teach our children to see the world as God's creation and to worship Him. Those things that bring glory to God should move our hearts to praise and give testimony to him. We

can help them to understand that they can listen to musicians playing instruments well and marvel at the beauty of the song or talent of the musician. Let them see that you can be moved to emotion by a glorious sunset, the wonders of new birth, or the home going of a dear saint. As your family interacts with the world, let your words and conversation reflect how you embrace the glory and character of its creator.

The problem here is when we indulge in the world as if it had no dangers or the potential to harm our children. If we are not careful, we interact with the world in a way where we begin to look like it. If our home and families become too much like the world, our children either see us either as hypocrites or think that the power of the Gospel is shallow and ineffective. When we fail to teach our children to see the potential for sin and evil in the world, we allow them to live blindly to the consequences of spiritual hardship and death. Indulging will have deadly results as our children will become rebellious or dangerously engage the world. And while there are ways of embracing the world as parents which are obviously sinful, there are also subtle ways we indulge that can lead to problems for our teens. Let me urge you to be wise and actively cautious in this area so that you do not make it harder for your children to see the distinction between Christ and the world.

The last area of the spectrum is the middle ground. This is the area that lies between withdrawal from the world at one end and embracing it at the other. I call this the redeem area of discernment. In reality this is the area we deal with the most and often plays out with the most complexity. This is the area where we have freedom and liberty as believers. To be clear we are not talking about redeeming our culture or the world here. However, we must teach our children to use their liberty wisely and with strong consideration to others as they interact in the world. As parents, you will need to think carefully and ask questions that cause your child to examine their own motivations and desires as well as those around them.

It is a complex area of engagement because it does not fall into either of the more clear-cut ends of the spectrum. And because it often involves a number of factors, including our own heart. It's complicated because it falls into the realm of wisdom and preference and may present several options or paths to choose from. The objective here is to teach your children to choose from the bad, the neutral, the good, the better, and the best. Help your children by thinking of everything from conversation, choices, attitudes, and responses as they interact with the world. Let me suggest to you look to these areas as opportunities to redeem your interaction with the world for God's glory. With the context of wisdom and discernment, help your children see how they can make the most of each opportunity as a means to display the gospel and glorify God.

A funny example of this was when Sheila and I were teaching our children how not to engage with others by using the word "stupid". Not that there is anything wrong with the word. But when directed at someone it is often used in a mean and hurtful way. Somehow our children came to view the word stupid as the worst word you could ever say. Worse than swearing; probably because they did not hear that in our home. But you can imagine the looks we got from other parents when our children felt free to publicly point out when their friends were using bad words. Our intent was not to create another bad word. But rather to instill in them the understanding that words matter and that God calls us to redeem our words in a way that builds others up and not use them in a way that could hurt or destroy.


The danger in this area as parents is that we ignore and miss this area as we teach our children to engage with the world. Rather than seeing opportunities to redeem as they engage with the world, we teach them that these areas do not matter. Often from our own example they see this area isn't that important. In doing so, we miss the opportunity to teach our children to wisely apply biblical principles and priorities in areas of biblical freedom as they interact in the world.

We can also undermine our teaching in other areas of discernment by saying, in essence, only the big and easy areas to discern really matter. Rather, we convey a message that they don't have to be discerning when it gets hard. This is not the striving and toiling I see in Paul's instructions to Timothy. We also must be careful not to check out as parents once our children have professed faith in Christ. Rather, this is when our teaching begins. We transition from leading them to the gospel to leading them to maturity. While salvation is a big deal and so important, it does not reduce or end our responsibility to understand how to engage the world for God's glory.

While your children are in your home, help them to avoid looking at situations in a neutral way. Rather be intentional in letting them see that they should strive to engage the world in a way that serves others and trusts God as an exercise of their faith. Help them look for opportunities to sacrifice personal preferences, to suffer unjustly, return good for evil, be a witness to the lost, or simply just be faithful to God; even when, and especially when, it costs them something. This is what I mean by engaging the world in a redeeming way.

Reflect and Respond

- Teaching
 - Teach them truth in the midst of life so that they may identify error
 - Make time to regularly read and study scripture together
 - Teach them by allowing them to exercise their faith; especially as they grow older
 - Teach them by not always protecting them from the consequences of their choices
 - Teach them to hope in Christ; not parents or people
 - Teach them the Gospel when they fail; when you fail; when others fail



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Let me wrap this up with a few more thoughts. The bottom line to all of this is that we must live in a way that finds a balance between withdrawing from the world and adopting it as our own. It is not always an easy tension to balance nor will we always get it right. But as parents we must

endeavor to teach and live out an approach to interacting with the world that spiritually prepares our children to leave the home and function with spiritual maturity on their own.

As I conclude, let me give you some examples of what this framework looks like in your home. I've broken these out by the two themes we saw in our passage, teaching and toiling. I hope these help and stir you to consider how you are preparing your children to transition from home to the world. And whether by action or inaction, you are preparing your children; it's just a matter of how well.

Teaching

- Teach them truth in the midst of life so that they may identify error
- Make time to regularly read and study scripture together
- Teach them by allowing them to exercise their faith; especially as they grow older
- Teach them by not always protecting them from the consequences of their choices
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- Teach them the Gospel when they fail; when you fail; when others fail

Reflect and Respond

Toiling

- Take the harder path and do not isolate them from the world and its culture
- Labor to live in a way that demonstrates a trust in God's sovereignty
- Show them the importance of biblical community; they will need it when they are on their own!
- Strive to live out kingdom priorities
- Live your own life in a way that shows our journey in this world as strangers



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Toiling

- Take the harder path and do not isolate them from the world and its culture
- Labor to live in a way that demonstrates a trust in God's sovereignty
- Show them the importance of biblical community; they will need it when they are on their own!
- Strive to live out kingdom priorities
- Live your own life in a way that shows our journey in this world as strangers

[closing prayer]

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