

Parenting - Ages 13-17

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning, everyone. My name is Mike. I am one of the pastors here at the Moorhead City site. My wife, Beth, is here with us as well. You may see her on Sunday mornings running around as the hospitality coordinator if you're here at the Moorhead site. We have two other people on our panel this morning to kind of just chat with you guys, and that's Andy and Cheryl Piggott.

I'm going to hush a minute, ask you guys to introduce yourselves, talk about your family just a second, and then I'll set up the next 20 or so minutes of the morning because we were wanting to kind of unpack some things practically, and then we're going to record all of that, and then at the end of unpacking a few things practically, we're going to cut the recording off, and then we're going to talk about whatever y'all want to talk about, and that way you feel hopefully at liberty to ask whatever you want to ask, and we are both very blunt families in regard, very transparent families, and so we will share very honestly with our experiences with you. So I'll hush a second.

Andy and Cheryl, you introduce yourselves. Tell us about your family a little bit. Well, Andy and my wife Cheryl, this will be 24 years we've been married this year. We do have four kids in the 13 to 19-year-old bracket. The two boys are the oldest, two girls are the youngest.

You know, as Brian was kind of talking up there, funny thing in my head the way I operate, I was just grading myself the whole time. You know, how did I do? How did I do? You know, as a point of transparency, only this is on a 10-point scale, not a regular point scale. I gave myself kind of, you know, a C-minus. You know, we've done some things right. We've done some things, you know, horribly wrong, you know. So, you know, I look forward to, I mean, hearing what you guys have to say and what they have to say. Do you have anything to say?

No, just prayer. That's just all you can do. If you haven't got a relationship or deep relationship with God before you have teenagers, I guarantee you, you will by the time your teenagers are over.

[2 : 1 0] Yeah, cool. So again, I am Mike and this is Beth. We have two boys. We have one that is 20 years old and a junior in college. And we have a 14-year-old that is going to be in high school this year.

So we kind of span both ends of the talking spectrum today. So I have, did you have anything? Sorry. Okay. So I have about six things that popped out of the sermon today or the sermon, the message from Brian this morning.

But I just wanted to chat about a few minutes because I think it will be ultimately helpful. And my thought is to give you some things to think about in regards to that.

I'm not going to unpack them very specifically here, make a few notes. And then, as I said, we'll come back and by topic, we'll address any questions that you might have.

And then if there's something that I don't hit, if you would please feel free to ask that. So the first thing really that I wanted to touch on was kind of what Brian really ended with in many ways, which was technology.

[3 : 2 0] So technology in and of itself, as you guys are well aware, society has moved very rapidly that way. And technology in many ways is a very good thing.

What I do every day, what I know Cheryl and Andy do every day, we rely very heavily on technology. We rely on young people that are technologically very savvy and very skilled. And so technology in and of itself, from our perspective, is not bad. However, to Brian's, from Brian's point, it also has very elements that demand great responsibility, both on the child and on us.

You know, some really cool things technology allows us to do is we can find our kids when we want them. We can call them. We can say, hey, there's an expectation. If I text you, you text me back. Hey, you're not to ignore my phone calls.

That kind of thing gives us a way to communicate and also kind of helps develop skills. And so there's some great benefits to that as well. When you're looking at your teenager, to Brian's point, I think consider your child as to when and where.

[4 : 28] Some quick things that factored into mine and best decision have been, do I need to get up with you? Do you need that technology for school?

Do you need it in your daily life? And what age does that start to happen? And that may very well look different for us and for the Piggots than it would look for you. So, for instance, they have older kids. We had older kids.

By the time we were really having this discussion for our 14-year-old, we're like, well, hey, he's got a big brother. He didn't go anywhere hardly that he's not with me or with his big brother. So technology for him has been delayed.

At the same time, if you're a single mom and your kids are playing sports and you're working or a single dad and you need to get up with them, that may move to the left for you out of necessity. Neither is wrong. Just evaluate it. As you evaluate it, to Brian's point also, how are you going to monitor it? This is going to sound very terrible, but it's very honest.

[5 : 30] There are people out there looking to take advantage of your children. And so you need to approach technology with that understanding. I literally grew up with a guy who works for the police force that what he does is pretend to be a teenager so that they can find those that are stalking teenagers.

That's the world that we live in. And that was a 10-year-old conversation. So understand the reality of that. I want that to be sobering to you. At the same time, I keep people every day, to my point, and I know Cheryl does, that we rely on the output of that technology to be something, a skill set that we have.

The other thing that he hit on that technology does now is really drives so much social interaction. I even find myself texting over calling or texting over going to see somebody and those things.

And so that technology has really driven how we operate. And so to his point, we often do this. We don't look up. We don't look at people. We don't communicate. And that same skill set that we're talking about, that's also part of it, is when I hire a young person, she hires a young person, can they talk to me?

Can I have an interaction with them? Will they look at me? Will they engage me? Will they come ask me questions? And so there's a balance there. And so kind of think through that.

[6 : 57] And also, you know, as far as responsibilities, look at online bullying and social media. He talked about the mental impact of that in our society today as far as depression goes, as far as teen suicide.

And so how are kids being treated online? Are they participating in or are they victims of the online communications that create bullying and create those things? So technology, as a quick wrap-up, in and of itself is certainly not bad.

As parents, you know, we really want to push into that and look at that. Everybody in this room, I hope you're beginning to face the reality that the transition that we have prepared ourselves for as parents all this time is really upon you.

In that, you know, you're looking to take your child and make them a productive adult. Make them a socially adept person. Make them a responsible adult.

That does not mean that everyone goes to college. It does not mean that everyone enters the workforce. It means that we are taking our child and looking at what's best for them and how God has made them.

[8 : 05] And we're preparing them to transition to that next thing that God has for them in life. To be honest, I think both of my children may very well be on completely different paths than that.

One actually pursues and loves academics. The other one does not care. And I clearly see that. And so what they do, I anticipate being very different.

But we take our role seriously in preparing both of them equally well for leaving our home. Because unfortunately, that is the goal. It's a very sad day when they transition from 18 to 19 to 20.

And you're like, man, my baby's gone. No, they're not. You've prepared them. It's a tough day. Don't get me wrong. But that was the goal. And you can't forget that that was the goal.

So the next thing I want to hit on really quickly is discipleship of children. And Brian talked about discipleship when they're young. And I think everything he said is dead on and very, very accurate.

[9 : 11] With your teenager, that looks different than some of the things that he's, in my mind, that he said. I do know some people who, as their children got older, they did still have a very deliberate time of discipleship each and every day.

If you're homeschooling, that could be a Bible class that you do. That could be things of that nature. If your kids are in public school or leave the home for school, then that looks different.

And so one of the ways that we dealt with that and continue to work through that is make it a part of daily conversation. We take opportunities, as he mentioned, around the table, in the car, to talk about, hey, do you see God acting in that?

Hey, how does God impact your life in this? And I would encourage you to seize those moments.

For us, that conversational time becomes very deliberate.

We deliberately look for opportunities to speak about God, his grace, his love, his oversight of all of our lives. We take time to do that.

[10 : 17] Help them see God and celebrate God in some wins in their lives when they have maybe relationships that they've really struggled with that seem to be getting better. Hey, celebrate that.

If they have things that they're excited about that have gone really well for them, celebrate God in that. Help them to see God in the good and the bad. Help them to see that on a daily basis when you can.

And seize every opportunity you have to do that. It's a whole lot harder with your 16, 17-year-old to have that deliberate sit-around family devotion time.

If you have done that throughout their life and they are still very willing and open to do that, that's awesome. To be transparent, mine go bunches of different directions.

So we approach that differently, although we still distinctly approach it. You can show them sometimes how to stand in the gap for others. I think discipleship can also be how great or is how great God is.

[11 : 18] It can also be this is how acting out what God looks like to others in their lives. You can encourage them in bullying situations. You can encourage them with people in need.

You can encourage them in compassionate situations. And you can model Christ's likeness for them and disciple them in doing so. One of the things that he mentioned about discipleship, and it also leads into the next one that I wanted to hit on, which is make sure your kids know you love them.

That's a hard reality sometimes. I think with our older one, that was easier. With our younger one, that has been harder. And we've had to have some very deliberate conversations about, I love you. You're not your brother. You're not your sister. That's okay. I'm cool with that. I love you for who you are. I want your best for you, and I want God's best for you.

But I love you for who you are, and I will always love you for who you are. Make sure they know you love them and that you love them as individuals and that God loves them just the way that he created them.

[12 : 29] Discipline often takes a different look. You know, when they're little, you know, spanking has kind of gone out of the wayside. But 25 years ago when we were thinking about getting, when we got married and had kids, that was still an okay thing to do.

You know, that is something that now socially is very different. But you're going to find ways to discipline, whether it's time out, whether it's put them in their room, whether it's a chair in the corner. You're going to find ways to discipline a young child.

When you're staring at a 16-year-old or 17-year-old, that's not how that works anymore. And so you're looking at privileges. You're looking at the car.

You're looking at cell phones. You're looking at TV. You're looking at time for friends. And so, but there's still discipline. And often for us, that has become a lot more conversational in guiding them in what's right and wrong.

It's still recognizing what you just did was wrong. Your choice in that situation was not good. Your choice in that situation was bad.

[13 : 38] And to kind of speak into that, to help them understand the gravity of that, to help them understand, if it's illegal, potentially the law implications of that.

You're, in my mind, transitioning some of that from just because I said so to understanding, was it legal, was it moral, was it ethical?

What does the Bible say about it? And loop that gospel back in. And regardless, God has grace. We have grace and be able to kind of talk through some of that. Hold on one second. You know, you can. One of the things that I think is so important in discipline, and Brian kind of hinted at it for a second.

Is that when we're looking at disciplining our kids and transitioning that part in their lives, one of the things that we lean towards socially now is to be their friend.

[14 : 41] And while there is great need to show them love and to make sure they're loved and to show them care and compassion and grace, there is great need to be their parent.

And a great need to say, I'm still mom. I'm still dad. We're still your parents. And while to foster a wonderful relationship, to not let the parent-child relationship and understanding die in that process. It's so important for them to still recognize that there's mom and dad and that mom and dad have wisdom and that mom and dad have things to give. And that that relationship is different because of that.

I will tell you with a 20-year-old, it does change. And after school, when they begin to get out, that takes a whole other element.

That's a whole other class. But it is very different. Encourage their gifting. So to be transparent, I like to be outdoors.

[15 : 45] I grew up hunting and fishing and being on the boat. I still love it. I still enjoy it. Neither of my kids like it. They both like completely different things.

One loves music. When he's home, different times from school throughout the year, he'll play here at the church. He absolutely loves music. God has gifted him in that way tremendously.

And so we chose to foster that. We chose to encourage that. We gave of our finances towards that. We helped him do that.

And so that's been a great thing to see God be faithful in his talents as he has been faithful to steward them. Our youngest one doesn't like music at all.

Doesn't like what I like. Doesn't really like what Beth likes. He enjoys martial arts. So we've done the same thing there. As we've been able to support that, we support that.

[16 : 44] We travel. We spend money on lessons. We give our finances to do that. They're very, very different. So encourage them in their gifting, even if it's not yours.

To Brian's point, when they're younger, they tend to do things because they want to spend time with you. As they get older, I think sometimes we choose to spend time with them in what they love.

And it looks a little different because of that. And I think one of the – is this the last?

Nope, not quite the last thing. So suffering is something that he mentioned. How do you teach your kids to suffer well? What does that look like? Like when they're younger, it's kind of not getting my way, and that kind of creates suffering.

At this point in your student's life, they are looking at bullying. They're looking at social pressures. Some of them may have had to deal with separations of your family.

[17 : 42] Some of them may have had to deal with death of parents. It's not uncommon in our society now. Grandparents.

Some of them have had – we live in a military-driven community. As you get more and more towards Havelock, as you move west, kids are dealing with deployments. Mom is gone. Dad is gone.

And that does create mental toll and mental anxiety on these guys. So how do we work through that with them? I think helping them encourage others helps them kind of process themselves a little bit.

I think that – so they're dealing with all of these things. I think helping them realize that they're image bearers, that God has created them uniquely, that they're image bearers for him.

And if they can focus more on what – how God has created them, their suffering becomes easier.

That they have a perfect father. They live in an imperfect world with imperfect friends and imperfect parents.

[18 : 54] And that God is perfect and that he wants their best and he wants his best for them. And that he loves them.

I think encouraging them to spend time in Scripture with God's Word and spend time nurturing that. And to find rest and peace in Christ.

And as they're suffering, in many ways, the only way I've really been able to deal with that, that we've encouraged our kids is to continually point them to Jesus. Point them to the cross. Point them

to Jesus. Point them to people in their lives who will encourage them to do those same things. Who will speak to them in honesty, but also speak to them in the love and the care of Jesus. And then the last thing I wanted to touch on was living lives of worship and mission. So we so often think of mission as everybody getting on an airplane and going some great part of the world and spending two weeks. Or maybe if that really went well for them, maybe they go spend a couple of months.

[20 : 01] And if that really went well, maybe they say, well, hey, I'm really called to be in the mission field. And they spend years from that. There is nothing wrong with that. And some of our children in One Harbor will, I think, most definitely be called into that.

So much of our worship and our mission, though, is happening in our community. And so you look at your young people and you're saying, and I want to use the term child, but really in this room now we're nurturing young people.

So much of that is in their community and in their daily lives. How do they minister? Can they show love to others? Can they encourage others to not bully? Can they step in in situations? Can they encourage those that they know are hurting? Those all are important ways that they can minister and show Christ's love to others and that they can bring honor to him and glory to him in doing that.

I think also something that's equally important is they're going to encounter people who are having really good days and have really great things to celebrate. They can celebrate with them.

[21 : 07] They're going to have friends who are suffering and they can reach out and mourn with them. And they can have compassion and empathy for them. So I think encouraging them to look at ways that mission is a daily thing, worship is a daily thing, being plugged into the community, being plugged into where they are socially.

Are there a mission field today? At 17, 16, their mission field is here. Their mission field is school. Their mission field is their family, your neighborhood, that kind of thing.

And so I think emphasizing that for them and helping them see the reality of that helps them create a culture for themselves of mission.