

Years 18+

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[0 : 00] you know, that Sally and I spent a lot of time this morning just kind of going through our notes or just trying to figure out what we would say about being parents of older kids.

Our oldest is 30. Our youngest is 19. So we kind of spread the gamut. And I asked a man tomorrow a minute ago out in the lobby what it felt like to be considered a bad parent because as Brian was talking this morning, I'm sitting there going, I did none of that.

None of that. And so, you know, if you consider what their view of parenting is and what they're hoping to teach parents, I mean, it was just kind of almost comical because I'm just shaking my head saying, well, I messed that up and I messed this up.

And so it was kind of funny. I will kind of share with you a little bit about, you know, our family dynamic just because I think it's important to understand. I mean, a lot of people that meet our daughters talk about how wonderful they are.

In fact, I had a parent come up to me this morning and just said, your daughter Rachel is the bomb. That girl is great. But it's not because of my parenting as a dad. It's because of God's grace, really, that I didn't screw it all up.

[1 : 14] And so our children grew up in a very strict home. I was very strict. I grew up in a very legalistic home.

My mother is very legalistic to the point of, you know, you don't drink, you don't chew, you don't hang with those who do. I mean, it's very, it was a very legalistic home.

And because I lived here and my children lived behind my parents, they felt like they were kind of in a bowl, a fish bowl. And they lived in a fish bowl where they never had the freedom to just be kids. It was almost like you had to be perfect. And I think Sally and I both, I think we both, you know, would say that we disciplined our kids or we trained our kids to be obedient because it reflected on us if they weren't.

And, you know, and you've been around probably children who are very unruly and very, you know, screaming and yelling and running around houses and stuff like that. You know, we, you know, in public, we wanted our daughters to act like young ladies.

[2 : 28] We wanted them to be obedient. And so, I mean, you know, I would look at them. I'd point my finger at them. They understood what that meant. I mean, we tried to control our girls.

And so they grew up in that world, that world of there's a hierarchy in the family. There's dad, there's mom, and then there's the rest of you. And you surely don't mess with dad, and you better respect your mom, and then the rest of it is open for discussion.

And so that's really how they grew up in our family. I think that probably the idea of being gospel-centered and speaking to our children in a gospel-centered way and saying, all right, girls, you know, you should be obedient to me because, you know, Jesus was obedient to the Father. And we never did that. I simply just said, this is what you're going to do, and this is the way we rock as a family. And it was what was expected, really, from them.

And I do think that they probably, I think they lived within those confines. I was not, I mean, we gave them affection. We loved on them. I mean, my daughters know that I love them because I have hugged on them and kissed on them all their lives, even to this day.

[3 : 44] I mean, I try to let them know how much I care for them. But the way I was raised was the way they were raised because that's just the way it is. I mean, I was taught to do that by my own parents.

And so being very gospel-centered was not something that I was very successful at. And I think Sally would probably agree that we did not do that. everything that Brian was talking about the day we failed.

And so, because, and plus we're older. I mean, we are older and our children are older. And so there is a little bit of a difference there. As far as discipling our children to live a life of worship, I do think that we, I do think that we try to guide our children into worship.

Now, I grew up in a Bible church. And so the worship in a Bible church was a whole lot more stilted than what you would see at One Harbor on a given Sunday.

It was a very conservative church. There was no raising of hands. There was none of that. There was just none of that. The music was very, is either piano or toward the end it became somewhat contemporary, but it was more country than anything else.

[4 : 57] But our children, I think, we did expose them to worship. And we wanted them to serve in light of their desire to worship God for who He was.

I do think that that was something that we really, I think we did that well. I mean, sometimes it can become very legalistic because what you're trying to do is you say, we go to church.

You know, this is what we do. The midgets do this. And it kind of defined us. But I do think our daughters did learn how to worship by growing up in our family.

We didn't, it was something that was very important to us. The problem is is that maybe the worship was not always joyful. It was, and Sally said this morning, it was more like your duty.

I don't know if that makes sense to you. It's more like your duty is to go to church, sing a song, check it off your box, and you're done. Well, that is, in a sense, you're being obedient to worship, but it was not joyful and it was not, it wasn't the authenticity.

[6 : 04] Yeah, it was not always very authentic in how we did things. Our children also lived through some great dysfunction in our former church.

They saw the dysfunction of the church. And because I was in leadership, they saw what that, how that affected me as their father.

And so, we did not shield them from that. In fact, I would agree with Brian on that, that you don't shield your children from hurts because hurts are real, hurts happen, life is that way.

And I think that in a lot of ways, our daughters got to see us interact through the dysfunction that was there and saw that we were still able to go and try to worship on Sunday, try to serve in capacities.

I was an elder in the church, also taught a class in the church. And so, they saw that and it wasn't like, we've been hurt, I've been busted up, I quit.

[7 : 09] And I'm taking my marbles up and I'm going home. Well, I think we did try to live in that line of saying, yes, you know, things are difficult, but we're still here and we still want to serve God in that manner.

And I would say this, that God's grace, where there were issues of hurt and pain and discouragements and those kind of things, God's grace super abounded more than I can even imagine in that my daughters, not perfect as they are, sinful as they have been, I do think that there is, that there's an awareness of who God is.

Three of them are really walking with the Lord very closely right now. Our oldest is going through some issues. I mean, she has struggled.

I think she saw some of the hurts that I went through closer than the other girls did and she saw it up front and I really think that it really discouraged her in a lot of ways.

She said, if the church will do this, why do I want to be involved in this? And so there has been a rebellion on her part, so to speak. But then I was also in a rebellious son and so I kind of know what that's like.

[8 : 30] I understand why there's a rebellion. But God's grace is still super abounded in her life and what Sally and I are trying to do with her is to point her to God's grace and his love for her in spite of all that she's seen.

And so we have, we did try to introduce them to worship. It was something that we desired for them to do and right now by God's grace, I mean, by and large, they do walk with the Lord and I think, you know, that is the great grace of God.

Raising kids in regards to community, man, I tell you, I think this is one area that we were very good in and the reason is is because we saw a need for community in our former church and we were pushing hard to be community-minded.

I mean, Sally and I opened our home. We had Bible studies in our home. We had, we would bring people over after church. We would try, we tried to minister to people and so I think our daughter

saw that and I think they really responded to it.

I would agree with what Brian said this morning about, you know, making your children have eye contact and speaking to when you're spoken to. That, I do think that that is something that Sally and I really push them on.

[9 : 50] If somebody speaks to you, you say yes sir and if they ask you a question, you answer the question. Don't sit there and blow them off. In fact, Rachel got in the most trouble that she's ever been in her life because she blew me off.

And she just blew me off publicly and I, I lost my temper for that. That's a bad night. But I mean, but she needed to understand that I would not tolerate her doing that to other people and I surely could not tolerate her doing that to me.

That she is not going to blow me off as if I'm not inconsequential. And so we really worked hard to get them to speak to people, to welcome people into the house. And so I think in that area, we were somewhat successful because I do think that Rachel loves community.

I mean, right now, if she were home, of course she's in college, if she were home and we were going to a community group, Rachel would want to go. She wants to be a part of that and so that's a, that's a fruit of us trying to be very, you know, community minded even years ago when they were younger.

And so I do think that they bought into what community was all about. I think if you were to ask them today the importance of community, they would probably tell you that it is greatly important in their lives.

[11 : 14] Rebecca and her husband go to Mercy Hill which is up in Greensboro. Great church, very community minded and I think that Rebecca and Justin are just fit right into that type of community.

I think Rachel when she was at High Point last year was in that community, you know, going to community groups in that college community and so they have had a chance to experience it outside of our home and outside of One Harbor Church and so I think if you were to ask them hey, you know, what, you know, how important is this?

They would say man, it's very important and in fact, probably the weak link in our oldest daughter's life right now is that she does not have a very strong community presence in her life and so I think that that is where she's at her weakest.

She serves with people at Elevation Uptown, she knows people there but I don't think that the sense of community, you know, is, is, it's reflected in her life and so I think that's probably a weakness that if she would, that could help her if she would ever open herself up to it.

Sarah's a very private person and she keeps everything to herself and so what she needs to be is an open person and sharing her heart and her struggles in community but that's something that's very hard for her to do.

[12 : 43] Finally, I guess, raising kids for the ministry of the church. this was, this I think, I think probably the biggest, one of the big warnings that I would give to anybody who says they're going to raise their kids to be in ministry is to remember that God is the one who calls, not parents.

I had a tremendous amount of pressure put on me as a young man to be a preacher. My mother wanted me to preach and so she let me know that she was not pleased with me because I was not going into ministry.

I wanted to be a harbor pilot which is what I do. That's what I wanted to do. I wanted to handle ships for a living and so I think probably instead of my mother trusting in the fact that God would call me into ministry, it was I'm going to push him into ministry and so I, I pushed back because I felt like no, if that's why you'll be pleased with me is because I'm in ministry, hold your breath because it ain't going to happen because I'm not going to do that.

I am not going to give in to you for that because I didn't have a sense that God was calling me into ministry. I didn't have a desire, so to speak, to go into ministry.

I probably have more of a desire now to be in ministry than I did when I was younger and because I want to serve in those areas and I want to be, I want to be effective but it's later in my life that it happened, not early in my life and so I would warn anybody not to look at your child and say, you know, this is what's going to make me happy about you if you are in full-time ministry because that is very damaging.

[14 : 30] Or your adult child. Or your adult child, yes. Thank you. I do think, and Brian touched on this a little bit this morning, I do think that we need to realize what our children's gifting is.

You know, I was racking my brain this morning trying to understand, I know that Rebecca is very organized, she gets that from her mom, I mean Rebecca, she had everything in her wedding set up, it was nailed down before they ever got close to the wedding, I mean she just got married three weeks ago and she had everything just bam, bam, bam, bam.

very organized person, very, I mean she's like me in a lot of ways, very direct, speaks her mind, I mean she's just a good leader, I mean she's very good at leading. Sarah's organized but I think her gifting is probably more in mercy.

Hannah, I wouldn't know, what do you think Hannah's gifting would be? Making everything fun. Hannah would be a good cruise director, I guess.

I don't know, Hannah's, Hannah's, of everything she does, she enjoys life. She's all in it. She loves life. And, you know, honestly, I really don't know just yet what Rachel, I think Rachel is a teacher, I think she's going to end up being a teacher, not a school teacher but she's going to teach people, I think she does have that gifting.

[15:56] She spoke at Rebecca's wedding because she was the maid of honor and she stood up and just killed it, I mean just stood up with no notes, just stood up and spoke to her sister and just killed it and Sally would never do that.

Sally is not a public speaker. I'm more of a public speaker. Rachel can do it too. So I do think that she probably has the gifts of teaching. So I would say that to know what your children's gifts are are very important because they're not like us.

My children are not exactly like me and they're not exactly like Sally. They're a combination of the two and so we can't make them like us. We can't say you're going to be like me because they are a blend.

I mean God has blended them and he's gifted them differently than he has us. And so to know those gifts and to encourage them to use those gifts. In fact, Sally reminded me this morning that Rachel taught children's church for three years before she left for college.

So she was involved in children's ministry here teaching. And so there's her gift being put on display you know in the local church because she liked to teach and she would get up on her own and come teach.

[17:10] I mean she did that because she owned it and I think Rebecca helped some too. She did. She did. Yeah. So knowing your child's gifting and understanding where their gifts lie is very good.

Also remember that your children won't do what they don't see you doing. I mean they won't do it. If you're not doing it don't expect your children to do it because what they see is you and they've got their eyes on you and I do think that that might you know I think my children are somewhat amazed at where you know we are right now as a couple.

We are not the same people we were when our children were young. We were kind of young and kind of disciplinarians and all those kind of things and I'm not saying I wouldn't discipline them now if I thought I needed to it's hard now when they're older to really discipline them.

I really can't I can speak into my daughters now but I can't tell them what to do because those days are gone but I would say that you know man you know it's it's just tough I mean it's just tough it's you know if you want your children to love the church and to be involved in the church they need to see you doing it instead of you talking about it because if you're not going they're not going I mean that's just the way it is and so they need to see our passions expressed and then they follow those passions I do think that because they're watching everything we do and they're watching everything we say in fact years ago funny story Sally Sally hates snakes and really hates them pretty bad and and whenever I was cutting grass I would always look at the girls when they're outside playing and I'd say

I'd stop the lawnmower and I'd look and I'd say get your tails in the house right now and they'd like a covey of quail they'd jump up go in the house and so I was at work and and Sarah was on the front porch with Hannah and Rebecca and there was a a black snake on the front porch and Sarah sees the snake and says get your butts in the house right now said exactly I mean he spoke it just like her dad was saying and they took off running in the house and I'm saying oh god I ruined my daughter man I ruined them and I can still see Rebecca doing the same thing she uses my mannerisms and she points it and she'll speak I mean with intensity that's all me I mean everybody it's me and I've seen her you know mimic me in a lot of ways I read it's amazing so don't expect them to be all in if you're not all in because they will say it's not that important to you dad it's not that important to me and so they'll do that and finally I would simply say

[20 : 07] I would say that you would probably need to ask God to inflame your passion for the church you know Lord let my passion burn for the church because it is an encouragement to them to do the same and that's somewhat similar to say and let them see what I do but I do think that you need to ask God by spirit to inflame your passions for the church I've had a great passion to minister for years and I wanted to pour into people I really did I wanted to pour into people and God moved me here by his grace so I could do that you know I mean I wanted to do that and so I think that's a passion that God gave me and I think what we need to do as parents is to say Lord increase my passion not just for making a good living not just for having good kids who are very obedient nice and sweet you know give me a passion for the body give me a passion for the church let my children see that I love your people and I think that that's something that God will do over time and I do and we got this this week

Rebecca called and she or Sally called and said Rebecca's got something she wants to tell you and I said well she's not pregnant already she's only been married three weeks two weeks two weeks and Sally goes no she's not pregnant but she but her and Justin are considering being church planters down in Florida from Mercy Hill Mercy Hill is going to do a church plant in Tampa right Tampa yeah Tampa and so they are talking about moving to Tampa and being church planters for at least two years you just answered our prayer brother really a church in Tampa oh cool that's exciting Mercy Hill's a good church it is Mercy Hill's good so anyway that's cool because what that shows is that that Rebecca and Justin are kind of have bought into the church and they're about the church and that thrills me as a dad I mean I told her I said make sure that God's calling you into this and not you're being shamed into it you know we need help and if you really love Jesus you would help us

I said don't do that but man you know hey make sure that God's calling you into that and if he is you go for it go for it I mean I'm thrilled for them it's a long way away but I'm still thrilled for them so is Mercy Hill in Greensboro yep this is just really wild yep so from Greensboro that's it