

INTRO:
Recap Pause Series

Submit your questions

Today we are going to talk about parenting, specifically. Many of our families are in this situation, and we want to address that dynamic.

Disclaimers

If you don't have kids--this is still for you.

Parenting can be touchy, so let's walk through this together with humility.

It's something people care a lot about, and sometimes if we feel put on our heels about it, we can get defensive. I get it, I feel it, I think it's because most of us really want to do right by our kids, we really do, but most of us also feel the tension ...

... that none of us know what we are doing.

We decided all this before or at the very beginning of this shelter-in-place stuff.

And week whatever it is, of whatever it is we are living through right now, I am more convinced than ever.

I think if we are honest, and humble, most of us, when it comes to parenting, are almost falling on our face day after day, and we want someone to tell us how to do it right.

Cash cow of parenting advice and books and retreats and sermons, with polar opposite ideas and priorities.

- instruct their children in the ways of the Lord ([Eph 6:4](#); Deut 6; Prov 1-9),
- discipline them when they disobey ([Prov 23:13-14](#); [Heb 12:7-8](#)),
- provide for their physical needs ([1 Tim 5:8](#)),
- regard them as blessings from the Lord ([Ps 127:3-5a](#)),
- and refrain from exasperating them ([Col 3:21](#); [Eph 6:4](#)).

The Bible doesn't say a lot about this, so we tend to fill in the blanks. And I think this is where most of us end up landing. Most, if not all, of our parenting decisions, come down to two motivations.

A desire to **protect** and a desire to **provide**.

Most of our parenting decisions are made from a place of protection or provision. And maybe they shouldn't be.

Don't get it twisted, I am not saying these are bad things, but they turn ugly when they are our top priority. There are absolutely times when it is good to protect our kids, there are times when it is good to provide for our kids. We don't want them to hurt, so we step in to protect. We don't want them to go without, we want them to have everything they need or think they need. Surely that can't be wrong. But we all know stories of how this can turn ugly.

Story of Mike- college, mom. When protecting your kids is your top priority, this is how it can go. Same is true with provision.

When providing for your kids is your top priority, this is how it can go.

Honestly, when taken to their extremes, it really comes down to control and pride.

So maybe, as well as taking this pause, what we need is a mental shift in priorities. See ...

Our job as followers of Jesus isn't to protect and provide for our kids. That might be a job down the list, but it's not our first job. Our first job as parents is to **point** and **prepare**.

The Bible is light on explicit commands regarding parenting, but it is full of advice on how to live for Jesus. We could spend hours combing through Scripture and directing all the places where God tells us how to prioritize our lives as followers of Him, but I think Jesus sums it up really well.

Matthew 6:33, *But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

Here is where I get hung up on this, when I think of the Kingdom of God, I think of risk and dependence, not playing it safe and having everything we want.

So if this is true of us as individual followers of Jesus, I think it's true of us as parents. That our priorities need a shift.

It really all comes down to: Are we pointing our kids toward God's Kingdom, and are we preparing them to live in that Kingdom if they choose Him?

Illustration that might be helpful

Psalm 127:3-5 *Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!*

Story from Levi Lusko. Arrow and target. Stole this, that's all parenting is anyway right?

If our kids are referred to as arrows, and we have influence in their lives, we have the ability to point them in a certain direction, toward a certain target if you will. The question then becomes: What target am I pointing them toward?

His story is pretty impactful—four daughters, three living, one in Heaven. She died at five years old. Three in the quiver, one in the target—because what else matters?

And how true that statement is. When it comes down to it, the only target that matters is Jesus.

But this is what so many of us do.

Options

Even worse, with our mouths we say it is important, but

We need to wrap our heads around this truth. The only target that matters in this life when it really comes down to it, when everything else is stripped away is Jesus. Seek first HIS Kingdom, and HIS righteousness. It's literally all that matters. And in these precious lives that have been entrusted to us, we have a weighty responsibility to show them that.

And not just point them in the right direction but prepare them for life in that Kingdom. They have their own choices to make, but are we giving them lots of reasons to say yes?

As we point them toward the target of Jesus, are we preparing them for the trip?

Abby: people will let you down, not Jesus

Judah: temptation will come. Jesus will give you strength

Vida: purpose. Jesus gives you the most important reason for living.

Jeremiah: Hardship, Jesus has overcome

Make no mistake. That kid you are raising will eventually hear of God as a father, as a parent. And they are going to interpret that news through how they experienced you first.

If my kid gives their life to Jesus, will it be in spite of me, or will I be one of the many reasons to say yes?

Have I lived my life in a way that they know exactly how worthwhile living for God's Kingdom is?

There is nothing more important than our kids giving their hearts to Jesus in a real and life-altering way. Nothing more important than they end up in Heaven with God for eternity and

experience His fullness here and now on this Earth. Nothing. Let me say it again, NOTHING is more important than that.

Your kid can be a total failure in life, but if they know Jesus, they are good.

Your kid can be the most intelligent, successful person, and if they are doing it apart from Him, they have missed the point entirely.

But is that what we are modeling?

This matters so much

Jesus says it.

My own kids ...

Students- unique position

I talk with some many kids who have no idea what direction to head.

If this is the goal, how do we do it?

One day at a time.

This isn't a one-time thing. This is a day-by-day decision.

I have been at this place before, even throughout this week, where I start the day thinking I've got it figured out and then I blow it again big-time.

Joshua 24:15 *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*

That is not something to get Holly Stavness to write in pretty cursive on a recycled fence board to hang up over your house. If that's your style fine, I'm sure Chip and Joanne love it, but that's not a slogan, that is a lifestyle, and one that is NOT easy.

We love to take that one verse and plaster it everywhere, but do you know what the rest of that chapter is talking about?

Joshua is saying give up everything you know, and serve God. Throw away all the idols, and serve God.

It's a day by day thing- and right now, many have a unique opportunity to give it a lot of attention.

I keep asking myself this question, maybe you could ask it of yourself too. As I walk through this time, what target am I pointing towards? What would my kids say was super important to me? Just getting through it?

Getting back to normal?

Super frustrated that things aren't what I want them to be?

Paralyzed by fear about what is going on?

Or will they see a life that is focused on Jesus, and the work of His Kingdom? We kind of have this lab, this case study in front of us, to do some real discipleship with our kids. Let's not miss it.

As we go parent through this week, this shelter-in-place season, let's make sure our priorities are right. Let's make sure that in all we say and in all we do, we are pointing those we love the most toward the only target that matters.

Pray



PAUSE: STAY ON TARGET

MATTHEW 6:33, JOSHUA 24:15 and others
MAY 3, 2020 | PASTOR KYLE BELDEN



GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1 How can you tell where a person has given priority in their life?
- 2 Why is it easy to go off-course in life, especially in the arena of parenting, and give priority to things that do not ultimately matter?

This week in our Pause series, Kyle focused on the topic of our kids and parenting. Family is a concept deeply woven throughout the pages of Scripture, but there are really just a handful of explicit parenting commands. We have filled in the blanks, and often times, maybe we are off base. In your group, look at the passages from Sunday and have a conversation about what our first priority should be as parents, according to God's Word.

QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1 Someone read **Matthew 6:33**.

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

How does seeking the Kingdom of God above all things help us prioritize the rest of our lives correctly?

If you seek first the Kingdom of God, what are some things you currently prioritize for your family and specifically, for your kids, that may become less important?

- 2 Someone read **Joshua 24:15**.

¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

What do we learn about Joshua's commitment to the Lord based on his statement in v. 15? What was the difference in Joshua privately deciding to remain faithful to God and Joshua publicly proclaiming it in front of the Israelites?

Have you ever had to place a “stake in the ground” or communicate a strong statement of faith with your family/kids like Joshua did publicly with the Israelites? What are examples of situations that would necessitate parents to do this with their kids?

One thing that makes Joshua's declaration so powerful is its immediacy - he committed to serve the Lord with his family starting right then. Another was its catalyst effect on both his family as well as the Israelites. Your stake in the ground isn't just for you. It's also for those around you who see the change in you.

LIVE IT OUT (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

- 1** Kyle shared the illustration of how our kids are like arrows in our quiver. Our job as parents is to point them in the right direction. Who or what are you pointing your kids toward?
- 2** What does or should it look like for you to prepare your kids for life choices they will be making in the future?
- 3** How are you helping your young children and/or adult children to discover more of who Jesus is and His plans for their lives? What in your life might be preventing you from doing this more?
- 4** What unique opportunities do we currently have to practically disciple our kids during this season when we are spending more time together at home? Of the current discipling habits that your family is engaging in, what do you want to continue doing, once regular extra-curricular activities start to resume?

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray with your group to end your time together.

NEXT WEEK

PAUSE, WEEK 4: TOPIC OF CHOICE

For weeks four and five of the “Pause” series, our teaching team will address a few topics submitted by the church. Join us Sunday morning online at cpmodesto.org! Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit cpmodesto.org/groupleaders to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit cpmodesto.org/homegroups and use the Home Group Finder!

COMMENTARY

MATTHEW 6:33

6:33. We are to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness. Everything starts here. This is to be our consuming priority. So it is important to remind ourselves of some basic kingdom realities. How does a person find God's righteousness that characterizes His kingdom? Jesus started His sermon by pointing out our utter spiritual bankruptcy. We have no righteousness of our own. Even our best attitudes and actions do not procure it. Righteousness comes as a merciful gift, grace through faith (Eph. 2:4–10).

JOHSHUA 24:15

24:15. Joshua challenged the people to make a choice. Already he had commanded the people to fear and serve the Lord. Then he entertained the possibility that such a command might be disagreeable to some of the people. If, indeed, following the Lord was offensive to some, Joshua exhorted them to choose for themselves that day whom they would serve. He offered three options. First, the people of Israel could return to the gods which their fathers served which were beyond the river. Second, they could worship the gods of the Amorites in the land where the people of Israel were living. The third option was the choice Joshua himself had made—"as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua was leading the people by commanding them to fear and serve the Lord (v. 14). He was also leading them by example.