



I'm Not The Perfect Parent

Part 2 – You Don't Seem To Be Listening, But I'll Keep Sharing

Pastor Ted Cunningham

To be in this series... because we learned a lot last week and I'm learning even more this week. If you've ever yelled at your children, would you raise your hand just to admit it? If you've ever yelled at someone else's children, would you raise your hand? We're going to deal with all that today because we've been talking about this. We started it last week, but we're talking about *You Don't Seem To Be Listening, But I'll Keep Sharing*.

Last week, was I make mistakes, but I've got to still be the parent. So, you're not listening, and this is why I have to do what I'm doing to get your attention. Again, this series is not about bringing guilt to anyone, shame to anyone. We want you to leave here with grace and peace upon you as you parent. But today, we're talking about what you do with the child that's not listening. You don't seem to be listening, but I'm going to continue to share.

Out of last week, we learned I'm not the perfect parent, but I still have to be the parent. I'm the boss applesauce. Today, we're on a journey from control to influence because we've all been in the store and have had this moment. I don't care who you are; if this wasn't your moment in your family, you experienced this with someone else's kid. But it's falling on the ground, throwing a tantrum. If this happens in your family or has ever once happened, would you raise your hand? I so badly want to walk in sometime, at 45 years old, ask Amy for something and have her tell me no and me just collapse to the floor. How many of you want to do that? I want to do that so badly, but it looks weird.

It's hard to reason with a toddler, but I think there are like four ways to handle this kid. It's all done by the generation. Let me first ask you. How would you handle this child? Spank him. I knew, that's the first Make America Great Again paddle guy right there. What else? Keep walking. Alright; he's got it. I think the first thing we see today is that parent trying to reason with the toddler. That's why the dollar bins are at the front of the store, so you can buy your child something to appease them for the rest of time.

My generation would just kind of drag him kicking and screaming. That's not how my parents did it though. My parents would step over me and say, "Yeah, meet me on aisle eight whenever you're done with whatever that is right there." Let me see the hands of all the grandparents in the room. The grandparents would say, "Get your own ride home" or "Walk home because I'm not putting up that." That's when even strangers were allowed to spank your children. There are a lot of different ways to handle this, but we want to do less yelling, less screaming.

There are books being written called *Scream Free Parenting*. I think in the heart of every parent... We've felt this and we've even said this. **"You don't seem to be listening, so I have to yell to get your attention."** "I have to be the loudest voice in the room." Let me just ask the basic Dr. Phil question. How's that working for you. It doesn't; we know that.

When is it okay for a parent to yell? A lot of people in the fist service yelled, "NEVER!" I'm going to give you time to think about that because I think it's appropriate... Somebody just yelled it out over here. I think it's appropriate for you to yell at your child's sporting event. Yell and scream and cheer, right? Nebraska, you weren't doing that enough yesterday. Oh, I told you no Nebraska jokes, but I just threw in one.

When is it not okay to yell at a football game? This is not okay at a football game. Raise your hand if you've ever been kicked out of your child's game. Be really honest. We're getting honest today. Is that it? Four? You didn't even beat the first service. Yeah, we don't yell at the coaches. There are signs all over the sporting fields, telling us parents how to behave.

I think it's okay to yell when you're yelling, "SURPRISE!" How about at a concert or any loud event? In loud movies, I'm yelling to try to communicate with my kids. Here's a time when I think it's okay to yell. When the kid is running out into the street, chasing something. Yeah, emergencies.

My friend, Gary Thomas, said, "We taught our kids there will be no warnings in this home because when you're in imminent danger, like when it's right before you, I want to make sure you hear my voice and respond immediately." Young people, this is why obedience is so important. Answer, listen, obey the first time because Mom and Dad are seeing something. I don't want to give this child a warning and hopefully he hears me on the second or third time. I want this child to hear me on the first time.

We can debate this next one. I think it's okay to yell when you're in the passenger seat, teaching the child how to drive. I don't know; it may be personal, and it may be me working some stuff out up here. We're constantly training. I even said it on the way in today. I was driving. But a live deer in the ditch means what? There's a herd in the forest... or a flock or whatever you call a bunch of deer in the woods. Meaning when this one jumps across, you've got to slow down because baby is right behind momma. You've got to slow down. It's in this exasperated tone that I'm preaching right now that I'm usually instructing in the car. "STOP!!" Right? "You're going to die."

But, there's a better way. There's a more relaxing way when it doesn't seem that they are listening. Not only do we yell, we think we just need to repeat. "If you would just listen the first time..." Finish it for me. "If I've told you once..." "I've told you a thousand times." "If you would listen the first time, I wouldn't have to keep repeating myself."

Here's where we're going today. One of the biggest mistakes we make as parents... And we're all in this, not perfect parents. One of the biggest mistakes we make today is **treating our children like children right up until the very day we expect them to be adults**. We treat them like children, we talk to them like children, we give them the responsibilities of children, and we are on them. We are controlling their every move until the day comes where we are no longer in control.

I get we're all exhausted on this journey. We said it last week. Parenting is hard. Many said to me last week. "Parenting is the hardest thing I've ever done. A job is way easier. Marriage is way easier. Parenting is difficult."

This is why you sneak off to the bathroom to just get a little alone time. You get in there and your quiet and you turn the light off. You just don't want to hear anything. And then the kids start screaming for you and you go into stealth mode and you're getting toilet paper as quietly as you can off of that roll and then you end up seeing this after about three minutes of not responding. [picture of a little hand under the bathroom door] That's when you just have to start stomping, "I just need five minutes."

To the exhausted parent, to the one who believes that you have to be the loudest voice in the room, keep this in mind from last week. I'll speak to the parents first and then to the young people. Parenting is for a season, a very short period of time. But being a parent is for a lifetime. Young people, obedience, obeying Mom and Dad, that's just for a season. But, according to the scripture, honor is for a lifetime. Obedience for a season, honor is for a lifetime.

What we teach here at Woodland Hills... And we try to do this in so many practical ways. On this journey from a season to lifetime, we're moving from control to influence. How many of you have toddlers? This is the most control you'll ever have. Every day, every week, every year of your child's life, you're losing control, but we hope you're replacing it with influence. That's why, at baby dedication at Woodland Hills, which is coming up, we give out this jar with your child's name on the top of it. Unless your child's name is Mason, then we etched it right on the glass for you. Only Grandma gets that joke.

This jar was full of 936 marbles, when we received it for our kids. We've raised both of our children at this church. One is 14 and one is 16. If you're new to our church, just to kind of tell you what it means, each of the 936 marbles represents a week in the life of your child. What we do is we hold this up and we say, according to Psalm 90: 12, "Lord teach us to number our days." We want to make the most of the time we have with our children. That's what I love about this jar. You'll notice that at the top is the word *control* and at the bottom is the word *influence*. As you (go with the joke) lose your marbles, we want you to know that you're losing control. I'm at the season in life with two teenagers that I am hopefully a voice of influence. Are they still under my roof, do they still have things to do in being a part of our family? Absolutely, but I don't have the control over them like I had over them when they were two, three, four, and five.

Last week, a young man in our church went to college. Two weeks before he left, he asked his dad, "I sure hope you're enjoying your last two marbles with me." There are mom's in here saying, "Don't do it. Do not go there right now." I know it's a little tender for some of you. Amy has told me not to make any jokes until November. "They need time."

We're moving from control to influence. Some of you just raised your hands as having toddlers, right? You're controlling everything. Here are just a few. We could have a list of hundreds of things. **Wake up, go potty...** I always joke about Amy that we would be leaving the house when our kids were small, she'd go, "Kids, go potty; we're going to be in the car for a little bit. Ted do you need to go potty?" I'd be like, "Listen, I'm 45½ right now. I'm going to go potty all by myself. I probably won't even tell you. I go a lot

when you don't even know." **Wake up, go potty, go to bed.** A good parent doesn't ask a three-year-old, "Do you want to go to bed tonight? What time do you want to go to bed?" This is what we mean by *be the parent*. You're the boss, applesauce. **Brush your teeth.** Should you be telling a 25-year-old to brush their teeth. You're like, "Unless they're on my insurance until 26." **Put deodorant on.** There are some sports moms going, "I will tell my kids all the way to 18 – 20 to do that. **Eat your vegetables, get dressed, pick up your room.** We're putting all these behaviors into our kid.

Last week, we looked at essentials vs non-essentials in parenting. We talked about the fact that we are weighed down and we're burdened by the non-essentials to the point we forget what the essentials are and we lose focus on the essentials. There are other behaviors that I have put into my children from the time they were very small that I never asked them about. I didn't get their opinion on it. I didn't say, "Do you want to be a part of this?" They were just a part of it because they were part of the Cunningham family. Way beyond this, I go into these others and I could give you a list here, but I'm going to keep it short. **We pray together as a family.** I may have asked my kids what they wanted to pray for that night when they were very small, but praying was not an option given to them. We pray before our meals, we pray before bed, we pray before you go out of the car, we pray at times throughout the day.

We read scripture together. At the end of dinner, I never asked my kids, "Hey, I'm going to open the Bible, is that okay with you?" I read scripture. **We go to church.** I was a drugged kid. Everybody knows what that means. I was drug Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night. I don't ever once remember my dad asking me, "Hey, do you want to go to church today?" I might say, "Hey, I'm not feeling really well, Dad. I don't want to go." He'd say, "Well throw up and prove it." And then you'd throw up and he'd say, "Good, now get in the car; we're going to church. You probably feel better after you threw up." We went to church. It wasn't a question that was given to me. My parents were in charge.

We tithe. When I brought money home, my dad didn't ask, "Do you want to give any this week?" It was a given. He sat me down. And it was since I was very young. I don't have great memory from the time I was four, five, six years old, but I know that's when it started. It's one of those things where I don't even really know when it started, but it was a practice in our home. It was a practice in our home before I even understood completely why we were doing this. That comes a little bit later.

Behavior comes into our children and then they get to the point where now I'm in the influence stage and they're going to start asking questions. We read about this in Deuteronomy 6. We looked at it last week. **4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts,** Mom and Dad, a love for the Lord, understanding that he is God, he is the Lord, and he is our Lord. **7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.** All throughout your day, we're praying, reading scripture, going to church, tithing. This is all part of what it means to be a part of our home. And in Deuteronomy 6, even more than just the home, but also the community.

When you go down to Verse 20... I love this. ***20 In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?”*** What is the meaning of all this? “Why do we do this? Mom and Dad, why do we do that?” Some of you right now, explain it to your kids when they are very small, but right now, you’re in the phase where you’re getting it into their hearts. In the future, there’s a day coming when they are going to ask even more questions about the behavior and why we do that.

That’s where we keep reading. ***21 tell him: “We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Before our eyes the Lord sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. 23 But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. 24 The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.***

That’s why you read in Psalms 78, ***1 My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth .2 I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—3 things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us.4 We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.*** “Mom and Dad, why do we do this. Mom and Dad, why do we go to church?”

I’ll be honest. As a pastor, I’m saddened when I get online... I saw it yesterday. Some person was spouting off saying, “You don’t have to go to church to be a Christian.” I get what you’re trying to say, but don’t diminish the bride of Christ. Don’t diminish the importance of being around God’s people. Don’t diminish the need for the community.

So, when your child asks, “Why do we go to church?” Explain to your child a time when the church was there for you; when the church helped you. We say it all the time around here. People find a lot of help at Woodland Hills when their life is falling apart. What we say is don’t leave after you start to get things back together. Stay, because it just might help keep you from having your life fall apart again.

Tell them of a time the church was there. Tell them what you learned from your mother, from your grandmother, from your father, from your grandfather. “Dad, why do we give? Why is generosity so important in this home?” Speak the truth to them. Share times where you saw the Lord come through for you and provide for you. Remind your children, “Listen, everything we have – this home we live, everything – it’s all his; we’re just stewards of it. We manage it. “Why do we pray?” “Why do we read the scripture?” Share with your kids your favorite scripture. Share with your kids of a dark time in your life when it was just you and there was no one around you, but you opened the Bible and the Lord showed you things from his word and it changed you. This is what it means to answer the questions our kids are asking.

Now, you're moving from control, just the behavior, to influence, a voice of influence in the life of your child. I’m moving from the parenting season. I’m not very far away from the just being a parent season. I long, ten years from now, for my child to call me for any and every reason, seeking help. I have a friend in this church that I love it when he tells me, “I just got a text from my daughter and she’s asking me

about her..." "My son talked to me today and he..." He's a dad who is a voice of influence. He cannot control his children's behavior, but he's that voice speaking into his children things they already know, things he taught them twenty years ago but now he's just that voice of influence.

What do we do as parents? **We create environments for our children to succeed rather than teaching them to succeed in environments we can't control.** So, what we do is we want to make everything perfect for them, creating a fail-safe environment that we place them in instead of being the parent that walks alongside and says, "You know what? I want to help you through this." That's influence.

Control is saying, "I'm going to make the environment perfect for you." For the teachers in the room, I think you probably know what I'm talking about. It's that parent who is calling you all the time. A parent will snatch a kid out of class where they don't think the teacher is the best for their kid, but the parent moving towards influence will say things to their kid like, "Okay, I'm not going to call your teacher, but I want to talk to you about some things you can say and do tomorrow when you return to that classroom." That's when parenting gets fun. Maybe you've heard this said another way: **Prepare your child for the path, not the path for your child.** We're sending children out of the home who love the Lord; they're responsible, they're ready for marriages of their own.

Control creates environments for our children to succeed. Influence gives your child the freedom to succeed – here's where it's hard for the bubble wrap parent generation – **(or fail) in environments we can't control.** I have a lot of friends in this room who don't hear from their kids a lot, but when the kids are struggling with something, they know that voice – Mom and Dad – to call to find help, knowing they're going to walk them through it. "They can't take it over for me. They can't bail me out of the consequences of the bad choice that I made, but I know they are going to give me wisdom."

We're moving from control to influence which means I'm no longer sitting in the passenger seat holding a fake wheel. Instead, I'm on the outside of the car, handing the keys to my daughter and she's going out there. Now, I'm still watching her go down the road. I follow her sometimes. Not like a lot of you do with the finding my iPhone app. I'm not to that level with the apps and stuff, but this is an environment I can't control anymore. You're like, "Yeah, you can. You can take the keys away." But you know what I mean. She's driving on her own. I'm not in the environment anymore.

Some of you just dropped kids off at the dorm room. Are they ready? They're calling home now. You don't have control, but you've got influence. I have friends whose parents... I still can't fathom this. I could give you name upon name upon name of friends whose parents controlled their every single move up until the day they dropped them off in a dorm room. I'm not a parenting expert, but I can tell you that's a horrible strategy. These kids got to college and experienced all this freedom and they lost their minds. They didn't know what to do with it.

I'll say another one and it's the cubical. HR managers around the country will tell you that Mommy and Daddy are still calling to negotiate compensation packages for their college graduates. This is a problem. I was in corporate America while I was going through seminary. Man, I had a couple of rough days. I wasn't used to the cutthroat behavior and I'd call my dad. Never once would I think my dad would call my boss, and he didn't. Could you imagine my mom calling, "I heard what you said to Teddy today and

let me tell you something. I hear that come out of you again and I'm going to tell him to quit." Man, I don't have control at this point, but I want influence.

If you haven't cried at the dropping of them off at the dorm room, we'll go right to the wedding. This picture is of Katie who is sitting back there. She's advancing the slides. This is Matt Gumm who led us in worship today. That's R.P. who just gave Katie away. He's whispering in Matt's ear, "I'll kill ya. I will rip you limb from limb."

There's a day coming where they are going to go into their own home. We read this in Genesis 2: 24, ***For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the they will become one flesh.*** The first half of that: For this reason, a man... If you've been at Woodland Hills for any period of time, you know this is a verse we've seen a lot. For this reason, a man... not a child, not an adolescent. It's my job as a parent to make sure Corynn and Carson leave home as adults, not on a journey to become one. And as they go out and into the dorm rooms and into the first workplace and into their own marriages, I want the influence.

Do not raise your hand on any of these questions I'm about to ask. But I hear it a lot from people. They've been gone from home for 20 years and Mom and Dad still want to control their every move. Do you know where that puts your kids? It puts them in marriage counseling. It does. It's a mom and dad who can't let go.

You say, "Oh, I don't control my kids." Christmas is coming up; how are you doing with that one? Are they free to go on a vacation without coming to visit you? "Well, if they love me, they'll come and see me." No, they love you, they honor you, but it's time for you to back off. It's time for you to let your kids go, relationally, emotionally, financially, and, as I tell the kids, if necessary, geographically. I tell them all the time, "If you are around smothering parents who are controlling your every move and you're having a hard time uniting and becoming one flesh, move a thousand miles away.

You're like, "I hate this. Don't you move..." I'm just saying geographically doesn't have to be the case, but if you can't break free relationally, emotionally, and I will say this for your parents, financially, you've got to let them go. And when they go and they go into homes of their own, we're hoping the voice of a parent, the parent of influence is saying I hope you will continue in everything you have learned in this home. I hope you'll put it into practice in your own home. Do you understand the joy that brings your parents? Do you want to bring joy to your mother and your father? Continue in everything they have taught you. Continue in it on your own and then teach it to your children as well.

That's why Paul said to Timothy, ***But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of...*** Young people going off to college, don't lose your mind. Bring joy to your mother and father and continue in what they've taught you. ***Because you know those from whom you have learned it and how from infancy, you have known the holy scriptures...*** Meaning this was taught to you before you could even ask all the questions you had. That came later on in life. Where did Timothy learn all this? It came from the primary influence and the primary influence for him was Mom and Grandma.

Mom and Dad, you're the primary influence in the life of your children. They taught you the holy scriptures ...**which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus**. Young people, you honor Mom and Dad, not by obeying them or allowing them to have control over you, but by continuing in what they taught you.

I'm going to give you some practical ways as we close. How to move as a parent from control to influence. How do you do that? I think control is the yelling and the screaming and the repeating. And the older your kids get, probably the more you're going to yell and scream because the more you are going to want to hold onto the control. How do we move from control to influence?

1. Find other voices that echo your teaching. That's what our whole family ministry here is based off of. We at the church want to partner with you. Mom and Dad, you have 3,000 hours a year of active time with your kids where you are influencing them. Remember our children see everything we do, hear everything we say, they forget nothing, and then they repeat. They're watching. They have a front row seat to your marriage, to your faith, to your quiet time with the Lord, to the way you drive... They're watching.

At the church, in family ministries, those who are pouring into your children have about 40 hours. You're 3,000 hours are making a big difference in the life of your kids. The 40 hours that are placed in here and are poured into your children, that's just a voice that's echoing what we hope you're already saying at home.

I want you to take just a few minutes and listen to Stephanie Watson, our Director of Family Ministries here, as she kind of explains the phases and then how our church desires to partner with you.

Stephanie Watson: We know that what happens at home is more important than what happens at church because we can't do in 40 hours what a parent can do in 3,000. So, we want to come alongside the parent and help them right where they're at. We do this in tangible ways through social media posts or Parent Cues. Just recently, we added discussion questions to our Instagram stories so that parents can talk about what the kids learned on Sunday mornings on their way out of the parking lot.

For our student ministries, partnering looks a little different. At this point in their life, they're starting to listen to other voices more than their parents. We always try to esteem the family. In small group, partnering with a parent might simply look like telling a student, "Hey, listen to your parents; they love you so much and they are really wise." Parents can partner with us by letting their small group leader know if there's something happening at home or at school that's impacting the student. When a parent and a small group leader work together, the impact is exponential.

We want to teach kids about Jesus in a way they're going to remember, and their language is fun. Jesus was clear about the way he valued and understood kids, so we want any child or student who walks through our doors to be engaged and learning at their level. Regardless of their age, it's going to revolve around some kind of fun.

In Critter Street, it looks like silly songs and dancing and lots of imaginary play. In Wild Woods, it looks more like small group time. They're learning to be friends and they're learning to take part in a group, but there's also lots of competitions, still lots of silliness, and lots of memories being made.

And then when we get to Student Ministry, they're growing up and we're going to grow with them. We still like to bring the crazy, we still like to bring the fun, but it's in a way that's tailored just for them.

We see wins every single Sunday and they look different in every child. In the baby room, it might look like a child finally feeling comfortable with us. In the pre-school years, when we get videos of a child sharing their Bible verse, that is a huge win.

Video of child: "I can do everything by the power of Christ."

Stephanie Watson: We know the kids are hiding that Word in their heart and they're going to remember it for the rest of their lives.

In Student Ministry, we share life together. None of us want to face this world alone, so we've spent months and years growing together, and when those relationships stick, that's a win.

One of my favorite stories that illustrates this is one of our students who grew up in our student ministries. When she got married, all of her small group leaders were there that day. If that's not enough, this same girl, once she graduated from high school, she took on a small group of her own, and let me tell you, those girls looked up to her; she was there for them. On her wedding day, many of them were there celebrating with her. It was really a picture of full circle how life on life makes an impact. We want them to grow into young men and young women who love Lord, seeking him with all their heart, and having a faith that's all their own.

Ted Cunningham: Would you help me thank our family ministries team. If you've not found your place of serving yet in this church and you want to be an additional voice, a voice of influence in the life of the children here at Woodland Hills, please see some one from Family Ministries and say that's the place we want to serve, that's the place I want to serve.

2. Allow your preschooler to make some decisions, but not adult decisions. And all the parents said... Amen. Listen, some of you hold your kids out of Family Ministries. If that's a family decision with purpose, I get that, but if you are holding them out because the three-year-old doesn't want to go in, let me just say, as your pastor, be the parent. "I ask; he doesn't want to go in." Well, he's going in. If it's not a family strategy or plan, but he just doesn't feel comfortable, this is a great, safe environment with voices of influence that you can practice losing control, not being in total control. "Ted, there are germs in that room." There are germs in here right now.

You can let kids make decisions about play time. "You do have to wear clothes out of the house today, but you can pick what shirt you want to wear." Sometimes we're not thinking through, developmentally, what a child is able to make decisions on.

3. Talk to your teens like adults, not children. That's a great way to move from control to influence. I have a 14 and 16 year old, and I'm here to tell you they tell me that so many adults are so condescending. May our church never be that one that looks at teenagers – when we see them coming in a store or coming in a restaurant – and thinks *oh they're up to no good*. Look for the best. Talk to them like adults, not like kids.

4. Give more responsibilities and less reminders. “If I don't tell him to get up, he won't get up. He'll be late for school.” Well let him feel that, experience that. “I have to remind him everyday about his books in the bag and if he got that one notebook...” Let him deal with the consequences of it from a teacher, and you don't have to be involved in every decision. They'll figure out you can't stay up until midnight or 1:00 am and then wonder why you're so tired at school. We start to give – in developmentally appropriate ways – more responsibility to our kids and less reminders.

5. Validate feelings and teach the life lesson later. This is the one I'm working on more than anything else as a parent right now. I have to get better at not giving a life lesson every single moment of the day. And you don't have to turn every moment of the day into a life lesson. And all the young people said... Amen. They come home and a friend has decided they no longer want to be your child's friend. Parents, we have to freak out on the inside and we have to walk alongside our child and deal with those feelings before we say things like, “I told you so. I have it right here. Don't be a companion of fools. Bad company corrupts good character. I've told you over and over again. He shouldn't have even been your friend.” Not the time. Let's just move that on down the road a little bit and walk alongside what your child is feeling. You could even say walk alongside what they are feeling after they have to now deal with a consequent from a bad choice. There will be plenty of time for the life lessons. Get better with validating.

This is all I know. I've got about 90 marbles left in here with my daughter Corynn. It's going to go fast. The days go slowly, but the years go fast. One day, I'm going to be standing at the back of a church with her, long after all the marbles are gone. I'm going to be standing at the back of a church with her, looking down the aisle at some pervert. And I'm not walking the aisle until I know he loves her as much as me.

When she was five and wanted to take over the room every time she would walk into a room... Everything was about “I'm here, stop your adult conversations. I'm the most important person in your life.”

I finally told her, “There's only one queen in this house and you ain't her. Your mom is the queen, but you're my princess. And one day I'm going to walk down the aisle and give you away to be another man's queen. And let me tell you, Corynn, that's going to go fast. I hope you allow me into the decision-making process. I hope you will honor me and your mother throughout your decisions in life.

“I hope you see that because don't blink... According to theologian Kenny Chesney. Just like that, you're six years old and you take a nap. You wake up and you're twenty-five. All the marbles are gone. And your high school sweetheart has become your wife. Don't blink because just like that, you'll miss your babies growing like mine did, turning into moms and dads. Next thing you know, your better half of 50

years is there in bed, and your praying God takes you instead. Trust me friends a hundred years (18) years go way faster than you think.”

May we be parents of influence in the lives of our children. And young people that are in here, bring joy to your parents by continuing in what they have taught you.

Father, I pray for every young person in here, the ones who this behavior has been brought upon them from the time of childhood, but they’ve never confessed with their mouth that Jesus is Lord or believed in their heart that he has been raised from the dead. I pray that today would be the day that their parents’ faith becomes their faith that they make the decision to follow Jesus. That they have the knowledge they have learned from infancy, the holy scriptures, knowledge that brings to them salvation that is only by faith alone in Christ alone. May that be the decision they make today.

I pray for all of our college students that are watching. With all that’s being thrown at them right now, that they would listen to the voice of influence from their parents, that they would call home, that we as parents would freak out on the inside, hold back on the control, and be a voice of influence.

May this church continue to be an influence into the lives of children as we partner with parents and for that we are grateful. It’s in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.