



First Comes Love
Part 1 – Then Come In-laws
Pastor Ted Cunningham

Good morning, Woodland Hills Family Church! To all of our guests, we're glad you're here; welcome to this special day, as we honor our graduates; we're glad that you're here. To all of those I saw out in the Courtyard, over at the Gathering place, and in the Chapel, welcome. To all of our church at home family, welcome; we're glad that you are tuning in. As part of our worship, we take an offering at our church. We are grateful for your generosity; it goes to support the ministries here, families, and individuals here in our church, as well as those in Southwest Missouri, Norwest Arkansas that we seek to reach and then taking to gospel to the ends of the earth. We are grateful. There are four ways you can give. There are offering boxes located in the back, you can hit the Church Center App, the "Give online now" button, or text any amount to 84321. We encourage that generosity.

We're going to do two parts of a series – a quick series before we jump into summer. A lot of great friends returning to Woodland Hills this summer. Clay Scroggins will be here, Rene Schleper, Alex Himaya, the Pastor of Woodland Hills West. He leads our west campus in Tulsa, Oklahoma. These are all great friends of ours as well as the teaching team, so we're looking forward to summer.

This series that we are jumping into is First Come Love. This week we are talking about Then Come In-laws. We're going to talk about the relationship that's changing. So, as you leave home, we want to talk about how to leave home well without getting parents too emotional. Today, I'm going to walk through something that can help with the tears in just a second. We're talking about how a relationship forms from your family of origin. Because you are going to bring your family of origin into your marriages. You're marrying someone with a different family of origin. There's lot's of baggage. You could say First come love then comes baggage. But Amy wouldn't let me refer to us as baggage. She said we are in-laws.

My daughter gets married two weeks from Tuesday and we're doing a simple backyard wedding. I'd like to explain to you what a simple backyard wedding looks like and the cost of a simple backyard wedding. There is a reason you rent wedding venues rather than build them in your backyard. We started with a pergola that is now a cathedral. And after May 31st, I'm going to be renting it out in Branson. If you'd like to get married in our backyard. The price tag starts at \$30,000.00. I'll do it for free. I'll officiate for free, but to rent the cathedral, it's 30. Amy said, "You have to offer a friends and family discount for the Woodland Hills family and so we are. It will be \$25,000.00 for you if you would like to get married back there. So, I've got all the feels.

Today, we are talking about the influence and relationship that I want as a parent when my children leave home. Mom and Dad, I want to maintain a relationship with my children that makes sure that I am also a parent of influence. I want to leverage my influence, I don't want to squander my influence the older I get. I want to let my kids leave home well. We're going to talk about that today.

We often talk about Genesis 2: 24 in context of marriage. We're going to look at that a little bit today but we're really looking at father and mother, the family of origin, and how to leave. We've covered Genesis 2: 24 a lot in our marriage ministry here at Woodland Hills. The first part of this verse is a parenting verse, right? A reason a man, not a child, not an adolescent, we're not going to talk about prolonged adolescence today, but it is the job of Mom and Dad to make sure our children leave home as adults, not on a journey to become one and how we do that. We talk about that a lot. But today, we're focusing on the leave part. What does the leave look like? And then we want to talk about the family of origin.

I work with a lot of couples who are struggling with the second half of this verse. Trying to become one flesh, being united to one another, but this process of leaving home hasn't been done well. They haven't left home well, they haven't completely left home, and the meshed family that they find themselves in is preventing them from having a thriving marriage.

So, whether you're married or not, this message is for you and I to think through all the message written on our hearts. They were placed there by our parents, father and mother, and extended family. You will leave your father and mother to be united to your wife and they will become one flesh.

Now, all of us in here, when you leave home and you guys have a couple of suitcases now and maybe a couple of boxes, you're packing. I've been trying to figure out... There are going to be some tears. There are tears at graduation. There are going to be some tears when you get dropped off at college or wherever you go. I'm officiating my daughter's wedding. You're like, "Oh, you'll never be able to do that." Oh, I have a plan. I'm going to do it tear free. There won't be one tear. You know what I've done? I've created a play list that has ever sad country song about children leaving home. You're going to miss this by Trace Atkins... My daughter and I are trying to find our song that we are going to dance to in two weeks. I said, "Let me play you this one." She had never heard the song, "Butterfly Kisses" by Bob Carlyle. We're playing it on the way back from Springfield yesterday. I looked back at her and she's looking out the window. She turns her head and she's pretty emotional. I said, "What about that one?" she's like, "That's a non can do. We ain't doing that one at the wedding." "Stealing Cinderella..." We have a lot of great country songs about this moment.

I've made this play list and I listen to it all day long. All my tears are going to be gone by May 31. So, Parents, I just want to encourage you. Before you get college or before you drop your kid off at their first place, just make yourself a sad play list. Listen to that, watch videos of puppies, do whatever you have to do to get all the feels out. I've been packing a suitcase... My whole life, my parents helped me pack this suitcase. I have boxes. Now, some boxes are pretty heavy. The baggage we bring into marriage can be pretty heavy. I want to talk a little bit today about some of the light baggage. I just want to encourage you, husband and wife, as you form relationships, when the baggage is light, lighten up. Let me tell you how your family of origin influences in a lot of different ways. It influences the way you worship, how you vote. I had a couple tell me a couple of weeks ago that hey, it's great. We don't even go to the polling booth anymore because we cancel each other out." I'm like I don't think that's what the founding fathers meant. I thin you should still get up, get dressed, and go cast your vote.

How you spend and save. Some of you grew up in a home that taught savings was money you put away for a rainy day. Others of you grew up in a home that taught savings was the difference between the actual price and the sale price.

Some of you grew up in a home that taught signs were laws to be followed; you break one, you go to jail or you get a ticket. Others of you grew up in a home that taught signs were suggestions for other people. I married Amy and Amy taught me how to cut people off in traffic. She's like, "Just keep your eyes down; don't look at them when you do it. Just get right past them."

You watched your father and mother fight and you learned how to fight and reconcile or not. That comes to you from your family of origin.

How to clean. Some of you are like... I want to tell you one mother-in-law joke. It's low hanging fruit. I didn't want to tell you this joke. I refused to do it, but Rex, one of our care pastors, said you have to do it." So this is one him. I didn't want to bring this up here because it's kind of offensive, but... No, I'm not going to do it. You want it? Okay, here it is. The wife said to her mother-in-law, "Stop telling me how to raise my children while I'm still raising one of your." I didn't want that for you. Rex will be down front here with the prayer team afterwards if you want to talk to him.

How you celebrate the holidays. That's part of the influence from your family of origin. Some of you grew up in a home that decorated for Christmas on a commercial break with a three foot pre-decorated tree with a garbage bag over it. Others of you grew up in the White House. You had a tree in every room, garland over every door. We could do this all day, but we're starting with influence today and how important it is to maintain a great relationship with our adult children so that we can maintain influence and influence over the most important thing. But it also affects the way you load the dishwasher. Now, I'm not saying my way is the only way to load a dishwasher, but it is the manufacturer's recommended loading instructions. We'll sit at the dinner table and Corynn will be like, "Why is this stuff on my fork?" I'm like, "I think the dishwasher is broken." The dishwasher is not broken. You can't put 15 utensils together upside down in that little hole and expect them to get clean. I'm sorry, I just... Half of my sermons are working things out. Can I get an amen on that? We're all just working things out. Let me tell you, you brought a lot of stuff. We could do a suitcase all day, but I tell you, I want to show you this (double toilet paper holder).

Target, for like twelve bucks, I think has decreased the divorce rate by 20%. Make some noise if you think this is the proper way to install the toilet paper (over the top). Yes. Make some noise if you think this is the proper way (from under the roll). Wrong. But there is somebody worse than that. You want to know who is worse than that? This person fires me up right here (leaves practically empty roll on the holder) Somebody needs to call you out right now. You left a half of a sheet of toilet paper on there so you could say it wasn't empty. You, yourself use an ample 12 to 15 squares. But there is somebody worse than this. You know who is worse than this? This person is way worse (full roll on the top of toilet paper holder). You know what? You are lazy, that's what you are.

Make some noise if you think this is proper toothpaste dispensing right here (end of tube rolled up). And then you married this person (tube squeezed in the middle). There is somebody worse than this. Some of you married this person (tube with cap left off). Yeah, what kind of animal refuses to use the

cap? Some of you, this brings great joy to your soul (triple folded bath towel). And you married this person (towel left on the floor).

Comedian Jeff Allen said, "My wife likes to confront me with this stuff with questions. I'll walk in the bedroom, and she'll be like, "Hey, is this your underwear on the floor?" He's like, "I hope so." If not, I'm going to have some questions of my own around here.

Dennis Lloyd Freitag, where are you? Are you sitting in this service? There's my father-in-law right there. My father-in-law and my mother-in-law. Oh, I'm coming at you right now, Dennis Lloyd Freitag. You know what I'm going to talk about don't you? My wife and I processed time very differently when we got married. My family kind of lived by this thing that if you were five minutes early, you were late. That's not what my Father in law believes. Right Denny? I didn't ask permission to do this, so here we go. We got married in October and we were back in Fremont, Nebraska in December, so two months after we were married. We were at their house and we decided to go to a movie that night. Denny, you're going to remember the line. You many not; this was 25 years ago. We decided to go to a 7:00 movie. We were all in the family room in Fremont, Nebraska. I looked at my watch and it's a quarter to 7:00. No one has shoes on, no coats; we're not moving toward the door. I asked, "Did we decide not to go to that movie?" Oh, yeah, we have time." "We've got time? How far away is the movie theater?" "About 10 minutes." "About 10 minutes? We're sitting here... We're going to miss the previews." Then I heard this come from my wife, "Oh, the previews are not big deal?" "Oh, no big deal? That's my favorite part. How do you know what next movie you should go to if you're not there for the previews?" She goes, "And then, if you miss the first couple minutes of the movie, that's going to be..." "What! Have you not... I can name ten movies that if you miss the first minute, you're lost the whole movie." We get there... I will never forget Denny Freitag saying this. We got there about two minutes to 7:00. He looked at his watch. He knew that at that point, we were having some jokes at the time. He looks at his watch and he goes, "We're two minutes early. Should we just circle the parking lot a couple times?" Raise your hand if I'm telling the truth, Dennis Lloyd. Yes! Alright!

This baggage is light and here's a term that will help you thrive in marriage whether it's toothpaste, toilet paper, towels or time, the answer is NBD – No big deal. Some of you are going, "VBD" – Very big deal. No, a different way is not the wrong way. You have a different way of doing something... I hear this from couples all the time – I married the wrong person. You didn't marry the wrong person. You married someone who has thousands and thousands and thousands of message written on their heart and a lot of them are way different than the message written on yours. And every message written on their heart has a story behind it. This is what make marriage fun. This is why when you're dating and engaged, there is no way you can unpack everything. This is why you enter into a covenant relationship where you sign a document saying I'm going to learn about this person until I'm dead. Because I married a different person, not the wrong person. And I know get to spend my days learning all of this."

Our culture does not get this right with compatibility. With compatibility, they think it's something you find. You find a perfect personality match and off to the races we go and it's just going to be happily ever after. The Hebrew for that is Hah! I'm 25 years married and there are still things I'm finding in boxes and bags. This is what I love about compatibility from a biblical definition of two becoming one. It's something you make over time. It takes time to unpack all of this and to learn about each other. You will never find it, text for it online, or stumble into it. It does not require a perfect personality match. It's a process and a willingness to live in curiosity and fascination with one another as you

navigate each new season and stage of life. And the seasons and stages of life change us. We're always learning about one another.

So, how do you leave... I just want to remind us. This influence coming into our home from our family of origin is just that. It's an influence but it shouldn't define who you are as a couple. You do that. So, maybe you're heard the expression, "You marry the family." Not true. You exchange vows and rings with your spouse, not the family.

So, how do we leave home well in order to thrive and work relationships down the road? Well, first, and this is what the word leave is actually referring to. There are a lot of ways we leave. We leave home physically, so we get that. We pack physical, literal boxes and bags and we move out.

We also leave home relationally. I just want parents to hear this today because there is a mother-in-law in here right now going, "I hate everything about this message and where it's headed." You don't lose your relationship with your kids, but your relationship most definitely changes. And this week, we want to talk about that, and next week, we will even talk more to grandparents and parents of adult children and we're going to talk about First Comes Love Then Comes the Empty Nest. Some people, when they get to the empty nest, they squander all their influence with their children and their grandchildren by making terrible decisions and drifting in their faith. We want to talk about that. But the relationship you have with your child when they leave home changes, and we want to talk about how to do that well in just a second.

Emotionally... the strings aren't... That's why we use the term cut the strings. The strings aren't the same, so we cut the strings. Praise our Father in Heaven that you leave financially. This Cathedral we're building in the back yard is her gift for the next ten years.

And if necessary, geographically. And some of you move far away from home. It's not required. But some of you found that the bond, the uniting husband and wife, was a little bit easier because you didn't live next door. Let me tell you what leaving home is not. We're called to honor our father and mother. Leaving home does not sever all ties with extended family, but it does change relationships. So, let talk about that with a few very practical ways.

1. Prioritize your spouse over your parents. This means that after a good day or a bad day, your parent is not your first phone call. Your spouse is your first phone call. I did premarital counseling a couple of years ago. Mom came up to me and said, "At the wedding rehearsal, how dare you tell my son to stop loving his mother."

I'm like, "See, here's part of the problem. That you know what went on in premarital counseling, you're part of the problem. I never told your son to stop loving you. I said he needs to stop calling you every day. He needs to stop calling you multiple times a day and he needs to make sure that his spouse, his new wife, is his first phone call after a good day or a bad day. He needs to prioritize her over you." Never compare your spouse to a parent. Oh, I got all sorts of stories after the first service about people going, "Man, I wish I would have heard that in the first month of marriage." Joe just came up to me and said his wife brought him meatloaf. She didn't grow up eating meatloaf, but some of you desire to do that – make the meal that your spouse grew up with. She brought him meatloaf and he was like, "Well, actually, the way my mom..." Don't judge Joe. He has learned, he has grown. I don't even know if I'm allowed to share this but she goes, "Well has your mom ever done this?" And took and it and tossed it

in the trash. That's why you never compare your spouse to a parent. But also, on the flip side of this, you never look at a spouse and say, "You're acting just like your mother." "You're acting just like your father." Have you ever been at your in-law's house and had an ah hah moment where like your mother in law or father in law say or do something and your like, Huh... That's why she says that. That's why he does that. Here's a big one.

Do not allow extended family members to make decisions for your marriage. This gets a lot of couples in trouble. How you celebrate the holidays is up to you and your spouse, it's not up to your parents. If you want to be home and wake up in your house and Christmas Day, guess what? You're an adult and you get to make that decision. I teach this in different parts of the country in different cultures. There are some cultures that really push back on this message saying, "Momma's always in charge until she draws her last breath. The Matriarch is always in charge." What we're talking about in Genesis 2: 24 and that Jesus repeats in Matthew 19, Paul repeats in Ephesians 5. It's a foundational marriage teaching of the scripture and it transcends all cultures. You have to leave your father and mother. An 85 year old grandma doesn't call all the shots for you, your marriage, and your children. And it's going to make people mad. I had somebody post online after I was at a church a couple of weeks ago, "You're tearing families apart with this message." I didn't, but I wanted to. I had it typed out, "No, you are. Because I end up counseling your children." They are wanting to move on in life and they want a good relationship with you."

Do not take personal responsibility for a parent's feelings, words, and actions. When you start making the decisions, people are going to get frustrated with you. Feelings could get hurt. So, when that happens, do not take personal responsibility for a parent's feelings, words, and actions. You are 100% responsible for your feelings, words, and actions. Your spouse is 100% responsible for their feelings, words, and actions. And your parent is 100% responsible for their feelings, words, and actions.

Stop obeying, but never stop honoring your parents. That's a tough one. I'm called to honor and care for my parents until the Lord calls them home. I'm called to that, but I don't obey them and take their requests. I try to fulfill them and that could be part of honoring. I share all this because I'm grateful. Amy and I do not have controlling parents. I look at Denny and Linda there. You were like, "Take her, Ted, this is fantastic. This is great. We're done." Denny wanted to fish a little bit. And my parents weren't controlling either. Some of you are dealing with that, so how can we help with that?

If these boundaries... Really all we're talking about are boundaries that you are establishing. If these boundaries aren't established, aren't followed, you end up with an enmeshed family. There are three ways families are enmeshed, like too close and the leaving hasn't properly taken place.

There are no boundaries. What momma says goes, what daddy says goes. We obey, we follow them, we allow them to make decisions for how we do vacation and how we do holidays, so there's just no boundaries at all.

Some of you are like, well, we do have boundaries, but we've never clearly communicated them – the boundaries are just unclear. They are there, but they are loose and we don't discuss them. We'll get in the care after family gatherings and be like, "You need to tell your mother..." "You need to have a conversation with your dad..." In those moments, you have boundaries, a way you want to see your marriage move forward but you just haven't stated them clearly. Can I just encourage young people? The earlier the better. Have the conversation. That's why I include all of this in wedding ceremonies the

best I can because I really want couples to start off well and maintain a great relationship. I want mom and dad and grandma and grandpa to have great relationships that are able to leverage influence in the life of their children long after their kids leave home.

Boundaries are established, but not followed. For some of you, boundaries are established, they've been clearly communicated, but not followed. That's some parents in here right now with adult children. You keep stepping over the boundaries. Can I just encourage you with a few things we share often in this church? Parenting is for a season, but being a parent is for a lifetime. This is tough. I have daughter getting married, a son turning 17 next month, and my parenting season is at an end, but I'm going to be their parent for a lifetime. The relationship looks different and I want to do everything we're talking about today so well... I had moments this week where I was like, "Man, I'm going to be an awesome father in law. But then I'm like, pride cometh before the fall. So, we're preaching to ourselves today. What does it mean to be a parent for a lifetime? It means I have influence and I want to maintain influence in the life of our children. It's something we say around here all the time. Parenting is a journey from control to influence. With every year of your child's life, you're losing control, but, hopefully, you're replacing it with influence. And if you want influence in the life of your child, you have to give up control. I see it all the time with parents and grandparents. They have very little influence in the life of their children and grandchildren because they are too controlling.

My son turns 17 and he's been talking about his senior year and trips we're doing and games we're going to go to. Every time he brings this up, I just have these moments. He's like, "Dad, when I graduate, my buddies and I..." So, they'll be like freshly 18. "We're all going to get in the car and go take a big trip somewhere. Probably go to Florida." I'm like really? You're all going to drive, just all of you together. Who is driving? You're going to pile in a car? Most parents say what? No. I didn't say no; I said can I come? Isn't that what you want? You want your parents on the trip. Come on! You want me going through Universal studios with you and hanging out with your friends. No. I get it. You see all of this can be summed up. If you want to be a parent of influence for a lifetime... Everything we just talked about my friend, Jim Burns sums it up in one sentence. It's the most brilliant sentence for parents doing life with their adult children I've ever heard. It's simply this. Keep the welcome mat out and your mouth shut. If you want influence, keep an open door and your mouth shut.

Listen, I don't have a problem keeping my mouth shut. Honestly, I feel like I'll be able to keep my mouth shut. My problem is my face. I'm not great at the poker face. I've watched it in this church. I've watched grandma with her daughter in law and baby being fed. Grandma fed her children a certain way at a certain speed and grandchild being fed is just shoveled in. Nothing is being said, but the face of shock.

My son saying he's going to load up in the car with his friends after his senior year and go someplace and I'm like, Hmm, really? Wow. Keep the welcome mat out and your mouth shut and a poker face to be the parent of influence.

Here's why all of this is so important. How the towel is folded and how you clean is all secondary, it's light. This is all influence from my parents but it's no big deal. Do you know what is a very big deal? VBD – very big deal? I want, for the remainder of my time under the sun, as I'm taking my trips around the sun, I want the remainder of my time to be an influence in the life of my kids to continue to show them how to love the Lord, how to know the Lord, how to spend time with the Lord, how to prioritize not just a love for Jesus, but a love for the local church. I want them to see that.

We share these passages. If you want to turn in your Bibles to Matthew 10, we'll be there in just a moment. We share some familiar passages if you've been at Woodland Hills for any length of time. Deuteronomy 6: 5-7 **Love the Lord you God with all your heart, with all your soul, and will all your strength.** Verse 6 is to you, Mom and Dad, and to you, Grandma and Grandpa. **These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.** Because what is on your heart will find its way onto the hearts of your children.

I don't want anything about my relationship with my kids to be so controlling that they want to spend no time around me, that they don't want to be with me on the holidays, they don't want to visit because every time they're with me, I'm in preaching mode, telling them how to live their life. I want to make sure I let the control go so I can be a parent of influence.

And I'm looking around the room right now at folks I've done life with for 20 years who are incredible parents of influence. You have stayed the course.

Next week, we're going to talk about how to do that in the second half of life. We're going to talk a very strong message to grandparents but it's also a strong message to widows and widowers as you pursue relationships in the last quarter of life. How to do that well so you can maintain influence in the life of your kids. These truths are to be upon your hearts and watch Verse 7 is all about influence. **7 Impress them on your children.** How do you impress a love for the Lord on the hearts of 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.** That's the influence I want to continue to have.

In 2 Timothy, Paul takes Deuteronomy 6 and just lays it out perfectly for us as he shares with Timothy about how influence led him to Jesus from not just one generation but from two. **5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois...** Grandma and Grandpa, I'm becoming more and more convinced of this. I think grandparenting could possibly be your greatest season of influence in your life. Don't waste it. Don't squander it. Come back next week as we talk and dive into that deeper. **...and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.** You guys have been equipped, you've been tooled, your parents pouring a love for Jesus into you.

Look at what Paul tells Timothy just a couple of chapters later in Timothy **14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned...** One of the best ways you can honor your parents... I love texting this to my kids. **Your father and mother rejoice.** Live a life honoring your parents, causing them to rejoice because you're continuing in what you have learned and have gathered in your home **and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**

When you get to Matthew 10, it's probably some of the strongest words Jesus ever shares. He is definitely talking to in laws, extended family, immediate family, the passage though is all about us. When you choose to follow Jesus, it is undivided allegiance to Christ. Some of you have experienced this. When you made a decision to follow Christ, certain family members stopped spending time with you. Certain family members didn't want anymore time with you because they didn't want anymore preaching from you. They didn't want to hear from you so they distanced themselves from you. Look at what Jesus says. Strong, strong words from Jesus.

34 “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. You're like that is not a good Christmas message right there. He's the Prince of Peace. But watch what he's saying. **I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.** And if you choose to follow me, your relationships will be affected. This kind of parallels along with in this world, yes, you will have trouble. In this world, a stand for me is going to cause people to hate you, but don't worry, they hated me first. That's not a challenge to Christians to go out and be jerks so people hate us. It's just when you give your life to Jesus and live in undivided allegiance to Jesus, people will hate you. Relationships will end because of it. **35 For I have come to turn“ a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...** I Jesus telling us here to dishonor your parents? No. He's not going against the commandments, he's not telling you to dishonor mom, dad, mother-in-law, father-in-law. He's saying but this happens when you choose to follow me. **36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'** **37 “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.** That's why, Mom and Dad, our job is to make sure we don't attach our kids to ourselves for life. Each and every day, from the moment we get up to the moment we go to sleep at night, as we sit at home, as we walk along the way, we are pointing our children to the true and only source of life. We're letting them know who the true and only source is. And that influence can be maintained long after your children leave home.

Why is all of this so important? We talk about this text often in context of yes, your relationships will be affected and now, as a soon to be father in law, as my children are leaving home, this is what I take away from Matthew 10 and this whole message summed up into this one single statement. I never want my relationship with my children to get in the way of their relationship with Jesus. I want to help them leave home well. It's why I want boundaries to be clear and I want to honor those boundaries. I want the welcome mat out and my mouth shut and my face doing what it should. Freaking out on the inside, not on the outside. I don't want anything about my life and my relationship with my kids to stand in the way of their relationship with Jesus.

That's why, at this church, we are all about equipping parents and grandparents as the primary influence to lead their children and grandchildren to Christ. As we prepare next week's message, it's going to come with a lot of warning. We have had a lot of people in our church, widows and widowers taken advantage of by online scams and people they thought they were dating that didn't even exist and lost life savings. It's been bad. We really want to help, as a church family, the generations that have gone before us and to make sure, as Greg Bettis loves to say, even when you retire, don't make it a retiring, make it a refiring like you're ready to go. In that final quarter of your life and last season of your life in the years that you have remaining that you are using those years to be a person of tremendous influence in the life of your children and grandchildren as you continue to tell them about the Lord and a love for the Lord. That's why getting these relationships so right is so important.

Father, in the name of Jesus, I pray for the strained mother in law – father in law relationship with a daughter or son, daughter in law – son in law right now that some conversations can be had that just bring joy to both, that boundaries can be established so marriage can thrive.

But there are some young people in here that have just kind of moved away from their parents, that maybe this is a moment that they can move back to a position of honoring their mother and father even if that isn't received and even if it isn't welcomed and even if boundaries are not honored coming from the other way.

We want to be a church that is helpful, encouraging, practical in all of our relationships. So, this message goes out as we follow you, that we would have relationships with our adult children and that adult children would have relationships with their parents and in-laws that honor you and bring joy to you. And nothing we do would stand in the way of their relationship with you.

For the one who has never placed faith in Jesus, that today would be the day of their salvation. That they would confess with their mouths Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that he has been raised from the dead that they would be saved.

We pray all of this in the authority of the name of Jesus and everyone agreed and said... Amen.