
PARENT TALK

Week 2: Kurt Bost

What do you think of when you see this picture? I know that we don't live (by and large) in an agrarian society, but surely you have seen a sight like this before in your neighborhood - or even in your own yard. Over the past few years I have increasingly seen myself when I look at a tree like this - always, in my flesh, bending and leaning in the wrong direction. BUT, thank God for the stake and rope! But this principle is not only true for me individually, it's also true for my family. As the father in my home, I have such an awesome (and sobering!) opportunity and responsibility to lead my family spiritually and teach them the Scriptures (Deut. 6:4-9)



As we heard last week, family worship is an incredible gift God gives to families. But there are even more gifts that God gives and intends us to utilize in our families. Families are designed to thrive in a local church. I'd like to encourage us today to see that the local church has been given to us by God to do in part what we see in the picture above: serve as a "stake and rope" in our lives.

For this devotional, I'd like us to think about two questions:

- (1) Left all alone, do you see yourself (and your family) as a slowly bending tree? Consider Hebrews 3:13 here: "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Let's be honest, this is a tough verse to swallow. We don't tend to think of ourselves as this vulnerable, but we can't miss the sobering reality presented here: we are prone and capable of being "deceived" by sin (also see Gen. 4:7-8). On our own (even as Christians), we tend to be trees growing sideways. Personally, this has been difficult for me to own up to, but this is God's grace that Scripture tells us this. Why? Because we will never take medicine for a condition that we don't realize we have (i.e. indwelling sin that easily deceives). This takes us to considering our second question:
- (2) Do you see the local church as a significant part of God's provision and protection for your family? Consider the verse again: "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today" that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." So, what is this passage's remedy or medicine for us? Other believers consistently in our lives exhorting and encouraging us in gospel love. This is the local church. Notice the "one another" dynamic in this passage and the "every day" dynamic - seeming to emphasize regularity. We need other Christians in our lives who have committed themselves to helping us grow in Christlikeness. In the local church, our families find wells to drink from and so many rich blessings from God! Our family worship is fanned into flame by others linking arms with us in the same mission to make disciples. Don't miss God's great gift in the local church. Yes, we need help - but praise God that He gives help through His Spirit in us AND in those around us in our local churches. I'll close with a great quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book *Life Together*. This quote I think is powerful for both individuals and families.

"The Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth. He needs his brother man as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. He needs his brother solely because of Jesus Christ. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother; his own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure."