Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
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Picnic in the Park

Key Verse: Proverbs 22:6

“FIVE THINGS A GREAT DAD WILL DO FOR HIS KIDS”

Proverbs 22:6

*“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

Welcome to Fil-Am Church! We’re glad you’re here.

Someone noticed that the word "father" appears in the dictionary .....just before the word "fatigued" .....and just after the word "fathead." So to all us fatigued, fathead fathers, ......Happy Father's Day!

Now, as fathers, we all want the best for our children, Amen? And not only that, we also want to bring out the best in our children, Amen? Just recently, we read and heard the news about a young man, 21 years old who shot point-blank nine people inside a church in South Carolina. And people started to question the way that young man was raised. Contrast that to another young man, 25 years old, who led a basketball team, the Golden State Warriors to a championship in the NBA after 40 years. This man would always beat his chest, indicating that his heart beats for God, and then would point his finger to heaven to give glory to God. In fact, he gave testimony to his life as a follower of Jesus whenever he got a chance. And, he attributed his good upbringing to his Christian parents.

How do we bring out the best in children? For that matter how do you bring out the best in anybody? How do you bring out the best in your wife? How do you bring out the best in your husband? How do you bring out the best in your boyfriend, your girlfriend, your friends, your parents, your boss, your employees? You do the five foundations of fathering. The five important principles that God tells us.

Let’s look at Proverbs 22:6. It’s a very famous verse about parenting. *“Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*

Now, I think that’s pretty straightforward. It’s self-explanatory. If you raise a child in an ungodly way, chances are that child will grow up to be a menace to the society. But if you raise a child in a godly way, more often than not that child will bring honor to you and be of benefit to the society. Notice I said chances are and more often than not. It’s because this is a saying in the book of Proverbs. You see, a proverb doesn’t mean that the principle is always true or the principle will always produce a result that we expect it to. We know of children who have become good citizens despite a poor upbringing. In the same way, we know of those who have grown up to be cruel or even criminals despite proper guidance from parents. But these are the exceptions, and I would say, few and far between. In general, Proverbs 22:6 is true. It’s quite similar to “what you sow, you reap”.

Dad, this morning, I’d like to share with you five things you can do when it comes to your relationship with your children in order to bring out the best in them. And I tell you, this will make them really love you are they grow old. These five things, I believe, are the foundations for great fathering. But you can apply these things too, whether you’re a dad or not, to any relationship you have. And people I’m sure will love you. But let’s concentrate on our dads, ok, because this is our day.

The first thing you can do is to

1. **Accept their Uniqueness**

 One of the great tasks of parenting is to help your kids recognize their uniqueness. Not only do you need to accept it, you need to help them recognize their uniqueness. That they don’t have to be like anybody else. That they are originals. They don’t need to compare themselves with anybody else. They’re not in competition with anybody else. That is a fundamental truth you have to teach your children.

This is a very difficult parenting task for two reasons.

 First, our culture has two pressures. The pressure of conforming and the pressure of comparing. These two things work against you as a parent. First is the pressure of conforming “Mom, everybody’s doing it!” So there’s that pressure, I ought to do it too. Then there’s the pressure of comparing. And Americans have made comparing a national pastime. It’s a sport of Olympic portions in America. Our culture teaches us to compare everything. We compare IQs, we compare how we look, appearance. We compare athletic ability. We compare income. We compare front yards and lawns. We compare cars and clothes. And everything in the world is now a list – the ten greatest, the ten best, the ten sexiest, the ten worst. Every magazine has figured out, this is a way to get people to read. So they make these lists and lists are always lists of comparison.

The thing is they don’t really mean anything. Because all of us are unique. God warns us over and over and over to never compare ourselves because we’re all unique. Galatians 6:4 says this *“Each person should judge his own actions and not compare himself with others. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done.”*

Did you know that there is a legitimate kind of pride in the Bible and there’s an illegitimate kind of pride? Arrogance, egotistical – that kind of pride. The good kind of pride is when you’re proud that God is working in your life, when you’re proud that God has made you unique, that you’re not like anybody else. Here’s the key to that pride – you don’t compare yourself to anybody else. The moment you start comparing yourself to anybody else – I’m better or I’m not as good, then it becomes wrong. He says there, *“Each person should judge his own actions and not compare himself to others. Then he can be proud of what he himself has done.”*

How can you tell as a parent when you’ve accepted your child’s uniqueness? How can you tell? It’s real simple! You stop trying to make them like you. That’s it. You stop trying to mold them into your image and you start letting them become what God made them to be in His image.

I guess what I’m saying is this, kids are not clay to be molded. They’re human beings to be unfolded that’s the goal. To be unfolded. The fact is this – hear me in this, parents – God sovereignty chose who your kids would be and He didn’t make any mistake about it. He chose the DNA and He put it together in a way that God chose what would be their dominant genes and recessive genes and He knew exactly what He wanted. He intentionally put them in your family and He knows what He’s doing. So accept their uniqueness.

There’s a second way to be a dad that your kids will love and that is….

**2. Affirm their value**

Why is this so important, to affirm people’s value? Because everyone is starving for affirmation. I’ve met thousands of people. I’ve never met a person who doesn’t need affirmation. Why is it important to affirm their value? Because God values every one of us. Look at how Jesus explained our value in Matthew 10:29-31 *“Jesus said, ‘Not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without your heavenly Father knowing it and you are much more valuable to Him than a whole flock of sparrows.”*

I know on Father’s Day we realize some of us that we didn’t grow up with perfect parents. Because of that sometimes we wonder about our value. Let me just put that to rest for you right now. God values you more than you could possibly imagine. He values every one of us. God custom-designed you, every one of us, before we were even born and values what He wants to do in every one of our lives.

The Bible says in Psalm 139:13-14 *“God made all the delicate parts of my body and He knit me together in my mother’s womb Thank You for making me so wonderfully complex. Your workmanship is marvelous.”*

If you have any doubt about your value, no baby is born by accident. God values you. God custom designed you and had a plan for your life even before you were born. You and I as parents have the opportunity and all of our relationship have the opportunity to pass along this thing of how God values people. If your parent valued you as you were growing up you understand how important this is. If your parents didn’t value you, you really understand how important this is.

So how do we do this? How do you affirm your kid’s value? The next verses talk about how our heavenly Father does it for us. Just learn from God. How does God value us so then how can we value each other?

Matthew 10:30 talks about the fact that one of the ways we can value our kids is by paying attention. By paying attention to them. God sure pays attention to us. Matthew 10:30 *“God pays attention to you down to the last detail, even to numbering the hairs on your head.”*

You can affirm your kids just by noticing them. Just by looking at them. Eye contact has incredible power when it comes to expressing and sharing values. Put down the newspaper and look at them. Turn from what you’re doing and look at them. Sometimes I have this blank look in my eye because I’m thinking about what’s going on here and what’s going on there while my kids are talking to me. *Lord, please. Help me get that blank look out of my eyes and look at them.* We don’t really understand the gift that you’re giving your kids just by eye contact. That’s how you appreciate their value, by paying attention.

The second way, the next verse, is by showing affection. Hosea *“I drew them to Me with affection and with love. I picked them up and held them to My cheek.”* That picture reminds us that people need loving touches. Your kids need hugs. I know sometimes as they get older you think they don’t need that any more. But kids always need hugs. They always need loving affection. When you do that, that values them.

Then the third thing you and I can do following the example of God is express appreciation. Isaiah 43:4 *“God says, ‘You are precious to Me. You are honored and I love you.’”*  When was the last time you said something like that to one of your kids? If you feel like you can’t say it, then write it down. Write a note of encouragement. Just write out something that says, “You’re doing a good job. I appreciate what you’re doing.” Anytime you appreciate your kids, you raise their value. You know what the word “appreciate” means when it comes to finances. When something appreciates it raises in value like a house. Every time you appreciate your kids with words you raise their value.

They’ve done some research on this that shows that when it comes to positive and negative words when we give a positive stroke to a kid for doing something good that’s worth one positive point. You give a stroke to them for being who they are, that’s worth ten positive points. If you give a negative stroke to a child for doing something wrong, that’s a minus ten points. You give them a negative stroke for being who they are, that is minus one hundred points. That’s how we tend to remember the negative things. Research shows us that people tend to lie up to what’s expected of them.

 So who do you need to encourage today? Look at the power of this next verse.  *“A word of encouragement does wonders.”* Which of your kids, as a dad, do you need to encourage? Who do you need to encourage today?

 The third foundation for great fathering….

**3. Trust them with responsibility**

 You accept their uniqueness. You affirm their value. And the third key to great parenting or fathering is to trust them with responsibility. Nothing brings out the best any faster than having somebody believe in you. Having somebody trust you, somebody trust you in a real way with responsibility.

Jesus said this is the way we grow. We grow through being trusted with responsibility. Luke 16:10 and following, *“Whoever can be trusted with a little can also be trusted with a lot. And if you cannot be trusted with things that belong to someone else, who will give you things of your own.”* People respond to responsibility. “Responsible” means you’re *response able*. You are able to respond. That’s what responsible means. When you give people responsibility you give them the ability to respond. God says you trust them with little things then greater and greater and greater.

I’ve found this throughout my entire life. When I was a little boy my dad would trust me with little responsibilities. As I grew he trusted me with greater ones and greater ones and greater ones. That’s happened my entire life.

I remember when I was 12 years old. My parents asked me to bring something to my aunt which she needed badly. Seemed like an easy task. There was one problem though. She lived about 10 miles from where we live. From Mandaluyong to Caloocan. There was no LRT yet. How do I get there? Obviously, I couldn’t drive. And we didn’t have a car even if I was older. How do I get there? By bus. And by jeepney, and by tricycle. That’s three rides. So, I took a taxi. No, I didn’t do that. I didn’t have enough money. Anyway, I had never traveled alone till that moment. So, I felt nervous, but my parents encouraged me and assured me that everything would be ok. If I just followed their instructions carefully. Which I did. My aunt herself was surprised to see me by myself knocking on her door. That experience taught me that I can be responsible.

Jesus taught this but He also modeled it. He took the twelve disciples and these were not exactly really brilliant people. They’re just common workers, they’re fishermen, they’re tax collectors. They’re just normal people. They’re not the top of their class. They’re not voted most likely to succeed. They’re certainly not wealthy or privileged or grew up in exciting homes where they were taken to museums every night. Jesus picked twelve ordinary people and one of them flaked out – Judas. He spends three years with them, giving them responsibility. Greater and greater responsibility. Finally He says one day, “Guys, I’m going back to heaven. I’m leaving the future salvation of the world in your hands.” And the guys go, “Wait a minute, Lord! Us?” “Yeah, I’m leaving the future salvation of the world in the hands of eleven fishermen.” Peter goes, “Lord, is there a Plan B?” And Jesus says, “There is no plan B. You’re it!”

That’s what you call trusting with responsibility. Obviously it worked. We’re all here. There are about two billion Christians in the world. Why? Because eleven men stepped up. They stepped up to the responsibility and they were given a worldwide vision, “Go into all the world!” And they stepped up.

 The biggest barrier we have in this trusting people with responsibilities is our tendency and desire to want to protect our kids. We want to protect them first of all from making mistakes. And second, we want to protect them from the negative feelings of failure. But this is not right. Why? Because that prevents them for learning very valuable lessons. What is that lesson? The lesson is this: failure is a part of life.

The difference between a failure and a successful person in life is that successful people fail just as much; they just get back up again. One of my favorite verses in the Bible in Proverbs says, *“Though a righteous man falls seven times he rises again.”* Why I like that verse is because it says even good guys stumble. Even good guys fall. Even righteous people make mistakes. They fail. But they get back up. That’s what righteous people do. They don’t give up.

You’ve seen that thing about how many elections Lincoln lost. Like nine in a row before he became President. He just kept on going. He kept on going! So failure is a part of life. If you don’t allow them to fail this is what they never learn – they never learn how to recover. And recovery from failure is one of the most important skills of life. Because you’re going to fail.

So you have to learn the skill of learning how to recover from failure. If you always protect your kids from making mistakes, from failing, and then you bail them out so they don’t feel the pain of the failure, it weakens their character and it leaves them unprepared for reality. Which is, you’re going to make mistakes.

The fourth thing we can do, dads, for kids and anybody can do in any relationship to strengthen that relationship is…

**4. Correct without condemning**

There’s not one of us who doesn’t need correction at times. Our kids – every one of us. None of us are perfect. Any of you have perfect kids, out there? So we need to correct without condemning. God does this with us. The Bible says He corrects those that He loves. It’s just not always easy.

Do you think you’re really good at correcting without condemning? Listen to yourself when asking your child to take a picture of you, how you talk to your kids sometimes. That’ll teach you something. You think you say, “My dear honored one and only son, would you move up the camera a little bit so you can also take the background behind us?” But in reality you say, “Move it or lose it! *Now!*” That’s the way you’re saying it. And you think, “How could I talk like that?” It’s just a reminder of the fact that we’ve got to be careful with our words and correct without condemning.

If you love your children you would be prompt to discipline them. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:24 *“If you refuse to discipline your children it proves you don’t love them.”* We all want to do this. How do we do it in a wise way? Words are tough. It’s hard to correct without condemning. So, how do we do that?

You watch your words. Realize the importance of your words. Ephesians 4:29 *“Don’t use harmful words. Use only helpful words. The kind that should build up.”* Harmful words create hurtful memories. We all know that. In fact, even as I say that some of you remember something that was said to you fifteen, twenty years ago. That’s how hurtful those memories can become. And using put downs, using harmful words, might motivate somebody in the short term. But it’s going to plant seeds of rebellion. It’s going to cause hurtful memories.

On the other hand, the Bible says we’re supposed to speak the truth in love. You don’t lie. You don’t pretend that the correction doesn’t need to be done. But when you and I take the time to create helpful words and speak the truth in love it has incredible power to change our children’s hearts.

The fifth thing you can do to be a dad your kids will like is to…

**5. Love them unconditionally**

Accept their uniqueness, affirm their value, trust them with responsibility, correct without condemning, and love them unconditionally. There are two ways that you do this.

The first is by offering them forgiveness. We talked about failure. You’ve got to forgiven them when they fail, too. Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind and loving to each other, forgiving each other just as God forgave you in Christ.”* Circle “just as”. We forgive our children because we’ve been forgiven by our heavenly Father. The truth is you’re going to be hurt as a parent. But godly parents keep on loving. Just as we have been forgiven we forgive others. You’re going to need massive doses of forgiveness in your marriage, and in your parenting.

The other way you offer love unconditionally is you never give up on them. You never give up on your children. Love always believes the best. The Bible says this in 1 Corinthians 13:7 *“Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope. It can outlast anything.”* Real love never gives up on people even when they get into drugs, when they get their lives messed up in some relationship. It never gives up.

What we all need, every one of us needs because we have all failed, we all need somebody who never gives up on us.

One of the most helpful things you can do, dads, or anybody else for that matter, is you need to help people forgive themselves. We all need others to help us forgive ourselves. Once we’ve been forgiven by God we’ve come and confessed it to God, often we still don’t feel forgiven. Often we need somebody in our lives saying, “It’s over. You’re forgiven. God has forgiven you.” You can be the voice of God in their lives. We learn to forgive others and we help them to forgive themselves.

What am I saying? A great dad doesn’t rub it in; he rubs it out. He doesn’t say, “Remember that time...” No! It’s rubbed out. It’s forgiven and it’s forgotten. Great dads walk in when everybody else walks out in your life. And God says “I want you to be forgiving and I want you to never give up. I want you to give kids a second chance because I’ve given you thousands of second chances. I’m just asking you to pass it on.” The Bible says this in Isaiah 54 *“’The mountains and the hills may crumble but My love for you will never end.’ So says the Lord who loves you.”*

The mountains and hills may crumble. You may go through all kinds of moral and physical and emotional and financial earthquakes, but God says, “There’s one thing you can count on. I am never, never, never going to stop loving you.”

Imagine that. I don’t know if you’ve realized this or not but these five actions of fathering are just the five ways God treats you. Your heavenly Father accepts your uniqueness, your heavenly Father affirms your value. Jesus on the cross says, “This much! That’s how much you’re worth! That’s how valuable you are to Me. I died for you. I affirm your value, I accept your uniqueness. God says I trust you with responsibility. What is in your hand? Use it or lose it. He corrects you without condemning. Jesus said “I didn’t come to condemn the world, I came to save it.” He loves you unconditionally. God just wants you to do with other people like He does with you. God just wants you to do with your children what He does with you. God just wants you to do with your wife or your husband or your boyfriend what He does with you.

Let’s all bow our heads and close our eyes and as the Praise and Worship Team come to the front and play music, let me ask you this.

How do you become a great parent? I’ll tell you how. The secret of becoming a great parent is to become not a great parent but to become a godly person. Godly people become great parents. Focus on you. Don’t focus on being a great parent. Focus on being a godly person.

The Bible says this in Proverbs 14 *“Reverence for God gives a man deep strength. His children have a place of refuge and security.”* Do your kids have a place of refuge and security, dads? What is it that gives them a place of refuge and security? A dad that is sold out to God. Reverence for God gives a man deep strength that you will never get any other way. You don’t get it in messing around sexually. You don’t get it making a lot of money. You don’t get it any other way. The only way you have strength to be a parent that God wants you to be is reverence for God.

How do you do that?

First you open up your life up to Christ. You say, “Jesus Christ, I need You in my life.” You’re never going to stumble when you’re on your knees. It’s impossible to fall when you’re on your knees. You say, “God I need You to make me a good father, to be a good dad. I need You to make me the person You want me to be. Jesus Christ, come into my life.” And you ask God to help you change. And He will.

Then you ask your kids to pray for you. You ask *them* to pray for you. You may even need to start with an apology. “I love you but I haven’t always done the right thing. I’m sorry. Would you forgive me?” In that humility I have never ever seen humility responded to with anger. Never. It melts people. “I ask you to forgive me.” That’s a good place to start. “I want to be a good dad. I know you’re 30, 40, 50 years old but I want to be a good dad to you.” You just admit that.

Let us Pray....