

Series: Fighting For Your Family
Message Title: **Hope Grows a Family**
Date: Sunday, November 11, 2018
Scripture: Various Scriptures
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Introduction

Sadly, many families fight with each other and not for each other! This is the second of three messages in the series, *Fighting For Your Family*.

We are in a battle for our families and we are seeking to identify and focus three essential defenses we need to protect our families:

“So now **faith**, **hope**, and **love** abide, these three; but the greatest of these is **love**”
(1 Corinthians 13:13 ESV).

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of **faith** and labor of **love** and steadfastness of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 ESV).

“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of **faith** and **love**, and for a helmet the **hope** of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 ESV).

Last week, we talked about faith—a faith that causes us to fight for our families. The things we believe in move us to courage, devotion and sacrifice. Trust is the foundation of confidence and guidance.

Think about it. If you have a coach who is successful and credible, then you have hope for a season that is incredible! The team has hope because of the coach!

Believing in someone or something of substance fuels hope. Faith builds a family. Hope grows a family.

Napoleon Bonaparte said, “A leader is a dealer in hope.”

Today we are addressing *hope*. Hope is needed in each family to fight the good fight of faith!

Hope = "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen or; (archaic) a feeling of trust."

If there is any quality, virtue or characteristic that is needed in the family (or church), it is confidence and hope.

I often ask for input from the members of the staff. I don't always have to be the originator of sermons, but a dispenser of truth.

Corey Baxter, our Missional Community Director at the Grovetown campus, said this: "I was reflecting on the history of humanity. I was reminded of all the regimes that attempted to extinguish hope through forced exile or even genocide. Of all these regimes could have felt threatened by, they were most threatened by hope. The reason why the Bible is the most banned book in the world and is not permitted in so many countries is simply because it contains hope. These hope-deprived, despotic leaders of the past knew

that hope is what fuels people. Like gravity, it is one of the most powerful unseen forces on the face of earth."

Nothing is harder and heavier than the feeling of hopelessness, and nothing is more uplifting and empowering than hope.

Someone once said, "Hope is oxygen to the soul." For all the hate and hardship in the world, we need and want our homes to be houses of hope.

How do we build houses of hope?... with our families? ... in the community? ...the local church?



1. Cultivate Kindness

"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect

harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful... And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Colossians 3:12-15, 17 ESV).

In this passage, we are given a broad-reaching command as one whose life is in Christ. We then read about the roles and relationships of husbands, wives and children. (See Colossians 3:18-21)

"Put on" because we have new attitudes and "attire" through life in Christ. This is the opposite of our natural tendency—irritable, critical, harsh, brash, quick-tempered. Colossians 3:8 provides us with a list of things to "put away."

Have you ever walked into the house when the kids' toys were everywhere, or everything was cluttered and out of order? You probably thought, "I've got to put this away!"

Likewise this is similar to how you need to do personal, spiritual battle—not letting the

natural impulses of the flesh overshadow or overcome the life-giving power of the Spirit.

Nothing suppresses hope like cynicism and criticism.

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4 ESV).

I did not say nor do I mean that there is no place for confrontation. There will be plenty of confrontations as you do life together, but confrontation is aimed at building you up together and criticism is focused on tearing you down.

A Christian home is a home where two people have surrendered to Christ and have been inhabited by the Spirit of God.

“Christ in you, the hope of glory” Colossians 1:27b. “Christ in you” is power and hope for you, your family and our church.

“Homes filled with kindness will have hearts filled with hope.”

2. Pursue Godliness

We build hope and a future by sowing seeds of godliness for this life and the life to come.

“Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons... Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:1, 7-8 ESV).

Here we meet the challenge to “train yourself for godliness.” *Discipline* is the word used in the New American Standard Bible translation. Spiritual life-development is a result of grace that works for us and discipline worked in us.

We all need instruction and exercise (discipline and training). This is especially true in our families. Fighting for your family means fighting a culture of entitlement—entertainment on the outside, and indulgence and indifference on the inside.

Your family needs you, and your children, in particular, need you to do what is demanding and even uncomfortable—to instruct and to direct toward the things of the Lord.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck” (Proverbs 1:7-9 ESV).

“My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3:11-12 ESV).

Children learn respect for God and others in the home. Children learn about consequences of bad choices and limits on freedom when they disrespect and defy the authority God has given.

“You must bear the burden of responsibility that your children be loved, but you dare not bear the burden of guaranteeing that

they feel loved. In that case you would replace God's objective command with their subjective response, and make a human the arbiter of obligation." —John Piper

Do what is right by your family and by society, and discipline yourself and your children toward godliness. Teach them right and wrong. Differentiate between honesty and deceit. Be sure they know the difference between character and performance, and ultimately, the surpassing value of God's truth over the opinions of peers and others.

I cannot overstate the importance of your personal pursuit of a relationship with Christ, and the principles of His Kingdom in your home and with your family.

You cannot "outsource" your God-given responsibility and the necessity of your example, instruction and focus on the Lord in your home. You cannot expect the Children's Ministry or the Student Ministry to do what you must do. You are the primary disciplinarian of your child, but please know, we gladly partner with parents to help fulfill this task because of our mission.

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9 ESV).

Moses saw the family as the primary delivery system for God’s truth from one generation to another. There is great need for training (spiritual formation) in the home and with the family. We build up the muscles of faith together. Every family needs training sessions to help them grow strong.

How do you give attention to spiritual formation with your family?

Worship. Make worship a priority of time together. Don’t let church be an optional part of life; make it essential!

But don’t just worship at church; worship at home. “Worship through the Word” is a core

value at Warren! Teach your children the Bible. How? Read it. Ask questions about it. Sing it. Talk about it. Let them see you love it and live it. Let them read it and lead it. And help them to think biblically.

Connect. Have family time. Make time to have a family life, not just a life with family. Meal times are important. It is a natural time to pray everyday. Trips and shared experiences are important too.

“The years fly by so quickly. Opportunities to drop seeds of affirmation into the soul of a child’s heart may not be as numerous as we might imagine. Let’s set aside some of our many ‘important’ distractions to make sure this great good gets done in our homes... even today.” —Gary Smalley and John Trent

This is so true. Life happens, and it happens fast. For example, the earth rotates on its axis every 24 hours. At what speed? 1,000 miles per hour. You don’t feel the earth’s rotation, and you may not feel how quickly time is passing and your children are growing up.

Community. Make a habit of having people with your family who can show and tell the truth of the gospel. One of the greatest gifts given to our children through the years has been the example and encouragement of devoted believers who lived out faith and demonstrated the reality of the living Christ.

Serve. One lesson we have learned at Warren is through mission trips. We go as a team, but we return as a family. In addition, our students serve together in Kingdom Project. We serve together locally through CityServe. To serve is to give. It involves time and talents, but never forget treasure.

Teaching your children and disciplining your family to be good stewards of God's provision are important. Break the power of indulgence and idolatry.

"Then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by His name you shall swear" (Deuteronomy 6:12-13 ESV).

We can overcome many enemies of our home through diligence and devotion together. See Deuteronomy 6:20-21, 25.

So much of this is caught and not taught. Let your children see you engaged in all of these things. "Your disengagement will fuel their disinterest in the things of God."

We are here to partner with you and to help you lead your family toward godliness and to grow in grace together.

The follow are resources that might benefit your family:

The Jesus Storybook Bible: Every Story Whispers His Name
by Sally Lloyd-Jones and Jago

Seeds Family Worship

*Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can
Radically Change Your Family*
by Paul David Tripp

Shepherding a Child's Heart
by Tedd Tripp

*A Lifelong Love: How to Have Lasting Intimacy,
Friendship, and Purpose in Your Marriage*
by Gary Thomas

*The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of
Commitment with the Wisdom of God*

by Timothy Keller

The Strong Family
by Charles R. Swindoll

Love Must Be Tough: New Hope for Marriages in Crisis
by James C. Dobson

Courageous Parenting
by Jack Graham

Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It
by Jerry B. Jenkins

Model Forgiveness. Because we are far from perfect people, we all bring injury. We let down expectations, we neglect responsibilities, we say things we shouldn't say to people we love, we forget important dates, we overlook opportunities to serve, we expect much of others, and want them to expect little of us. These all lead to injury, disappointment, hurt and brokenness.

..."bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Colossians 3:13 ESV).

If left unattended, brokenness will invite bitterness into our hearts, and bitterness will devour and destroy the blessing of family life.

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil... Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32 ESV).

“...as God in Christ forgave you”—GRACE!

“Forgiveness is a decision to release a person from the obligation that resulted when they injured you.” —James MacDonald

Let hope (not your hurt) shape your future and sustain your family.

4. Practice Prayerfulness

The greatest tool in all warfare is prayer.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the

authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:12-13, 18 ESV).

Prayer is a place where hope is renewed, not because our circumstances get better, but because we grasped a better vision from God—clearer and bigger.

"Darkness comes. In the middle of it, the future looks blank. The temptation to quit is huge. Don't. You are in good company... You will argue with yourself that there is no way forward. But with God, nothing is impossible. He has more ropes and ladders and tunnels out of pits than you can conceive. Wait. Pray without ceasing. Hope." —John Piper

Hope is promised in God's Word.
Read Psalm 42:5; 71:5; 130:5; 33:20-22.

Hope can be stolen. Life is full of hardships and hurts.

“Family pain and injury, hits the hardest, hurts the most and lingers the longest.”

—James MacDonald

In the midst of a hate-filled world and in the path of many heartbreaking experiences, put your hope in the Lord and ask God to make your home a house of hope.

“My dad once said this to me as I began my journey as a dad, ‘There are a lot of things that parents can leave to their children, but the most important thing, the most valuable thing, is to leave hope.’” —Corey Baxter