

PBC20040613AM1
"Courageous Parenting"

Parenting Is A Partnership

Colossians 3:17-24

June 13, 2004 • Sunday 9:15 AM • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message, *Parenting Is A Partnership*]

Well, thank you Holly and praise team, choir and orchestra, Rick for leading us today. How we need that affirmation of faith because we live by faith and not by sight and there are a lot of things that we don't understand and we can't explain in this world but it is faith that makes all the difference and it's faith that is rooted and that is built upon the sure foundation of the Word of God and we are so thankful today that we have His Word and the hope of promise in Him to guide us and to help us every s...step of the way in life. And I'm especially thankful for that truth when it comes to the matter of parenting. We've been talking about *Courageous Parenting* and if there's any place where faith needs to be in effect and where God's help and God's strength is needed, it is in the area of our homes and of our families. So many of the problems, so many of the issues, so many of the crisis of our world and of our nation today are rooted in the problems and the issues that are unfolding in our homes and in our families and so it is always important to take time to revisit what the Word of God has to say about the subject of the home and of the family and to learn the instruction of Scripture and to learn the insights of wisdom that will help us to live a life that will please God and that will ultimately fulfill His purpose in this world. Now nowhere can that be more clearly seen than when we take a little glimpse back in history.

In 1874 Richard Dugdale served as a member of The Executive Committee of the New York Prison Association. During his service he decided that he would visit some of the a..., prisons there in the state of New York and he went to one jail and he found that there were 6 people from the same family, all blood related, in the same jail at the same time and as he began to investigate and to inquire he learned that they were there because of burglary and rape and assault and he learned that a..., this family had a very bad reputation going back many years in the Y...New York State Penitentiary System. Well, that sort of tweaked something in his mind and brought an interest and a curiosity forward and so Mr. Dugdale started tracing the family tree of this family and he gave them a name, a fictitious name for his study, He called them the Jukes family and he traced them all the way back to a man by the name of Max Jukes. Max lived somewhere between 1720 and 1740. He lived a life of drunkenness and of crime. He was the father of 6 daughters and 2 sons and in 1877, going back to the family tree, beginning with Max Jukes, Mr. Dugdale re...published a report entitled, *The Jukes, A Study In Crime, Pauperism, Disease And*

Heredity, and this is what he found. He found that in the family tree of the Jukes family there were:

180 people who had lived as paupers, they had lived in poverty.

He found that there were:

140 who were criminals and who had lived out a criminal life.

He found that:

60 were habitual thieves.

And that:

50 had been prostitutes.

He was amazed to see what had happened in the family tree of this man and of his life and his life influence. But at the same time, the same century in which Max Jukes lived there was another man, a man of great notoriety and his name was Jonathan Edwards. While the Jukes family had been known for their negative impact on society and the destabilizing force in the lives of so many of the descendents, the Edwards family was on the other side of the fence. Jonathan Edwards was a theologian, a pastor and at one time was the President of Princeton University. He was married to his wife Sarah and they had 3 sons and 8 daughters. Yes, 11 children! He lived between Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts and New Jersey and in 1900 A. E. Winship printed a lineage of the life of Jonathan Edwards and among his descendents this is what they found:

13 were college professors...6...excuse me college presidents.

65 were professors.

100 were lawyers, including a law school dean.

30 were judges.

66 were physicians, including a medical school dean.

80 were holders of public office, including 3 U.S. Senators, 3 mayors of large cities, 3 governors, a controller of the U.S. ~~Tres~~...Treasury and a U.S. Vice President.

The contrast couldn't be greater and of course what we see here is not just to see that all of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards were high achievers, because not all of them necessarily were, but what we do see is the incredible advantage and the benefit personally and to society when families are in tact, when families are stable and when there are values and virtues being instilled in our children. Now I know today that not everyone in this room has necessarily come from a great family. Some of you today are here because of the blessing of your family, you are a continuance of a generation of people who have been people of faith and people of virtue, but frankly some of you here today would have to say, hey, I'm the exception to the rule in my family.

Mark Twain said that on one occasion he spent a great amount of money to trace his family tree and then he said he spent two times that amount tryin to keep it from goin public. Heh! [pause for congregation laughter]

Well, maybe you're here as a part of a difficult family, maybe you are the beginning of a turn around generation and today I wanna talk to you about a principle, a principle in life that can make all of the difference in your family and in your influence and the message that I bring today I not only bring to those who are married and in the throes of child rearing and child bearing, it's really a message to every one of us, because we are all influenced by the relationships of our lives and today what I want us to do is to consider the powerful principle of partnership and how partnership together can ultimately make all of the difference in the future. You see to be a courageous parent requires a recognition that you cannot go it alone and do it alone. You need the help of others and you need some very important partnerships in your life and so this morning if you have your Bible, I invite you to take it and to open it with me to the book of Colossians, chapter 3, because I believe in this portion of Scripture we see the outline of the partnerships that essential for building our homes and families, for building our communities and societies and for ultimately influencing our nation and our world. Colossians chapter 3 and we begin reading in verse 17, the Bible says:

¹⁷And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. ¹⁸Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

And then look down in verse 22 (**really 23**):

²³And what ever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

You see this passage begins in verse 17 with:

...whatever you do...

And then it ends in verse 23 with:

...whatever you do,...

And so whatever you do in life this is important to you. What is he talking about here? He's talking about living your life in relationship and in partnership. And the first and the most important partnership that every one of us needs to understand and consider in life is the importance of partnering with God.

PARTNER WITH GOD! It is the secret to life, because everything that I do

and everything that you do is to be done under the authority and for the glory and ultimately for the honor of the name of Jesus Christ. This is God's plan, this is God's principle that all of life is to be lived to the honor and the glory of the name of Jesus Christ. It's all about Him and all of life is about Him and fulfilling His plan and His purpose for you. Therefore to partner with God we have to recognize this and it is the most important and fundamental principle of life, that life is designed and life is intended to be a partnership with God. Please understand that today. This is where we have to begin. When we think about living life the most essential thing that you can understand is that you were planned for God's purpose and you were created for His pleasure and all of life is about knowing and doing the will of God in your life and God made you and God designed you to live in partnership with Him. It doesn't matter who you are or where you are in life, whether you are a married adult or a single adult, whether you are a young person, a child or an older adult, every person is to live life for the partnership and the purpose for which we...they were created and that is to live life in relationship with God. Now what is it that keeps us from living life in relationship, living life in partnership with God? Well the Bible calls it by its first name a...a title that's not very popular today, but it's clearly what the Bible says the problem is. The Bible says the problem with all of us is a sin problem, a sin problem. In fact the Bible just universally puts us in our place.

[Romans 3:23]

for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

If you wanna know what sin is just go to the middle letter of the word sin. It is S, what's the next letter? [I] Would you say that a little louder? [I] Yeah, me, myself and I, that is what sin is. Me living my life independent of God's plan and God's purpose wanting to go my way, wanting to do my thing. That's why the Bible says:

[Isaiah 53:6]

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way;

You see there is something within us that wants to live life independently from God and what that is, is this problem called sin and it is sin that destroys us and it is sin that is destroying our world. And the reality is, is that God has made a provision for us to be taken away from the slavery and the ultimate degradation of sin in order that we might be able to have life in Him and have peace with Him and the way that He has done that is by establishing a partnership for us. Jesus, His Son, is the principle investor in that partnership. In fact He is the soul investor in that partnership and what Jesus Christ did is that He saw that we were alienated from God the Father and He stepped out of heaven and stepped into earth and He brought together an alliance. There is one mediator between God and man, it is the Man Jesus Christ and the day that you finally realize that you can't go it alone, you can't do it by yourself, that your life needs to be in right relationship with God. When you call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ you are saved and when you are saved, you enter into a partnership with God and you begin to live life,

the way that it was intended, to be lived. You see you need a partnership with God in your life and so many of you are striving and struggling and trying to put life together, or maybe you have deluded yourself to believing that because you're so successful and you're so effective that you don't need God. Let me tell you the day will come when you will realize that the most desperate need of your life is for a partnership with God and so I challenge you today to consider the importance, to recognize the fact that you need a partnership with God. Your life was designed and intended to be lived, in partnership with God. But having said that, let me move on into this idea of the partnership with God that we need to remember this that parenting is a service that we render to God.

PARENTING IS A SERVICE THAT WE RENDER TO GOD. Once I understand that my life is to be lived in partnership with God then I begin to understand that parenting is something that I do as a service to God. Let's go back to verse 17:

And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,...

Now how many of you believe that the Bible teaches that we are to pray in the name of Jesus? Anybody believe, everybody believe that, huh? Yeah, we know that don't we? We know it, if nothin else that when we pray, we get to the end of the prayer we say, "*I pray this in Jesus name. Amen.*" Right? But did you know that praying in Jesus name is not the only thing that you're to do in His name? You are to parent in Jesus name. In fact the Bible says:

Whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And then it says:

Wives,...husbands,...children,...fathers,...

You see how it goes right there together? The Bible blends and interweaves all of these ideas together and therefore it is important for you and for me to understand as parents that parenting is a service that we render to God. It's not something that we do for ourselves and it's not something that we do for our children. I'm convinced that too often we have the wrong focus. We seem to think that our kids are our kids and the reality is they're not mine, they're Gods. Every child that is born into this earth, placed in the arms of a mother, of a father, ultimately needs to be seen and recognized, viewed as a gift from God and that child belongs to Him. That's why in our church we have baby dedication services. You know, many times each year we have a day where we get together, we sing, we open those doors and I mean more babies than you've ever seen in your life come walking to the front of the church and it's a great day and I have to say parenthetically I can't think of any group of people that oughta throw a bigger party and have a bigger celebration for new life and new birth than the church because we believe God is the author and the creator of life.

But because we believe that we honor those gifts of life. But in addition to honoring and celebrating the life of those children we want to strengthen and to encourage the journey that those parents are making. You see, I have the privilege each time before we do a baby dedication of going and meeting with the parents and one of the things that I try to really help them to understand is that yes, we're gonna celebrate and we are going to ultimately present your child publicly as a gift from God and we're gonna give God thanks for that, but this baby dedication is about you. It's about you being committed to be the primary influencer in the life of that child and living your life in a way that you will serve the Lord by serving your child. And serve them we do, right? Heh! Yeah! All of our children have servants [congregation laughter] and they're called parents [more laughter] and whether we like it or not we get to serve them, but we do it as unto the Lord and everything that we do is to be done as unto the Lord. That's why we discipline our children.

DISCIPLINE IS A SERVICE THAT YOU RENDER TO GOD, but discipline begins with you. You see a part of understanding that I'm in a partnership with God is that I wanna walk with God and I wanna live for God and I want my life to be conformed to His plan and to His will so that as my life is disciplined in a walk with God that I can give direction to my children. You see that's really the secret here. Discipline isn't something you do to children, discipline is something you do to yourself and as you discipline yourself then you give direction and you give application to your children. I'm convinced the reason we have so many undisciplined children is because we have so many undisciplined parents and ladies and gentlemen the issue begins that you have to see that what you do, you do as a parent rendering your service to God and therefore we celebrate His grace in giving us these children, but then we live out our lives by paying attention to our walk and to our faith and to our growth in a relationship with Him. So I must recognize that life is intended to be a partnership with God, I must realize that parenting is a service that I render to God and then finally:

I MUST SEE THAT I NEED GOD'S GUIDANCE AND GOD'S ASSISTANCE EVERY DAY.

Every day I'm dependent upon His grace and His strength. Now that's true whether you're a parent or not. Every one of us needs to understand that in the partnership we have with God that we are dependent upon God for His guidance and for His strength every single day. That's why the Bible tells us here in verse 16 of this passage:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom and teaching, admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Let God's Word be rich in you. You are dependent upon God for wisdom, for guidance, for grace and strength, every single day and so what I'm talking about is pursuing fellowship and communion with God. And as you give yourself to fellowship and to communion with God then ultimately you begin to live your life out in a way that is pleasing to Him and a way that will influence others. You see God is all into this thing called character

development and therefore it is important in your life every day as a parent that you are seeking conformity to the will of God so that in and through your life the character of Christ may be shaped and therefore may therefore influence your children. You see I'm afraid that a lot of parents are a lot more concerned with their image as a parent than they are with their character as a parent. We're into image. In fact I'm concerned today that the greatest point of focus in family life seems to be the cosmetics. We're all in to the cosmetics of how we look and how we come off in family life and there's a lot of concern about...about how cool we are and...and how up we are and how in we are as families. But God's not interested in your image He didn't give you your kids to make you look cool. God gave you your kids so that you could have a character that would influence and shape their characters to live and to fulfill His mission and His purpose in life.

I spoke about some interesting families earlier. I heard about one family who had tried to get a biographer to help them to write and to compile a..., some sort of a document on their family life and their family tree. But they had something very disturbing up the tree. They had a..., one of their family members who had been a convicted murderer and had been put to death by the electric chair and so they didn't really know how to get around it. They were trying to write this wonderful presentation of their life and their heredity and they had this horrible thing that had happened. So the biographer tried to help their image and this is what he wrote:

"Uncle George occupied a chair of applied electronics at an important government institution. [pause for congregation laughter] He was attached to his position by the strongest of ties [more laughter] and his death came as a real shock."

Heh! [more laughter] Well, a lot of us get caught up in the image, [more laughter] but may I say that the most essential part of leadership is character and if you are going to ultimately lead and influence other people, what has to matter to you is character. And the shaping of your character, morally and spiritually is in direct association with a sense of daily guidance and dependence, daily assistance that you receive from God as you make the journey through life. So number one, partner with God, but there's something else that the Bible tells us here and that is not only that we must understand the principle of partnership as it relates to our relationship with God. But then the Bible says:

PARTNER WITH YOUR MATE. Look at how the Bible puts this together, verse 17:

...whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God...God the Father through Him.

And then it immediately goes in to this family relationship.

Wives,...

Listen to what it says:

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Now let me just stop right there. In a day of political correctness there is not a dirtier word related to women than the word submission. Nobody likes that word. Nobody wants to use that word and frankly most preachers are scared to death to preach about this subject. But you know we have to deal with the fact that it's present in the Scripture. Now let me give you some points of clarification. When the Bible says:

Wives, submit to your own husbands,...

The Bible is very clear that it does not say, and nowhere does it say women submit to men. The Bible does not present some sort of an inferiority or a second class citizenship to women. The Bible makes it clear that we are valuable in the sight of God, but we are distinct in our function and therefore women...the Bible doesn't say women submit to men, the Bible says:

Wives, submit to your...husbands,...

And even then in the way in which it is constructed it is in the middle voice. It means wives you choose to submit yourself. Nowhere does the Bible say that any man ever has the right to look at a woman and say, you submit to me, not even her husband. God doesn't give you that permission sir. God tells her she is to conform her heart to you. And then wives, one other thing that is very important, I want you to notice that it says:

Wives, submit to your own husbands,...

That little word own is the Greek word "*idios*." It's where we get our word idiosyncrasy or idiom. That is that which is unique and peculiar to someone. Therefore it says that in this relationship you are to choose this attitude and this disposition. It's also where we get our word idiot. [pause for congregation laughter] So let me just read this text implying the Greek one more time. [more laughter]

Wives, submit to your idiot husband,...

[more laughter] It's biblical! [more laughter] God knows he's an idiot, He called him an idiot in the Scripture, [more laughter] in the Greek. [more laughter] And I know when you think about submission you think, God he's an idiot, God says, I know, I told you so. [more laughter] So what does it mean? [more laughter] Well, I love what John Eadie says, a classic Greek text commentator, ~~born between 18...~~ lived between 1810 and 1872, this is what he said. He said:

"The submission that is inculcated on the part of the wife is wholly different in source and form from the slavery which is found in the heathen lands. For it is the willing acquiescence which springs out of

social position and wedded love and is dictated at once by a wife's affection and by her instinctive tendency to lean on her husband for support."

The Bible says here, ladies, you are to choose to do everything that you can through conformity, compliance, through an attitude of cooperation and of love, to seek to build unity, affection and partnership with your husband, in order that you may benefit your children and your family. But then the Bible is very clear, because it goes right on to speak to the husbands and this is what it says. It says:

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

What does that mean? Literally the Bible is saying, sir, don't be cross with your wife, don't spend your time being irritable and fault finding and putting your wife down. The greatest disservice sir that you can do to your children and to your role as a parent is to devalue and to discredit your wife in front of your children. You see what your children need to see is that you love your wife and that you are affectionate toward your wife and that you are tender toward your wife. You see what I'm trying to get at is this ladies and gentlemen; it is possible to be parents and not be partners. Did you know that? It's possible to be mates, it's possible to be parents, but it's possible to not be partners in parenting and therefore we need to understand that one of the most essential and one of the most fundamental principles in partnership is building the partnership of the marriage in the home and the family because when there's a healthy marriage there are healthy children and so it's essential. That's why it all links together. That's why it's all so very important. Work on your marriage. The welfare of your marriage is vital and parenting is a very emotionally charged assignment and the question is, what kind of energy is coming out of that assignment in your life? Is it positive charge or negative charge? Heh! It's like someone said, "Marriage is made in heaven, but so is thunder and lightening." [pause for congregation laughter] And so it's very important that you give attention to your marriage and I guess what I'm really asking you today is, is if your children were assessing your life and your home would they see you as doing time together or doing life together? What would they see? Would they say my parents are doing time together, they're just living out this sentence called life and I can't wait until I get out of here? Or do they see you as doing life together and they just get to be on the journey with you? You see that's such an important thing and therefore to be involved in the right partnership for child rearing, if you are married it is vital that you give yourself to the well-being and the care of your marriage partnership. I don't have time to develop this, but I want to take time to just mention several things that will make all the difference in your marriage:

#1 FAITH: When there is a commitment to God that fuels the commitment that you have to one another, you will grow in unity and you will grow in partnership in a way that will make a dynamic difference in your lives and in the lives of your children. You see there are two basic models by which

you can build a marriage; one is the God model, that is where you have a husband and you have a wife and each of them share a individual relationship with God. The husband may be here and the wife here or the wife may even be here and the husband here, but the key thing is that as they grow in their relationship with God they grow in their relationship with each other. That's the model of a triangle and what do we know about the triangle geometrically? It is the most stable and secure of all geometrical figures. But the alternative to that is to have a marriage that's like parallel lines, a railroad track. And what do we know about parallel lines? They never meet. So you have a husband and you have a wife who are each driven and in control of their lives. They're constantly competing for control and direction in the relationship and everything in the marriage is a battle. You see, it all begins first and foremost with faith.

SECONDLY THERE IS FOCUS: If you wanna build your marriage you have to give focused attention to the needs, concerns and well-beings of your mate. You have to pay attention to each other. It's not easy to keep a marriage going and it's especially not easy to keep your attention in focus when there are so many things that are vying for your attention. It's easy for the marriage to get out of focus in the throes of trying to fulfill the obligations of work and the financial responsibilities and trying to rear children. Children are a great blessing to a home but they're also a great drain on a marriage. I mean I just gotta be honest, kids will suck the life right out of you. [pause for congregation laughter] Now I have 2 wonderful kids and I love my kids, but I'm telling you that even as much as I love my kids, I wanna love my wife more and I want to love her in a way that gives focus and attention to the energy and the life and the well-being of our marriage. Therefore there must be a commitment to giving attention, to giving time to one another.

Armand Nicholi said this:

"Time is like oxygen. There a minimum amount that's necessary for ~~aviv~~...survival and it takes quantity as well as quality to develop warm and caring relationships."

Your marriage needs your focus and when you focus on your marriage you help your children.

#3 ~~Forgiveness...excuse me~~ FRIENDSHIP: Friendship, friendship is the sharing of experiences both good and bad to build memories, traditions and to make investments in the lives of one another and you know I find that it's an interesting thing that many people are married but they're not friends. I have to tell you the greatest blessing of my life is that my dearest friend is my wife Connie. We are friends. Yes, we're mates and we're partners, we are in love, but we are friends and it's forging and building a friendship that adds so much to the chemistry of a marriage and to a home and to a family and so it's important that you give and that you share those experiences.

#4 FORGIVENESS: You have to mend the fences that get broken in every marriage. Marriage is a relationship of 2 imperfect people, of sinners, sinners who can only have hope to be redeemed by the grace of God and who are dependent upon God for strength and who need forgiveness and so you have to work on forgiving and renewing and strengthening because ~~every time brokenness incur...re...~~every time brokenness occurs in a relationship bitterness will set in and we have to deal with it at the point of forgiveness.

And then we need a **FUTURE:** Every marriage needs to always have a future. Not just what we had when we met and fell in love, but what we have and what we're looking forward to in the days to come. Constantly dreaming, constantly building, constantly thinking about all that is yet to come. Partner with your mate.

But now some of you say, well that's great, thank you for sharing that, [pause for slight congregation laughter] but pastor I'm a single parent. I didn't wanna be here like this. I love my children, they're the greatest gift God has given me, but I'm having to do double duty and pastor I don't have a marriage partner, what about me? Well, obviously the first principle applies to you, partnering with God and the last principle applies to you.

PARTNER WITH YOUR CHURCH: Everybody needs a partnership with a church, married and single, because the church is God's institution for building and growing Christians to fulfill His kingdom mission. The Bible says:

Whatever you do, you do it heartily, as to the Lord,...knowing that you receive the reward of the inheritance for the Lord Christ who you serve.

We share an inheritance as fellow believers in the household of God and therefore the purpose of the church is to create a family of faith that will build love and encouragement and strength and support into every one of us. Now, let me be very clear, the church cannot be a substitute for your spiritual life and the church cannot make up for deficiencies that are found in you because of willful disobedience to the plan and the purpose of God. But when you are going through life and you let the church of God become a part of the extended network and family of your life it's amazing how God can and will use His church to strengthen you in partnership with other believers.

Not long ago I read a interesting little piece it says:

"It has been learned that when geese fly in the V formation that the whole flock can fly..."

Listen to this!

"...71% further than if each bird flew on their own. When a goose falls out of formation it suddenly feels the drag and the resistance of trying to go it alone and so they quickly get back into formation to take advantage of

the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of them. When the lead goose gets tired he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point and the geese honk from behind to encourage the one up front to keep up his speed." [slight congregation laughter] *"When a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshot and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow them down to protect them and they stay with that goose until he is either able to fly or is gone. And then they launch on their own, or with another formation to catch up with the group once again."*

You know the problem, with us, is most of us don't have goose sense. Most of us don't understand that the greatest need in life is a partnership with other people of faith that will make a difference in our lives and in our families. You see the geese fly in a V formation. Well, the church flies in a V formation, called victory in Jesus Christ and when we by faith uplift and build and encourage one another it's amazing what we can do to help and to strengthen one another both in our marriages and in our parenting responsibilities and at every stage and every season of life, that's why the church is so important. It's a part of God's foundation and function for you as a believer to be strong and to be encouraged and to be in...supported.

I talked to our married couples about how to build your marriage, but let me talk to all of us today about one other item and that is about ways that we can help and encourage single parent families. I think this is such an important issue in our world and not long ago I came across a...a list called *10 Ways To Support Single Parent Families* and I just wanna read them to you.

#1: PRAY FOR WISDOM, TO ENCOURAGE AND LISTEN FOR WAYS TO BE AVAILABLE TO HELP.

Have you ever thought about just finding a single family and saying I'm gonna make that family my prayer and I'm just gonna ask God to make me sensitive to ways that I can encourage, that I can help.

#2: REACH OUT TO THE CHILDREN. MAKE PROVISION FOR PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH ACTIVITY.

One of the things that blesses me the most is when I see people in our church who give a...additional time, service of themselves and their financial resources to help to be sure that children who may not have adequate resource can be a part of camps and retreats and all kinds of events like this. This is a function that we can fulfill.

#3: OFFER PRACTICAL HELP.

Free babysitting, yard work, car or home repairs, deliver a meal.

#4: INVITE SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES TO TAKE PART IN EVENTS, DINNERS AND SPECIAL GATHERINGS.

#5: REMEMBER BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS AND OTHER SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

This may be the time when a single parent feels the most alone because they realize that so much is dependent upon them and they don't have support and you can make a difference there.

#6: REAFIRM THEIR SELF WORTH, ACCEPT THEM AND UPLIFT THEM.

Hawk for them. Tell em, I'm pullin for you, I'm with you.

#7: EMPATHIZE, PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR PLACE.

Don't just see life through your eyes, see it through their eyes.

#8: CONTACT THEM WITH CARDS AND NOTES AND BIBLE VERSES AND PHONE CALLS.

Letting them know that you recognize them and value them and place importance on them.

#9: TAKE THEM OUT. [He missed this one, but it was on the screen.]**#10: ENCOURAGE THEIR SPIRITUAL GO...GROWTH.**

Invite participation in worship and Bible fellowship groups and prayer groups and when we do these things ladies and gentlemen it helps us as a family of faith, in the church of Jesus Christ, to strengthen and to partner together for the sake of the kingdom of Christ and the glory of God. You and I can make a difference, but we cannot do it alone and so my question to you today is, who is your partner? Do you have a partnership with God? Are you engaged in a partnership with your mate? Are you partnering with a church? Maybe you need to settle that partnership right now.