

What Ever Kid Needs

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[0 : 00] This morning, I want you to turn to Genesis chapter 18. Genesis chapter 18, I'm going to read a passage out of there in just a few minutes. When people sign up for the Peace Corps, they're given a manual with instructions.

And the one for those who are to work in the Amazon jungle is particularly interesting. It tells volunteers what to do when attacked by an anaconda.

Now, anaconda is the biggest snake in the world. It can grow as long as 35 feet and weigh as much as 300 to 400 pounds.

Thankfully, it is not native to Pickens County. But in case you run into one in the Amazon jungle, I'll tell you what to do.

Number one, if you're attacked by an anaconda, do not run. The snake is faster than you are.

Number two, lie flat on the ground.

[1 : 08] Put your arms tight against your side. Your legs tight against one another. Number three, tuck your chin in.

Number four, the snake will come and begin to nudge and climb over your body. Number five, do not panic.

Number six, after the snake has examined you, it will begin to swallow you from the feet in. Always from the feet in. Permit the snake to swallow your feet and ankles.

Do not panic. Number seven, the snake will now begin to suck your legs into its body. You must lie perfectly still.

This will take a long time. Number eight, when the snake has reached your knees, slowly and with as little movement as possible, reach down, take your knife, and very gently slide it into the side of the snake's mouth between the edge of its mouth and your leg.

[2 : 22] And then suddenly rip upwards, severing the snake's head. Number nine, be sure to have your knife. Number 10, be sure your knife is sharp.

David, we'd be dead by then, wouldn't we, brother? We would be. I share that because we're talking about family matters. And because family matters, I thought we ought to take a few weeks this summer to talk about some family matters.

Specifically today, we're talking about raising kids. And being swallowed by an anaconda is about what it feels like sometimes. So it's hard to be patient, and we need to expect some difficulty.

And that's just at the house. I mean, you think about it. If you add that to just what happens at the house, to the philosophical anacondas in the world, gender and race and the lack thereof has become more important to much of our country than God has.

Your kids hear that. You better have an attack plan. Not only that, but there's relational anacondas. Good, godly, lasting relationships are rare these days.

[3 : 46] And a lot of things are done out of step and off kilter. So plan for it. There are social anacondas.

Socially, our country's in a mess. And I'm not talking about up in the northeast, and I'm not talking about on the west coast. I'm talking about right here among us. The Bible belt's buckle has come unattached, and we are losing our spiritual britches as a society.

And so don't ignore that. Don't ignore that. Spiritually, when people mention spiritual matters, be careful to pay attention to what they're talking about.

Because we may not be talking about the same spirit. There's a good chance we're not. And so with that in mind, I want to share with you five things that every kid needs.

The first thing every kid needs is a very visible Jesus. The greatest responsibility of a Christian parent is to do everything that he or she can to lead that child to Christ.

[5 : 02] You can't force that. You can't manipulate that. And you cannot make that happen. However, you have, as a parent, the greatest opportunity of anyone to set everything in motion. And it is your greatest responsibility as a Christian parent to lead that child to Christ. If they are blessed with health, but they never know Jesus, it is for naught. If they are blessed with everything that they ever want, well, they won't get it without Jesus because God has made us for a relationship with him. If we ever misplaced the greatest responsibility that we have with other priorities. Those priorities will become a hindrance to our greatest task. Paul's priorities growing up was to be religious and to be right. But even with that, he said in Philippians chapter 3 that they were a hindrance to him actually coming to Christ. [6 : 11] He says, I count all of this pedigree as a loss. Because it was a hindrance to keep him from coming to Christ. They set him back from knowing Christ.

So be careful that anything and everything that you do as a parent is ushering your child toward Jesus. If the child has not made a decision, all we do leads to that decision. If a child has made a decision for Christ, all we ought to do is nurture that relationship. Because I'll be honest with you, it's not enough for just your child to come to Christ. It's a wonderful time. It is the most exciting time. It's the best decision they've ever made. And you ought to act like it. But it don't stop there. There's a continued responsibility that you have to point that child to Christ.

First, your child needs to know that you serve a God big enough to handle everything that your family faces. And you ought to share that with your child.

[7 : 25] Second thing that kids need, every kid is a godly family. They need a godly family. Your child needs to see you do more than just talk a good game.

They need to see you live that out. You will live it out imperfectly. Of course.

But you live it out with great effort. Be clear. God has called us to lead, to guide, to nurture, to correct, to discipline our children.

I like what God says to Abraham in Genesis 18, 19. It says this. I have chosen you that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.

Greatest example he can give to his kids. Ephesians chapter 6 verse 4 tells us to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

[8 : 38] Also translated, the love and the admonition of the Lord. You lead them to Jesus by what you say. And you nurture that and you invite that and you guide them to Jesus.

You show them what it's like to live for Jesus by the way in which you live. I want to give you some good wisdom found on a refrigerator magnet.

Better than a country song. Refrigerator magnet. Listen to this. If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn. If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty. If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy. If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence. If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

[9 : 40] If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith. If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself. If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

Yes, they learn by you talking to them. They catch more than you think they do. However, they learn by watching. And godly families make a world of difference.

Third thing, every kid needs is a gospel-driven church. I want you to hear me.

I promise you, if you'll bring your family to church, for as long as God allows me, I'll preach the gospel.

I don't mean as long as he'll allow me to do it through this sermon. I usually try to let you out on time. But however, you're going to hear the gospel again and again.

[10 : 54] And I am unapologetic about that. Because I believe it changes lives. And that's the way it ought to be. If you volunteer in any capacity in this church, whatever you do needs to be gospel-driven.

And it's a great reason to serve the Lord here. When you teach, when you lead, when you make decisions on a committee or a team, when you do what deacons do, all of that ought to be

gospel-driven.

There should never be a person in our facilities for any purpose and not receive the love of Christ through us. We must make it a priority.

How do we do that? When you're going to bed on Saturday night, pray that God will show you how to minister to someone in the morning for the gospel. I send out a note to over 600 people on Saturday afternoons.

Encouraging you to pray about who you can invite. Who can you send a text to? And say, I got room for you. Will you meet me at church today?

[12:07] Think about that, folks. Pray that God will show you how to minister to somebody in the morning. Pray for the gospel. On the way to church, ask the Lord, Lord, how do you want to use me today?

What would you have me do? And not, Lord, what can I get out of worship? Or what can I get out of church? But Lord, what can I do for you when I'm in that place of worship?

But I will tell you that anybody that comes and sits in this room will hear the gospel.

And they'll hear it loud. Because Jesus died for you. And he died for your family. And through his death, your sins can be forgiven.

And you ought to come to Jesus. Bring your family. And let them hear it every week.

[13:13] But bring your family. Don't merely align with a church. Don't merely be a part of a church. Don't just get on the roll of a church.

Miss for the extraordinary. But don't miss for the ordinary. Because if you're not careful, the ordinary will pull you away.

And I promise you, you'll have an ordinary opportunity every week. It's an easy way for folks to get out of the habit of worshiping the Lord as a body of believers.

Every day, your family is bombarded by false ideologies. It's in children's programming. It's in commercials.

It's in billboards. It's in libraries. It's in rewritten textbooks. You better dilute the influence of the world through the word of God.

[14:23] And in my lifetime, just by my observation, every generation has been less faithful than the previous generation. Think about that.

Now, if that is true, what does that say about the chances of your child? So be active and faithful in a gospel-driven church.

The church needs you, and we need the church. I think God honors that. The next thing that every kid needs is good, godly mentors.

You need, your child needs other adults to look up to. How does that come? It comes through family. Grandparents, don't you ever underestimate your influence.

Your influence is more than you can imagine. And make a point to point your kids, to point your grandkids to Jesus in what you say and what you do.

[15:33] Take advantage of the opportunity. Let them expect it to come out of your mouth when they see you. They need it through their family. They also need it through the church.

Some of the best mentors come through the church, and they're carried out through the church.

And if you want to make sure that your child has somebody besides you to look up to, take them to church faithfully.

And by the way, if they do look up to you, don't expect them to tell you, okay? Because they're not going to. But they need to see it in you. They need to see it in others.

That live for the Lord consistently. Fellowship with good, godly people. Also, find good, godly mentors through social settings outside of church.

And I want you to hear me today. Church people should never get together to fellowship outside the church and slip in their walk with God or in their testimony and coddle each other in their disobedience.

[16:46] It dishonors God. It dishonors God. It hurts the church of Jesus Christ. And it affects your children. Don't leave worship gathered together and not live out what the word of God teaches and what the church stands for.

And be careful about who you're hanging out with, folks. Mingling in other people's homes and living out your faith before your children will make a world of difference. When they see people come together and honor God together, live lives that are wholesome and right in ways that honor God.

But if they see one thing at church and they don't see the same thing in social situations, what will weigh out more? What will stand out to them?

When they hear you at church one way and then hear you at home another way or social settings in another way, what's going to stick in their minds? Surround your children with people that walk closer to God than you do because it will help you to grow.

It is worth the effort. And that's why the third page of the bulletin, the whole worship bulletin on the third page is dedicated to life groups. Find a group that you can study God's word with, that you can fellowship with after hours.

[18 : 07] It's a great opportunity for you to build relationships and that's the way to do it. I often say, as much as you may enjoy worship here, I promise you, you won't understand the secret in the sauce of Pickens First Baptist Church until you venture outside of this sanctuary and this meeting and meet with life groups, meet with small groups, be a part of fellowships, mingle with folks, build life with them.

Folks, that's what it's about. They need it. And I'll tell you what else they need. They need engaged and encouraging parents.

Every kid needs engaged and encouraging parents. It does not take much for you to tell your children you love them.

It does not take much for you to listen intently to them. To look them in the eyes when they talk to you.

To be willing to apologize to them when you mess up. To be willing to ask God to forgive you, but also to ask them for forgiveness.

[19 : 23] It does not take much for you to pray for them. It does not take much for them. It does not take much to pray for them. It does not take much to share with them that you pray for them.

It does not take much for you to pray over your children. And school is about to start back. Now I don't mean to bring it up.

I apologize. To those who work in the school system and for those who go to school. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to bring it up. But I want you to hear me. Before your child gets out of your car.

Or before they walk out of your house to walk to the bus stop. Or before they walk out your door to drive themselves to school. You take a moment.

And you pray over that child. Pray about what God's going to do this year. Pray about their friends. With all that drama.

[20 : 28] Pray about that. Your kid's about two friends away from doing something really stupid. Really stupid. So I know that if you're a good godly parent with a burden like that.

That I have. That you pray for them. And I'm just telling you. You need to let them hear it. You need to let them know it. Not in a showboat fashion.

Not in some high righteous fashion. Your kids know you. They know you better than you want them to. So don't act like that. But you pray over them.

Pray for their safety. Pray for their mindset. Pray that this year they'll grow in the Lord. Pray over them. And encourage them. They need it.

And you need it. We all need it. Share with them that you pray for them. And compliment them. The world will tear them down.

[21 : 31] They will tear them down. If they wear the wrong shoes on the first day of school. Somebody will tear them down. They pick out the wrong backpack. Or they have the wrong pencil.

Or whatever. Somebody ain't going to like it. You know. And I got a word for those folks. But anyway. You need to compliment them. You need to encourage them.

You need to be there for them. Not only that. But nourish them. Nourish them with spiritual food. Nourish them with emotional food. Nourish them with psychological nutrition.

Build them up. Building a child up is not always telling them what they want to hear. That's not what I'm saying. It's not all rosy. Set a standard. And then live by that standard.

And when they live by that. When they live by the standard that you set. And that honors God. Then encourage them in that. And when they don't do that.

[22 : 30] Discipline them. Tell them why. Tell them you love them. Don't do what you do in anger.

And then discipline them. You may have to walk away and cool down. Before you deal with the matter. You get upset with your children.

You can blow your testimony in a heartbeat. I mean you can burn down the whole house in a heartbeat. If you ain't careful. You know what I mean? I mean it can happen. Just that quick. And so just walk in the kitchen.

And open the refrigerator and cool off. All right? Don't ignore it. You got to deal with it. But you need to deal with it in a godly fashion.

Now I want you to hear me and I'll close. I left you. Kept you a long time last week. I ain't going to keep you a long time. So.

[23 : 36] Parent. You have not done all this right. You have not. If you think you have, you're wrong. Okay? You need to wake up. And if you think you're the only one.

That does things the wrong way. I got news for you. You're a room full of. Okay? You've not done everything right. Nobody has done it all correct.

I'm going to tell you something. That may upset some of you. Facebook pictures lie. Nobody's always on vacation.

Okay? And they don't put the debt that they come back to on Facebook. Facebook pictures lie. Instagram isn't real reality.

It isn't. Today. And what I'm sharing is not about a guilt trip about yesterday. Feeling guilty or ashamed will only make you throw your hands up.

[24 : 40] Unless you use today. As a day to repent. Lord, what I've done wrong, I want to make right. Forgive me for yesterday.

And empower me for tomorrow. For today. For today. For tomorrow. Parents. Grandparents. Mentors of others. Some of you have the blessed opportunity to cast a lot of influence on other people's children. Dedicate yourselves to the Lord.

That you're going to give kids exactly what they need. That you're going to do. That you're going to do. That you're going to show them a very visible Jesus.

That you're going to be a godly family. That you're going to be in a gospel driven church. That you're going to make sure that they're around good godly mentors.

[25 : 44] And that you're going to be engaged and encouraging parents. I will tell you. At times.

It's going to feel like. You're being swallowed by an anaconda. So let's sharpen our knives.

And be ready. For the attack. By living as consistently as God allows us to live. To influence those.

That God has placed in our responsibility. I'll tell you what God needs. God needs parents. God needs grandparents. God needs a church. That loves them dearly.

And wants to show them Jesus in every way. With every head bowed. And every eye closed.