

July 25, 2019



Pastor Eric's E Note

Dear All Saints Family,

Is your life, is your soul overloaded? Several months ago one of your neighbors came into the office and said, "I can't take it any more! I'm overloaded!"

I could have suggested classes in time management and stress management. I thought of suggesting a subscription to "Real Simple" (I ran into this magazine at a women's clothing store waiting for Judy), but I didn't. Come Sunday and find out what I suggested.

I continue to get requests for the sermon "Bringing out the Best in Our Children" which began our summer series on "Questions I've Been Asked." The sermon is attached to this newsletter if you are interested.

See You Sunday,
Pastor Eric

Thanks to all who worked to make our annual Garage Sale and Bake Sale a great success! We raised \$4750.00.

The youth raised \$583.00 from the food stand toward their trip to the National Youth Gathering in Minneapolis July 2021.

Summer Offering

Thank you for blessing All Saints with good summer of offerings so far. July and August are always tough and as you know registration is now open for our faith formation programs. (Bible Studies, Sunday School, Confirmation, WOW, etc.) Our investments in these programs soar as we purchase copyrights, materials and supplies. Thanks for giving online when you are not in worship and thanks for giving every Sunday when you are.

Fall programming

Registration is open for Sunday School, WOW, Children's Choir and Confirmation. Go to our website for brochures and registration forms: www.allsaintsny.org

Bringing Out the Best in Our Children

This year's summer sermon series will be based on questions people have shared with me in the midst of their struggles. One of those questions, How do I do what's best for my children?

What does it take to bring out the best in our children? This morning we take a crack at it. Some of what I say you will agree with maybe some you will not and I hope you will add to what it takes to bring out the best in our children.

You heard our granddaughter Alison and her Husband Nic promise in baptism to point their son Maverick to God. It is where we begin.

1. POINT YOUR CHILDREN TO GOD.

The most important lesson we teach our children is about knowing and loving God. **Philippians 3:8** "Everything else is worthless compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord." Knowing God is what you build every other form of learning or training on. We live a life that points

our children to Jesus Christ, their friend, their Savior, the one who loves them, the one who died for them, and the one who gives them the best life ever.

How do you do that?

2. YOU LOVE THEM UNCONDITIONALLY

Just as God loves us unconditionally we love our children, spouse, friends one another in the same way.

How can we show God's unconditional love? Two practical ways:

1. Forgive one another as God has forgiven you. **Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and loving to each other, forgiving each other just as God forgave you in Christ."** Every family requires massive doses of forgiveness. You're in a position to forgive your children for things that they do and children you are in a position to forgive your parents for what they do. To forgive without limit is to love unconditionally. As **1 Corinthians 13:7** says, "Love knows no limit to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything."

Unconditional love never gives up on your child. When our children know somebody believes in them they can face just about anything. If we know somebody has faith in us, somebody thinks we're great, somebody thinks we're going to make it, you can hang on. Romans 8 says nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. No stupid mistake on our part, no dumb decision, no period of rebellion, nothing can separate us from that forever bond with God and as the family of God we develop same kind of love for our children.

3. ACCEPT THEIR UNIQUENESS/AFFIRM THEIR VALUE

Every child is different and unique. They are not alike. Even twins are not alike. I always enjoy conferences with our children's teachers especially when they said, "This one is sure different than your last child." Thank goodness.

The Bible tells us that God intentionally makes everybody different. **1 Corinthians 12:6** says "God works through different people in different ways." The reason that God makes us all different is that the world would be incredibly boring if He made us all the same. On top of that there would be a lot of work that wouldn't get done.

One of the great tasks of parenting is helping your child or children realize that they are unique, they don't have to compare themselves to anybody else, they don't have to measure up to anybody else, they don't have to be like anybody else, they are an original and God doesn't intend for them to be a carbon copy. They are unique. They are not in competition with anybody else.

This is a very difficult task for us as parents to teach our kids that they are unique because there are two competing pressures in the world:

First, the pressure of conforming in everything -- peer pressures, advertising, pressures to conform to be alike.

Then there's the pressure of comparing. **Galatians 6:4** "Each person should judge his own actions and not compare himself with others." We have made comparing a science. In this competitive environment, we compare everything -- how we look, our clothes, our cars, our homes, our intelligence, our background, social and economic status, as if it really matters. I saw this thought for the day on Facebook, Don't compare your child to others. There's no comparison between the sun and the moon They shine when it's their time.

How can you tell, as a parent, when you've accepted your kid's uniqueness? Simple: You stop insisting that they be like you. As parents, God made us in His image, and now we want to make our kids in our image. I

don't want to shock you... but the world only needs one of you! We don't need any more of you. One of you is enough. One of me is enough. Children are not things to be molded. They're people to be unfolded. Your goal in life is not to mold kids in your image. Your goal in life is to help them unfold and discover what God made them to be.

It's not enough to just accept your child's uniqueness take it a step further affirm their value. **Psalm 139:13-14** *"You made my whole being; You formed me in my mother's body. I praise You because You made me in an amazing and wonderful way. What You have done is wonderful."*

How do you affirm their value? Three things: attention, affection, and affirmation. Attention: Spend time with one another. Affection: Demonstrate their value through affection. One of the most important ways to tell somebody that you matter is through touch—a hug a kiss a touch. Appreciation: Let them know when they've done a good job. Say "Thank You" all the time. Even when it's just household chores you've told them they had to do, thank them, tell them they've done a good job. When you notice your kids working on an area in their life and improving -- especially in those areas that are hard for them tell them that you see it. On an ordinary day write them a note and tell them what a gift God has given you in them.

4. PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN IN STORMS.

Notice the phrase is "in storms" not "from storms." When you have children, grandchildren nephews nieces you pray "God, please protect them" and we start listing all the things we want God to protect them from in their lifetime. Over time you begin to understand that your prayers and love are not enough to protect them from all the problems that are going to come their way. We cannot protect our children from storms of life. They're going to come. But I can protect my children in the storms. The things that come in life batter us, bruise us and beat us up, you get dumped on and things don't go the way you planned. Life is very tough and we all need a place of safety, security, peace, protection. God has planned that our homes be that place.

Proverbs 14:26 *"He who fears the Lord has a secure home, and for his children it will be a refuge."* The home is a place of refuge and security.

5. TRUST THEM WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Nothing brings out the best in people faster than having somebody believe in you and having somebody trust you with responsibility.

Jesus did this with His disciples. He walked around for 3½ years with a bunch of misfits. But Jesus developed them. He trusted them. He gave them responsibility. One day He said, "I'm going back to heaven and I'm leaving the salvation of the world in your hands." Would you do that? Obviously it worked. We're all here because of them. Jesus knew what He was doing. He trusted people with responsibility.

When asked "What would you do differently?" I often hear Parents say, "If I had to do it over, I'd do less for my kids and I'd teach them to do more for themselves." Why? Because there is a principle of life that goes like this. When we take responsibility for someone, we take responsibility away from that someone. Eventually, as **Galatians 6:5** says, *"We are each responsible for our own conduct."*

6. CORRECT THEM WITHOUT CONDEMNING THEM

We all need correction at times because none of us is perfect. If we don't discipline, correct our children it means two things: I'm willing to participate in their destruction **Proverbs 19:18** *"Correct your children while there is still hope; do not let them destroy themselves."* If I don't take the time to correct my kids, if I don't teach them new habits, if I don't teach them the right way to behave, the right way to live, I'm actually setting them up to fail and be destroyed. Even worse, it says in **Proverbs 13:24** *"If you refuse to discipline your children, it proves you don't love him"*

How can we correct them in a way without condemning them?

Two things I did you don't want to do. Correct in anger and condemn. **Ephesians 6:4** *"Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline, with suggestions and godly advice."* When I was frustrated and angry with our kids, it felt good to let out that frustration. That frustration was usually church frustration. It feels good to jump all over them a chance to release your frustration and get in their face. You might get instant cooperation and obedience but it does nothing for the long term. The older our children got the less I tended to erupt, but they just got smarter and avoided me when I was ready to explode.

The second thing I should not have done, I was a master of the sharp word. I was able to slice them into little bits with words like stupid, idiot, dumb, etc.) **Ephesians 4:29 (Good News) puts it well:** *"Don't use harmful words. Use only helpful words, the kind that build up."* Harmful words create hurtful memories. Those words that belittle our weaknesses and our faults and our failings, those words when spoken in anger are like knives in the heart.

Which leads me to my final point. We not only need to lead our children to God but point ourselves to God.

7. POINT YOURSELF TO GOD

I find that a sermon like this which is supposed to help you bring out the best in your children makes you feel like the worst parent on earth. None of us has the power to parent on our own. It takes the love and forgiveness of God. Human love runs out. There is a limit to how much you can handle. There is a limit to how much you can take. There are days and there are nights when you don't have any more to give and you know it. Therefore to love and forgive unconditionally we point ourselves to God. God is the source of all love and forgiveness. When you're plugged into God, God will give you power and energy and love that you didn't know you had. And God will give you the power David prayed for in **Psalm 101:2** *"I will try to walk a blameless path, but how I need Your help, especially in my own home, where I long to act as I should."*

Let's pray:

Gracious God thank you that You love us unconditionally and forgive us unconditionally. You accept our uniqueness and affirm our value, , You protect us in the midst of storms and you trust us with responsibility, and You correct us without condemning. Help us to treat our children and othersthe way you treat us. Amen.