

Good morning, everybody! Welcome to week three of *I Love Sundays!*

Last week we learned that Sunday can be the best day of our week because God designed it as a Sabbath for us to rest, refuel, and refocus. today we are going to explore how a good Sunday can help improve your entire family.

One of the great challenges of our day is to raise great kids in the midst of a ninety-mile-an-hour culture. We move so fast and have so many opportunities and obligations, it's hard to find time to be together as a family, much less enjoy your family. And when we are together, we're usually driving to a soccer practice or some type of performance. Or, while we're driving, every kid in the car has their earphones in and is listening to something other than the family's conversation.

I want to help you learn to use Sundays to build better families. Some of you live alone, but you're going to find this message helpful as well. I want to give you practices that will help everyone you love, whether you're related to them or not. We'll be focused on families, but every principle I give you can apply to helping nieces and nephews, grandsons and granddaughters, and every other member of the next generation you have influence on.

Let us read together Proverbs 22:6 in three different versions.

Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.

Train children in the way they should go; when they grow old, they won't depart from it.

Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their life.

This one little verse we're about to read contains one of the most important principles ever given in the history of parenting. The first practice of successful parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and discerning leaders is to

1. Put God first

You know the phrase "first things first"? God wants to be the first of all firsts in your life for your sake, and for the sake of those who follow you as well.

In Jesus's famous Sermon on the Mount, He said, "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.(Matthew 6:33)

The best gift you can give your children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews is not to love *them* first but to love *God* first. Every time we fly, we hear about the Oxygen Mask Rule: "Should **the** cabin lose pressure, oxygen **masks** will drop from **the** overhead area. Please place **the mask** over **your** own mouth and nose before assisting others."

So we have to put God first. what does it mean to put God first?

In the book, I Love Sundays, Hal Seed says, "There is grace. You won't be perfect. But if you are trying to honor God, your children will see that and imitate it. And when you fail, they'll see that it's okay for them to be imperfect too." So your first practice is to put God first. Once God is first, your second practice is to

2. Let your kids see your relationship with God (Deuteronomy 6:6–9).

When Moses was preparing to send the Israelites into the Promised Land, he wanted them to know how to pass on their faith to their descendants. So he decided to spell it out for them very carefully. He said . . .

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. ⁷ Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸ Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem^[a] on your forehead, ⁹ and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. **(Deuteronomy 6:6–9).**

Hal Seed writes, “In the generation that came before me, Christian families held what was called ‘family devotions’ together. After dinner, the family would read a passage of Scripture together, then talk about it and pray together. That never worked well for me. The idea seemed forced and old-fashioned. . . . Ultimately I rejected that practice because I wanted everyone in my family to have a relationship with God that was real and personal. Instead of walking through a daily devotional, Lori and I made a conscious effort to talk about our relationship with the Lord during dinner as often as possible. I would say, ‘Honey, tell us what you’re reading in the Bible.’ Or, ‘What is God saying to you these days?’ As our children got older, I’d ask them what they were reading or what they learned in Sunday school or their youth group. A favorite of ours was a game we still play called ‘High/Low.’ Everyone at the table takes a turn in describing their highest moment of the day and their lowest moment. Inevitably, someone’s high or low involves God. By talking about God at the dinner table, I could communicate my relationship with Him in a natural way. Of course there are other ways of accomplishing the same thing; the point is to let your children see your relationship with God in a way that rubs off on them.”

The third practice in raising healthy children is to show them how to allocate and spend money in a healthy way. The only real way to do that is to . . .

3. Let your children learn how to give, save, spend, and invest.

The simplest form of a healthy budget that I know of is called “The 10-10-80 Plan.” Under the 10-10-80 Plan, you tithe your first 10 percent, save your second 10 percent, and live on the other 80 percent.

If you want to teach your children this plan, start them off with an allowance that divides easily by ten. If you give them a \$1 dollar allowance, don’t give them a dollar bill—give them coins that include at least two dimes, so they can put the first dime in their “tithe envelope,” the second dime in their “save envelope,” and the rest of their allowance in their “spend envelope.”

If you give them a \$5 allowance, give them four \$1 bills, and change so they can put fifty cents into their tithe envelope and fifty cents into their save envelope. You get the idea.

Because of our affluence, generosity is one of the biggest challenges for our society. Studies show that the more money Americans earn, the smaller percentage we give. But the sooner you start giving, the easier it is to give. Children who learn to give before they spend rarely have trouble being generous later in life. Teach your children how to give, save, spend, and invest by setting up a 10-10-80 Plan with them.

Hal Seed wrote in conclusion for *Sundays makes Better Families*, “Anchor your Sundays in church; then continue spending quality time together at home and

beyond. And make it fun. Take time to breathe together and build time for connection in ways that resonate with your family's personality. Play, connect, and seek balance between scheduled events and the freedom to relax and choose spontaneous activities.”

At this moment, I have a challenge with the saying, “Anchor your Sundays in church”. As you know, the corona virus is now a pandemic and our community has the confirmed cases.

If we cannot worship in the church, how do we make Sundays the best day as the church family?

I want to share my suggestion when we cannot gather together in the church. I want to suggest “Family Worship.”

We may set up the time on Sunday, 8:45 AM or 10:45 AM for the Family Worship at home. If you have the children, it is a great opportunity to explain that God is first in your family. You would read a passage of Scripture together, sing together, and pray together for one another and all those affected by the coronavirus: our health workers, those on the front line of public safety, and those who will feel the economic impact of this pandemic.

When you put God first, your family members put God first. I love Sundays because Sundays are so helpful for families!