

• •
vision
2023

HOME *for my* **HEART**

VISION 2023

PUBLISHER

Connection Communications

EDITORIAL

Francesca Garcia
Nancy Reimann
Cory Schweitzer

CONTRIBUTORS

Taylor Bronisz, Nate Heitzig, Lenya Heitzig,
Skip Heitzig, Santiago Llanes, Kevin Miller

DESIGN

Adam Baney
Tish Carlson
Chorus Padilla
Nikki Sandoval

DIGITAL VIDEO CONTENT

David Baca
Alicia Leyva
Landan Mofley
Marcos Romero
Jordee Wester

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Ryan and Reoyne Cook, Aaron and Brittany Moreno,
Clay and Michelle Schroff for participating in the
adoption and foster panel

Dennis Massegee for uploading digital content to YouTube



4001 Osuna Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109

All Scripture unless otherwise indicated is taken from the New King James
Version of the Bible. Copyright ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

I'm thrilled to officially announce our 2023 vision: Home for my heart—this place, these people, my privilege. The truth is that the emphasis on family, church, and city has been guiding our ministry focus and decisions since the last quarter of last year. Maybe you've noticed our expanded commitment to pro-life values in our more intentional support of fostering and adoption. Or maybe you've taken a step toward being more invested here at Calvary Church through Connect Groups, our men's and women's ministries' small groups,

or joining our Life Team. Hopefully we'll see many of you serving our city during our upcoming Love Week. My prayer is that our vision will go beyond inspiring you to motivating you to take ownership and action. As Mordecai encouraged Esther to step into God's will for the Jews, I encourage you to step into God's will for your family, this church community, and our city and state "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).



Creating Life Change

by Skip Heitzig



Change is the one thing in life that never changes. It can be like a tidal wave or like a slow-moving glacier, but guaranteed, it will come.

And change is something we at Calvary Church love to see—life change, that is, or what the Bible calls transformation. This is a heart change, an inward change that produces an outward change. And over the years, by God’s grace, our fellowship has been a place where many lives have been changed—including my own.

The apostle Paul spoke of this kind of change in Romans 12: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (vv. 1-2).

The original Greek word for the phrase “be transformed” is *metamorphoō*, where we get our word metamorphosis. A metamorphosis is a changing from one form into another. In this text, it describes a profound and radical change of the inner you.

Church ought to be a place where people hear the message that change is possible, that there is hope even if you’ve failed, fallen, or faltered. We serve the living Christ, who rose from the dead. If He can conquer death, He can conquer your dying hopes and bring true, lasting transformation.

But this does require action on your part. “Do not be conformed to this world,” Paul said, “but be transformed.” The way this is written in the original language means that someone or something besides you is doing the transforming—God, in this case. Transformation is promised you, but you make it personal by presenting your life and your body to God and allowing Him to do the changing. It’s a divine operation, but there must also be human cooperation.

And the thing is, this change doesn’t happen overnight. Yes, the new birth is a single, instantaneous event: you come to Christ, and you’re saved. But sanctification—growing up and being changed into the image of Christ—

is a process, and it takes time. This “renewing,” according to Paul, is something that takes place in your mind, or more simply, in the inner you as opposed to the outer you.

This is why you need to be saturated with the Word of God. And this is why at Calvary we make it a point to expound the text of the Bible, line by line. There’s transforming power in being exposed to the truths of Scripture over time. Yes, it takes discipline, but you can’t expect results without it.

As you present your body to God and your mind is transformed, that will result in being able to apprehend God’s will: “That you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Unfortunately, some people think you have to have some mystical experience to discern the will of God, but more often than not it’s going to come by the process of exposing your mind to the truth of God. One follows the other. We present our bodies to the control of God, our minds are renewed by the Word of God, and we’re then able to discern the will of God. This is all part of being changed into the image of Christ.

Again, change is the one thing that never changes. It’s part of life. Unfortunately, that means you and I often face the pressure to change from the world as we’re exposed to their values and their messages day in and day out. That’s why we need the balancing pressure of renewed minds, presented bodies, and living out the will of God by the Spirit of God and the truth of God in Scripture.

And we get all of those things in the church. That’s where true life transformation happens. I believe the church ought also to regularly celebrate that life change, and I’m so proud to be part of a body of believers that does just that. God has done some monumental things through His people here at Calvary Church, and I can’t wait to see how He works in us and through us in the future. 🏛️



**FOR MORE ON THIS TOPIC
FROM PASTOR SKIP**

cabq.us/vw22

connect groups

Connect Groups are small groups. They are a place to grow in your relationship with Jesus and with people.

A Connect Group is a place to learn how to apply God's Word and serve—a place to live life together.

Join an open group at calvarynm.church/connect or email connectgroups@calvarynm.church.



LIFEtrack

find your purpose. serve others. change lives.

Life Track is a three-step journey designed to help you find your purpose and grasp our vision and to equip you to change lives.

For more information about Life Track, visit calvarynm.church/lifetrack.

STEP ONE: **CATCH THE VISION**

STEP TWO: **DISCOVER YOUR DESIGN**

STEP THREE: **BUILD THE CHURCH**

OUR PURPOSE: CREATING LIFE CHANGE

At Calvary Church, we create environments that minimize awkwardness and remove obstacles, believing this will maximize belonging and create opportunities for life change. We want people to feel loved, cared for, and comfortable, because we believe this makes them more receptive to the Word. We want to implement this in everything we do including our worship experience, giving experience, Connect Group experience, and children's ministry, as well as on our websites. Everything we do is about creating life change and we want to build and provide opportunities for change in every realm of life: spiritually, relationally, professionally, and emotionally. We want to see people give their lives to Jesus Christ and become better husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and employees and business owners. A relationship with Jesus makes life better—and it makes you better at life.

OUR VISION

We are a fellowship of believers who pursue the God who passionately pursues a lost world; we do this by connecting with one another, through worship, by the Word, to the world.

OUR CAMPUSES

Calvary Church Albuquerque

4001 Osuna Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Sat • 6:30 pm
Sun • 9 & 11 am
Wed • 6:30 pm

Calvary Church Westside

6051 Winter Haven Rd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

Sun • 10 am

Calvary Church Santa Fe

1295 Clark Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87507

Sun • 9 am
Sun • 11 am (en español)
Wed • 6:30 pm

Iglesia Calvario

YouTube

Miérc • 6:30 pm
Dom • 1 pm

Calvary Church At Home

live.calvarynm.church
YouTube • Facebook
Apple TV • ROKU

Wed • 6:30 pm
Sat • 6:30 pm
Sunday • 9 & 11 am






Nate Heitzig on Vision 2023

We recently sat down with Pastor Nate and a London Fog to get a deeper understanding of this year's vision: Home for my heart—this place, these people, my privilege. Find out how it developed, what it means, and how you can engage with it.

Why do you think it's important to establish an annual vision?

Throughout the Bible we see that without vision people perish. When you have a clearly stated vision, most decisions make themselves. People often ask why we're doing this ministry or that event, and when it fits into a vision it's understandable. Vision helps give everything we do a *why*. For example, an awful lot of people in the world hate Christians, but our goal is to love them and preach the gospel to them. It seems counterintuitive, but when you add the *why*—because Jesus died for all mankind, and we are to make disciples of all men—it makes sense. That's why we love a world that hates us. Also, part of our job as pastors and church leadership is to exercise the gift of prophecy by looking at what's happening and what's going to happen and establish vision based on where we think we're headed. It's like Joshua sending the spies ahead into the land of Canaan. We walk a bit ahead, see what the landscape is, and report back what we believe God is about to do and how we can be part of that.

What does the process of coming up with vision for the year look like?



Sometimes it comes from sitting down with Pastor Skip or other pastors and church leaders and talking through things we're seeing. Other times it will come from observing things in the church or in society that can be better. I'm always looking at things and asking how this or that could be better. What are we missing? What does our church need? This year's vision came out of what we believe the church lost during those COVID years. We had a lot of Bible teaching and content, but we had very little connection to one another. A lot of negative ideas and habits seeped into our individual lives and into the church. This year's vision is rooted in that.

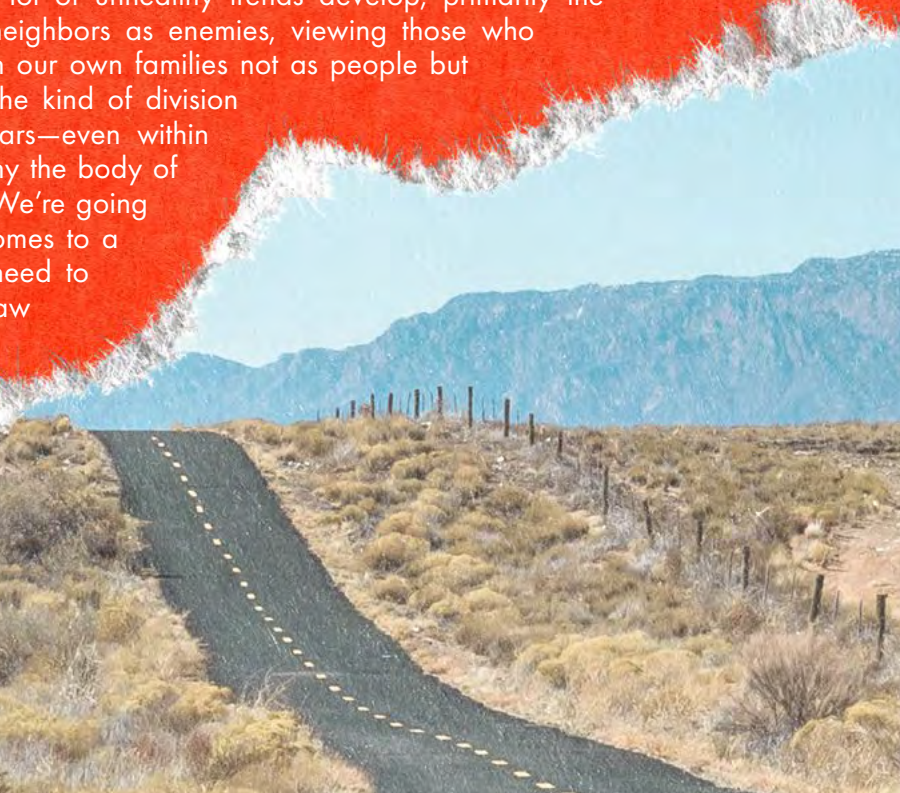
Did current trends or events inspire this year's vision? If so, how?

In recent years we saw a lot of unhealthy trends develop, primarily the trend toward viewing our neighbors as enemies, viewing those who are right next door and even our own families not as people but as problems. I'd never seen the kind of division that I did in the past two years—even within the church. And I kept asking why the body of Christ can't just love each other. We're going to have disagreements. When it comes to a sin or scriptural disagreement, we need to hash that out. But so much of what I saw was political narratives driving a wedge between Christians and between family members, and it drove me nuts.

this **PLACE**

these **PEOPLE**

my **PRIVILEGE**



But what if I lead with gratitude for this place, these people? What if my mindset is that it's my privilege to be here? Then I can excuse a lot of things that I don't agree with. If we shift our mentality at home, at church, and around our neighborhoods, we're going to lead a healthier life and have healthier relationships.

Did a Bible verse or passage inspire this year's vision?

Throughout Scripture we find a similar mentality in the people God used, and it's the mentality expressed in this year's vision. We see it in Nehemiah when he asked the king for permission to go Jerusalem. That was his place, his people, and it was his privilege to go there and rebuild. Esther carried this mentality when she approached the king on behalf of the Jews. Those were her people, and it was her privilege to try to help them "at such a time as this." And of course Jesus had such a heart for His creation, His people—for us—that he died on the cross. And He viewed His sacrifice as a privilege to make a way for us to get to the Father. This can be our "such a time as this" moment. We need to rise up and say, "This place is worth redeeming. It's worth saving. It's worth investing in. These people are my neighbors, and I love them. They are worth redeeming." If we move forward with that mentality, I think our families, our church, and our city will all be a radically different and better place.

Now that our church family knows the vision, how do you hope we'll respond?

Personal responsibility. My hope is that every Christian will realize it's not the church's job to find ways for you to love your family, church, city. It's not the city's job. It's your job. It's my job. I'm going to find ways to love my family, my church, my city. A compelling vision should cause people to ask themselves, "What am I going to do to take ownership of the vision?" Ownership mentality is so huge. I believe if each person were to take ownership of this city, for example, we wouldn't drive past poverty or crime or homelessness and just complain or make a snide remark. We would find a way to make it better and not just think it's someone else's responsibility. If each person had an ownership mentality toward the church, more people would step in and be a part of making it a better place. For our families, an ownership mentality means we're not going to turn a blind eye to what our kids are consuming, we're going to take an active role in parenting that. You know home is something you don't give up on. Home is something you don't quit on. And home is obviously my family, but it's also my church family, and it's my larger community.

What if I feel overwhelmed by the vision and the number of opportunities to engage in making an impact on family, church, and city. Where should I start?

Every person has a next step. I would suggest asking yourself, "What's one thing I can do to help make this area or these areas look more like they're supposed to?" If you take that next step, you're going to see progress. Maybe your next step at church is something like starting to take notes during the teaching, or to start serving or giving. Maybe your family life feels disconnected and so your next step is to once a week put screens away and have a game night. We all know our city is so broken, so maybe your next step is to go to a city council or school board meeting or create homeless care bags to keep in your car. None of us can do everything. Everyone can do something. And if everyone does do something, we're going to see that anything is possible.

What are you most excited about with this year's vision?

We say that a relationship with Jesus makes life better, and it makes you better at life. A lot of Christians only experience the first part: salvation. They're saved, but they're not allowing the sanctifying power of Christ and the principles in the Bible to make them better at life—better husbands and wives, better employees, better friends, better business owners, better citizens. If you take a next step, you're going to be better at life. You're going to make a difference. And I believe if you take a next step in these three areas, you will become better at life and you'll make other people's lives better, too. And that's our goal. 🏠



**WATCH THE ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSION ON VISION**
cabq.us/vw66

PEOPLE
PRIVILEGE

HOME for my HEART • HOME for my HEART • HOME for my HEART • HOME for my HEART • HOME for my HEART • HOME for my HEART



A CALL TO
BIBLICAL MANHOOD

MAN UP

BY
KEVIN
MILLER

I have to admit I'm not a stereotypical man. I don't have a beard because I can't grow one worth being proud of. I love sports, but I don't follow one and I don't have a "team." I don't drive a sports car or even a new car. In fact, my 2007 Sequoia has almost 300,000 miles on it, and when something breaks, I have to take it in to someone who knows what they're doing. After all, I'm much better behind an espresso bar than under the hood of a car. I don't do DIY home projects and, although I have a grill in my backyard, I haven't used it in a couple of years. I'm not sure if it actually works. Maybe I should stop there. I sense I might be losing respect from any man who happens to be reading this.

That list of manly stereotypes begs the question: What defines a man? In a culture that doesn't know up from down, right from wrong, or male from female, I was pleasantly surprised to find that *adult male person* is part

"THAT LIST OF MANLY
STEREOTYPES BEGS
THE QUESTION: WHAT
DEFINES A MAN?"

of the definition of *man*, according to dictionary.com. We'll see how long that definition holds before it gets canceled like bathroom signs marked *Men* and

Women. Although the dictionary got that part right, pop culture and the media seem to have a difficult time defining manhood and masculinity.

Thankfully, God's Word provides not only a definition of and framework for masculinity, but also many godly examples of what it looks like to live as a man in a confused culture. In some of 70-year-old King David's final words to his 20-year-old son Solomon, the king pulled no punches as he challenged his son to be a man.

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever

you turn; that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel'" (1 Kings 2:1-4).

Almost as interesting as what David did say is what he didn't say. There's no mention of women, money, horses and chariots, or fame—all things that kings had access to and that Solomon would go on to fully

exploit (and regret) one day. It turns out that biblical manhood is pretty simple and straightforward. According to David's

"IT TURNS OUT THAT BIBLICAL MANHOOD IS PRETTY SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD."

words, I would define a biblical man as one who knows God's Word, obeys God's Word, and challenges others to do the same. Let's break that down.

KNOW GOD'S WORD.

David began by challenging Solomon to "keep the charge of the Lord your God," which is a fancy biblical way of challenging him to obey. We'll explore that shortly, but before obedience comes knowledge. After all, how can you follow the speed limit if you don't know what it is? David told Solomon to "keep His ways, statutes, commandments, judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses" (v. 3). We all love a good buffet where we get to pick and choose our favorites, but that's not how the Bible works. We must learn to digest it as it is, not how we wish it was. So if you want to know God's Word, open it up. Daily. Put the work in. There are no shortcuts to knowing God's Word. Get into it and it will get into you!

OBEY GOD'S WORD.

Many people know things that the Bible says, but not nearly enough people are obeying it. Need proof? Just read current news headlines. David told Solomon to "walk in His ways" (v. 3). I love the image of a man (or anyone, for that matter)

walking in the ways of the Lord. Walking is slow, steady, and consistent. It won't get you there fast, but it will get you there. My house is an eight-minute drive from church, but Google Maps says it would take over an hour to walk there. I've done it before, and it's true. If I stick to it, I'll make it slowly but surely. American culture says, "Run!" God says, "Let's go for a walk." Stay steady and consistent, and when you inevitably trip, don't beat yourself up. Get up and keep walking.

CHALLENGE OTHERS TO DO THE SAME.

David "charged" Solomon (v. 1). He wasn't suggesting Solomon take up a hobby, he was stating with authority how Solomon should live his life. What a beautiful picture of the church and discipleship. Each generation needs others and has things to learn from those older and younger. Diverse godly community is so important for all of us. Proverbs 27:17 reminds us that "iron sharpens iron," but that doesn't happen just through Bluetooth or a livestream; it happens through time and proximity.

So why does all of this matter? First, Jesus exemplified these things for us. He knew Scripture, obeyed it, and challenged others to do the same. He was the ultimate—and original—small group leader. Another reason is

"that the Lord may fulfill His Word" (v. 4). Although David was referencing a promise God made

AMERICAN CULTURE SAYS, "RUN!" GOD SAYS, "LET'S GO FOR A WALK."

specifically to him, the principle is true for us as well: you will never fully be who God created you to be unless you know and obey God's Word.

American culture is replete with boys with big beards, nice cars, and hot grills, but our culture needs real men. Let's make sure God's Word is our standard of manhood. If we will each step into the role God is calling us to, it will change our families, our churches, our cities, and our culture. 🏠



**FOR MORE ON THIS TOPIC
FROM PASTOR KEVIN MILLER**

cabq.us/vw20

man up

FOOD • TEACHING • CONNECT WITH GOD & ONE ANOTHER

In a culture that's having an identity crisis, it's time for men to man up and be who God designed them to be. Gather with like-minded men in godly community and get prepared to go out into our community with confidence.

Welcome to the brotherhood.



calvarynm.church/manup

PROVERBS 31

THE VIRTUOUS WIFE

-
- 10* Who can find a virtuous wife?
For her worth is far above rubies.
- 11* The heart of her husband safely
trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
- 12* She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
- 13* She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
- 14* She is like the merchant ships,
She brings her food from afar.
- 15* She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
- 16* She considers a field and buys it;
From her profits she plants a vineyard.
- 17* She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
- 18* She perceives that her merchandise
is good,
And her lamp does not go out by night.
- 19* She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
- 20* She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to
the needy.
- 21* She is not afraid of snow for
her household,
For all her household is clothed
with scarlet.
-
- 22* She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.
- 23* Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of
the land.
- 24* She makes linen garments and
sells them,
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
- 25* Strength and honor are her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
- 26* She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue is the law of kindness.
- 27* She watches over the ways of
her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.
- 28* Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband also, and he praises her:
- 29* "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all."
- 30* Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing,
But a woman who fears the Lord, she
shall be praised.
- 31* Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her
in the gates.

RETHINKING THE *Proverbs 31* STANDARD

by Lenya Heitzig

Do you cringe at the mention of the Proverbs 31 woman? If you do, you're not alone—many women are right there with you. I'd venture to say that at one time or another, all Christian women have buckled under the guilt and shame of trying to live up to the lofty aspirations and tiresome tasks contained in the twenty-one verses that describe this virtuous lady. Her example can leave us feeling equal parts admiration and agitation.

But at Sheologie, we decided to deconstruct the Proverbs 31 woman and reconstruct her to adapt to the modern world. We invited a diverse group of friends (single, married, and widowed; with and without children; and a variety of ages) to sit around a table, discuss her more objectively, and reimagine what she might look like if she were alive today. We made a game of pulling apart the many facets of this hybrid woman who seems part Joanna Gaines with a sprinkle of Hailey Bieber and a dash of Michelle Obama.

The Proverbs 31 woman is a rare breed. The passage begins by asking, "Who can find a virtuous woman?" (v. 10, KJV). It's not just rhetorical. It's categorical. You might say she's one in a million. Let's parallel her historical traits with corresponding contemporary characteristics:

- "Willingly works with her hands" (v. 13) means she is not afraid of hard work, but now a Swiffer Sweeper replaces her bristle broom.
- "Merchant ships" with "food from afar" (v. 14) tells us she enjoys diverse meals. Whether she tries recipes from Pinterest, shops at Trader Joe's, or orders Chinese, Middle Eastern, or Mexican from Grubhub, she has a discriminating palate.
- The mention of "maidservants" (v. 15) reminds us that she can't do it alone. Even without a big budget to employ a cook, gardener, or housekeeper, today's virtuous woman knows how to delegate chores and get the job done.
- "She considers a field and buys it" (v. 16) is a great way of saying she leaves whatever she's given in better shape when she moves on to something else.



- “She plants a vineyard” (v. 16) lets us know that she appreciates celebrating life’s achievements, as wine was a symbol of joy in ancient times.
- “Her hand holds the spindle” (v. 19) shows her creative artisanal abilities.
- “She extends her hand to the poor” (v. 20) proves Jesus’ words that “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).
- She “strengthens her arms” (v. 17) describes a fabulously fit female, whether through yoga, jogging, or lifting weights.
- “Her merchandise is good” (v. 18) lets us know that she can run a profitable business. In today’s world, many women supplement the family income, with some becoming sole providers.
- “[Rejoicing] in time to come” (v. 25) tells us she is not afraid of the future. The virtuous woman is emotionally well-adjusted, grounding herself in Scripture and trusting the Lord with all her heart.
- “All her household is clothed with scarlet” (v. 21) speaks of covering her family in the redemptive blood of the Lamb—Jesus Christ. This amazing lady keeps her priorities straight: she seeks first the kingdom of God.
- “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness” (v. 26). Honor, wisdom, and kindness endear her to those who are looking for advice. Her opinion matters.

But *what* this virtuous woman does is not as important as her *why*: she fears the Lord. “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised” (v. 30). She sees the wisdom in obeying what God tells her to do and seeks to honor Him with her whole life. She knows Jesus is not just for Sundays and quiet time. The Lord influences her every decision.

As a result, she is a woman who is to be praised. Instead of shying away from her, we can embrace her as an ideal for us today. We can relate to and emulate her values. We can admire her pluck. And we can inspire others to do the same.

By reimagining the virtuous woman, Sheologie aims to be a movement of women who are rooted in God’s Word and cultivated in contemporary culture. We encourage women to occupy their calling—whether that’s at home or the workplace, in politics or the church, on college campuses or Wall Street—every sphere of influence that God opens before them. More than that, we want women to have an encounter with the living God that ignites a holy passion to transform their everything. 🏠



**WATCH SHEOLOGIE'S SERIES
PORTRAITS OF A WOMAN**

cabq.us/vw19

She·ol·o·gie

**Discover your God-given identity
in the art of being female.**

sheologie.com

HOW TO LOVE OUR CITY LIKE JESUS

First Corinthians 13 has become ubiquitous at weddings and anniversaries, and it's easy to see why. Known affectionately as the love chapter, it contains the most comprehensive description of love in all of Scripture. But it is not a treatise on marriage or romantic love, familial love, or even the deep love between close friends. This passage characterizes a much more significant love: *agape* love, divine love, God's love.

The Bible says the world will know we are disciples—Christ followers—by our *agape* love for one another (see John 13:35). Our identity in Christ isn't found in our love for God, but in our love for other people. That includes the people in our city—a city which God loves, a city which God cares about, a city for which Jesus shed His blood. With this year's vision, we aim to consider it a privilege to extend Jesus' love in this place to these people. To do it, we need to make sure we understand *agape* love, and then we need to love like Jesus so that we look like Jesus to our city.

We look like Jesus when we are patient. Paul wrote, "Love is patient" (v. 4, NIV). Some translations use *suffers long*, and the literal translation is *long tempered*. Patient, longsuffering, long-tempered love implies the capacity to be inconvenienced or even taken full advantage of by another over and over again. It's the kind of love that Jesus spoke of when he said, "Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also" (Matthew 5:39). It's the kind of love Stephen exhibited when stones were being hurled at his body, and he was able to say, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60, NIV).

We also look like Jesus when we are kind. "Love is kind," continued Paul. "It does not boast, it is not proud.... It is not self-seeking" (vv. 4-5, NIV). If patience takes anything from others, kindness gives anything to others. Jesus didn't stop at turn the other cheek. He said if someone sues you for your tunic, give him both your tunic and your cloak (see Matthew 5:40). In God's definition of love, patience and kindness go hand in hand. Patience says, "You can do anything to me," and kindness



turns around and says, “And I will do anything for you.” Patience says, “You can hurt me,” and kindness adds, “And I will bless you.”

The link between kindness and patience is articulated in Romans 2. “Do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?” (v. 4, NIV). It is *agape* love characterized by patience and kindness that leads people to repentance. Tim Keller said, “When the world sees the church doing evangelism, making converts, it only sees us increasing our numbers and increasing our power. When it sees us sacrificially serving the needs of our neighbors, whether they believe or not, then it may see that we are motivated by love, not the desire for power. We must both preach the gospel and serve those who can do nothing for us in return.” The way to transform our city—to realize repentance and revival—is for the church to act on “love is patient, love is kind.”

On embracing this year’s vision for our city, Pastor Mat Pirolo put it this way: “We are a kingdom within a city, citizens of a spiritual land called to love the city we’re in. As we preach the gospel and practice its implications, the hungry are fed, children are cared for, the broken and cast aside find family, and crime rates decline. The church is a change agent, shifting the climate everywhere it’s found. Jesus described His people as salt and light bringing a rich flavor of true life to a bland and dark world.”

The benchmark for our love is nothing less than Jesus’ love for us—His patient and kind love that drew each of us to repentance. Will you join us in establishing not just a tenacious mindset but an active lifestyle that considers it a privilege to love this place and these people? We believe if Calvary Church loves this city like Jesus, this city will be drawn to Him. 🏡



Fulfilling the Great Commission at Home: Parenting as Disciple-Making

by *Taylor Bronisz*

*“But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’”
Matthew 19:14 (ESV)*

Parenting isn't for the faint of heart. For most Christian parents, our weeks look something like this: go to work, go to church, take children to and from school and activities, make sure homework gets done, and then wake up and do it all over again. And somehow we're also supposed to raise them to have a strong biblical worldview. If that was exhausting to read, it's even more exhausting to live. Despite our best efforts, we're faced with statistics that warn us that 66 percent of children raised in church will stop attending when they no longer live under their parents' roof.¹ Scary statistics aside, something clearly isn't working. The question is what changes can we make before it's too late?

Those of us who are blessed to be parents can often compartmentalize the task of raising children. Rather than parenting holistically, we split up our responsibilities into different buckets. We put a few hours each week in the church bucket, a few hours in the homework bucket, and so forth. Rarely are we ever unhurried enough to see how all those separate areas fit together when the best we can do is simply to survive. Sometimes our parenting style can miss any broader vision of what we're trying to accomplish and what God wants to do in the life of our family. Instead, we do our best to stay afloat and keep our kids safe, healthy, and educated. We survive for

eighteen years and hope for the best. The question that we must ask ourselves is this: Are we raising our children to be good disciples?

Suffice it to say our compartmentalized approach to parenting is absent from the pages of Scripture. Across the Old and New Testaments, the biblical vision of parenting is one of holistic development wherein a child is taken from childish immaturity to physical, spiritual, and emotional maturity. Speaking about himself, Paul said, “When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways” (1 Corinthians 13:11, ESV). As Christian parents, are we raising our children to be mature and thriving adults who can discern truth from error? Are we slowly, patiently, and graciously helping them embrace a wise and Christ-centered worldview?

In the ancient world, children were often relegated to a second- or third-tier position in society. Children were expected to be seen, not heard. They had

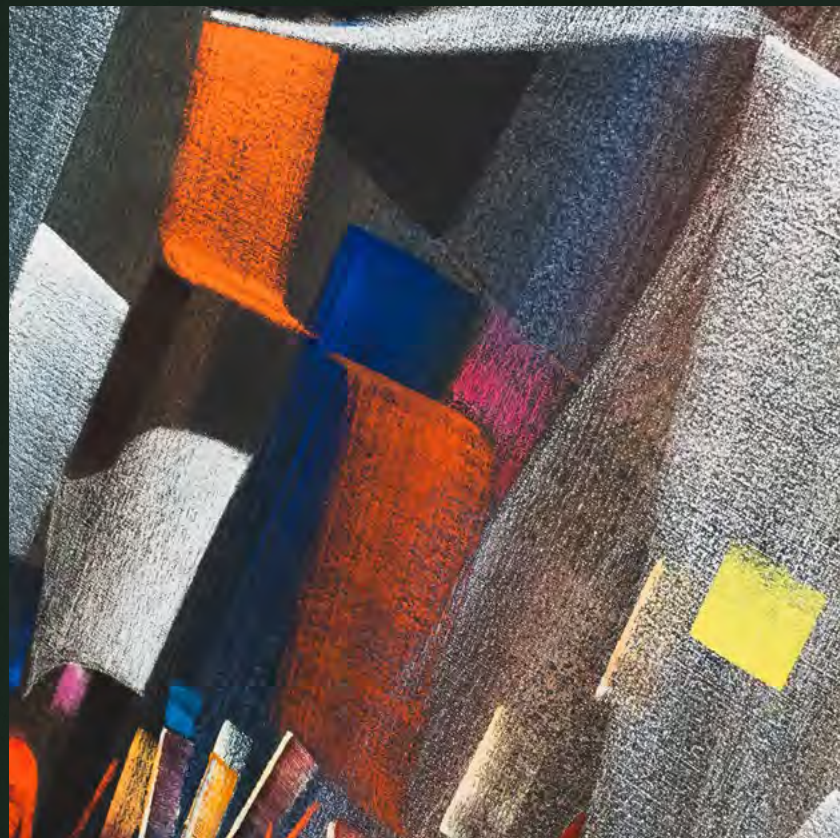
little freedom in the home and absolutely none outside it. Paul, speaking to both children and parents, said, “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Colossians 3:20-21, ESV). Interestingly, whenever Paul addressed the young and energetic congregation in Colosse, he addressed children and parents together.^[i] Children are to grow in spiritual maturity just as their parents (hopefully) are. Children have a real place in the life of the church. They’re under our care, but God also sees them as having a level of spiritual independence and responsibility in their own right.

Simply put, parenting must be approached as an act of disciple making. Since Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20 to “make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you,” shouldn’t that process start in our homes? The task of raising a child to adulthood is more than ensuring they have the skills necessary to get into a good college or get a steady job. Parents are worldview shapers. The worldview we impart to our children will be either accepted or rejected when our children enter adulthood. Is the worldview you’re giving them a biblical one? Our children need us not just to raise them but to *disciple* them. In fact, your child is being disciplined by everyone. Every teacher, every friend, and every social media influencer in your child’s life is disciplining them. The question is whether they’re being disciplined in the way of Jesus or the way of the world. The church cannot provide all the spiritual training and direction that a child needs—that’s a role entrusted to parents.

If we expect a couple of hours each week at church to counteract the dozens of hours of unbiblical discipleship they’re receiving from teachers, friends, and social media, we’re naïve. If we delegate our spiritual responsibility in the home to the church, we’re setting our kids up for a crisis of faith when they grow up. Biblically speaking, the act of discipleship starts not at church but in the home. “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

read the Bible, and hear you admit your own faults and ask for forgiveness. If that’s what they see from you, it might just be something they want to imitate. When your children are disobedient, use it as an opportunity to preach the gospel to them. The next time they wake up after a nightmare, use it as a chance to remind them just how big and powerful our God is.

If you’re feeling the weight of parental responsibility, that’s good. We’ve been given a God-



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” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, ESV). Your home is the best place for discipleship to happen. And biblical instruction should happen throughout your home life, not just around the dinner table or on the drive home from church. Your children need you to be disciples of Christ as well. They should see you pray, watch you

ordained role in the lives of our children, a role He designed especially for you. The good news is God’s grace applies to you as a parent just as much as it does to your child. You may not feel like you’re up to the task, but in His strength, you are! Together, let’s raise our children to be the generation that stays. Let’s pray that they will stay in church, that they will stay in the faith, and that they will shake the world in the name of Jesus. 🏠

[i] Earls, Aaron. “Most Teenagers Drop Out of Church When They Become Young Adults.” Lifeway Research. January 15, 2019. <https://research.lifeway.com/2019/01/15/most-teenagers-drop-out-of-church-as-young-adults>.

[ii] Peter T. O’Brien, New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1274.



Should Christians be Involved in Politics?

By Skip Heitzig

I don't endorse candidates or political parties, but I believe in the truths of Scripture, which tell us that God ordained human government and that we are subject to the authorities He has placed over us (see Romans 13). It seems unthinkable that God would ordain human government and then want humans to stay out of it, especially in the democratic republic of the United States in which we live.

So, what are our responsibilities to our nation if we are followers of Jesus? We find an answer to that question in Jeremiah 29:1-13.

A. Be responsible in our culture.

In 597 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar's forces had taken hostages from Jerusalem and carried them off to Babylon to serve his empire. Six years earlier, in 603 BC, Jeremiah's contemporaries, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, had been kidnapped and taken to Babylon to serve the king.

[REDACTED]

The prophet Jeremiah told the Jewish captives, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 'Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce... multiply there, and do not decrease'" (29:4-6, ESV).

Jeremiah was saying they would be in Babylon for a long time. He encouraged them to provide for themselves and establish families. He told them to be involved and responsible in their new culture.

Jesus did not intend us to live apathetically in anticipation of the rapture. Instead, He wants us to live out our faith in this world. Before His crucifixion, he prayed, "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15, ESV). We are not to promote isolation or insulation, but permeation. The gospel should influence all areas of our lives, including politically.

B. Be prayerful for our country.

Jeremiah continued, "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7, ESV). He was saying the Jews' welfare was bound up in the interests of Babylon. He did not urge the Jews to revolt or start a revolution. He urged them to pray for the hostile land in which they lived.

[REDACTED]

Our nation needs God's help. We need God to forgive our sins and to bring healing. We need to pray daily for our leaders and our country. We are not instructed to rebel against our government but to be peacemakers and lights in the darkness (see Romans 12:18).

Of course, this is not to say we stop with prayer. We can—and should—always do more than pray. But we can never do more *until* we've prayed.

[REDACTED]

C. Be careful whom we consider.

Next, Jeremiah issued a warning to the Jews:

“For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them,’ declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 29:8, ESV).

There were men amid the Jewish congregation in Babylon who were writing letters and speaking messages that conflicted with everything Jeremiah was writing. They were saying that peace was coming, the Jews would not remain in Babylon for seventy years, and that their exile was not a punishment for their sin.

We hear positive and negative messages from both political parties and countless media outlets. I think it’s safe to say we’re going to hear some true things and some that are false. What are we to do with so many different messages?

We think. We learn. We become informed about the real issues and what our leaders stand for. We need followers of Jesus involved in the political process. Run for office. Step up to the plate. Help shape policy. We don’t have the option to sit back and complain.

D. Be hopeful of our calling.

After reminding the Jews to be responsible, prayerful, and careful, Jeremiah exhorted the Jews to be hopeful about the future. He wrote:

“For thus says the LORD: ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart’” (Jeremiah 29:10-13, ESV).

God promised to bring the Jews back to Jerusalem, and He did.

[REDACTED]

With the big picture in mind, get involved, but have a light touch. As we live in this temporary earthly realm, we must fix our eyes on the permanent heavenly kingdom to which we journey. We’re here for a lifetime, not all time.

As children of God, we must not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed with hopelessness or despair because of our government or society. We have a purpose in politics; we must stay informed, engaged, and active. But more importantly, we must remember that God is on the throne in heaven. That’s a rock-solid truth we can rest on at all times. 🏠



Foster + *Adoption*

With the historic overturning of Roe v. Wade by the US Supreme Court, Calvary Church recognizes that pro-life values go beyond opposing abortion. To impact our church family and our larger community, we must support foster and adoptive families as well as couples who are taking steps toward fostering or adopting children. Pastors Kevin Miller and Taylor Bronisz recently sat down with three couples from our church whose families have been blessed by fostering and adoption: Ryan and Reoyne Cook, Aaron and Brittany Moreno, and Clay and Michelle Schroff.

PASTOR KEVIN

Introduce yourselves and give us a big-picture view of your involvement with fostering or adoption.

RYAN & REOYNE

We've been married for thirteen years and have seven children. We adopted four kids through the foster system. Our story is unique in that we adopted our first long-term placement, a sibling set of four. We didn't set out with the intention of adopting at all, but God had other plans.

AARON & BRITTANY

We've been married for eleven years, and we have one son we adopted privately. We have an open adoption and it's awesome to have a relationship with his biological mom. We did foster care in Los Angeles and after reunifying our foster child, we decided to move back here to have a support system so we could continue fostering.

CLAY & MICHELLE

We've been married for twenty-seven years. We've had over forty foster kids come through our home. We have ten children total, and we've forgotten which ones are adopted and which ones are biological. But it's been a long journey. We founded and run the Aspen Project to bring together people in the foster care and adoption systems and mentorship and support programs and to try to make New Mexico the best place to be a kid.

PASTOR TAYLOR

Why did you choose to foster and/or why did you choose to adopt?

REOYNE

When we got married, Ryan didn't want kids. We would have conversations about how messed up the world is, and one day I looked at Ryan said, "We need to do something instead of just sit around and complain about it." Eventually I felt God put it on my heart to foster, and I was terrified to talk to Ryan about it. We already had two children. I prayed and I told God, "I'll talk to him, but he's going to say no. I'll do my part so You can stop convicting me." And Ryan didn't say no.

RYAN

She asked me, and I said, "Let's pursue it until God closes the door." So we kept going in that direction, and God kept opening doors and now, here we are. We adopted four siblings and we're full for right now. We have no more beds.

AARON

I think fostering and adoption was always plan A for us. Even before we started dating, we each had a desire to foster and adopt, so when we started dating, that conversation came up pretty quickly. That was a confirmation for us.

PASTOR KEVIN

Where did that desire come from before you even started dating?

BRITTANY

For me, I grew up with a single mom, and I feel like the community had always kind of come around us. For me, family wasn't necessarily about blood—it had to be more than that. I didn't grow up in a Christian home, but I assume the Lord planted that seed, that desire. I credit Him that it happened, including our marriage.

“Family wasn't necessarily about blood—it had to be more than that.”



AARON

For me, one of the things I've always loved and something I experienced growing up in this church is coming together as a diverse family. It made me want to have that in my own home. I wanted to lead children and love them and show them the love of Christ. The Lord placed this vision in my heart, and the Holy Spirit confirmed that it was a God-given desire, something He was calling me to. He confirmed it when Brittany and I talked about it because I had met a woman I wanted to spend the rest of my life with, and she shared that passion.

MICHELLE

When Clay and I met, adoption was my heart's desire because when I was nineteen, I was told that I couldn't have children. When we stepped into our relationship, we agreed that we

“Foster care refined our faith and our relationship with each other, with our children, and with the Lord.”

would adopt. We got married and two months later I was pregnant. Ten months later I was pregnant again. And ten months later I was pregnant again. So we didn't foster or adopt right away like we thought we would. When we had our third child, I said, "It's time." He said, "No, it's not." He put the brakes on and said, "Unless God places a child on our doorstep, the answer is no."

CLAY

Did I mention we have ten kids?

MICHELLE

We had one more child and decided we were done. We got rid of everything. Then needs for adoption started rising and we felt strongly that we wanted a multicultural family. I joked that I wanted the UN of families, and God provided. We adopted from Russia. The Lord laid it on Clay's heart to foster even though our big problem with fostering was having to give the kids back. Foster care refined our faith and our relationship with each other, with our children, and with the Lord.

BRITTANY

I didn't want to have an open adoption, a relationship with the biological family. However, our experience in foster care helped us build a relationship with our son's biological family, and now we advocate to anyone who is going to foster or adopt that they have that relationship with the biological family—if it's healthy.

MICHELLE

I absolutely agree. We've seen the most success with the children we've fostered in being reunited with their families by seeking to have that relationship with their biological families.

CLAY

God lays on you the responsibility of preparing that biological parent for the kids you call your own. When these kids enter my home, they know that they are loved, and they are mine. Yet at the same time, none of my children are mine; they all belong to God. And when God asks me to give them back to a family that has been neglectful or abusive in the past and they've made those changes, it reminds me of how God loves me. He loved me while I was still broken.

PASTOR KEVIN

It's important to highlight that there are struggles and challenges that come with fostering and adoption. What were some of the challenges you faced along the road, maybe even starting on the adoption or fostering journey?

REOYNE

Well one of the things that I've really struggled with and why I didn't want to foster initially was the fear of giving kids back. I remember telling Michelle, "Oh, you're such a great person. I could never do that. I would get too attached." As if Michelle didn't get attached, right? I think what Michelle told me was that it's not about me. Whatever I'm going through as an adult, these

“My fear of getting too attached was really about surrendering my will and my emotions to be obedient to the Lord.”

kids are going through so much worse. My fear of getting too attached was really about surrendering my will and my emotions to be obedient to the Lord. I

think the other thing that was difficult was the relationship with the biological parents. That's one of my biggest regrets. I wish I had had a softer heart toward them because they're God's children also. They weren't equipped the way that I had been equipped. Yes, they were making poor choices, but did they have a support system to help them do better? Did they know to do better?

RYAN

For me it was more a fear of not knowing how to do it. Because I come from a broken family—my parents are split, and my dad's parents were split, and my mom's parents were split—so I have this history on both sides of my family of families just falling apart. I didn't know how to be a dad. I didn't have good role models. When I became a believer, Jesus started working on me in that area. Then it was, well, I don't know how to take care of other people's kids. I don't even know how to take care of my own. There was a lot of fear, and God's just been equipping us and placing His hand on my heart and helping me through that.

AARON

One of the hardest parts of getting started was just realizing how intrusive the process is. I think my wife had a more realistic approach of what it would take to be ready for foster care. But it challenged our marriage and our motivation. When we did our home study, it felt like someone came into our house to judge us. They were walking around, taking notes, and asking us questions. They interviewed us separately. It was intrusive to the point that I started questioning whether I was fit for it, and I started questioning whether I had the tools or the ability. And the Lord just reminded me that He called me to this. I won't sugarcoat it; it's very difficult. For example, in doing monitored visitations with the biological family, the child would sit in a room with the biological mother, but the child would reach toward us for comfort. But this was time for the child to be with his biological mom. And it was so hard to not just step in, but we're called to just say, "Hey, this is still your biological mom," and to continue pushing toward reunification. Our job was to give them a safe home for now when there isn't permanency.

PASTOR KEVIN

Clay and Michelle, having had forty plus kids through your home, could you speak to those who are just starting out and give them an idea of some of the challenges they may face and how you've navigated those personally?



CLAY

If you have biological kids, you already know that raising kids and being a parent is hard. David said he would never give the Lord something that didn't cost him something. Being a foster parent or an adoptive parent will cost you something. But as Christians, we're called to do the hard things. Kids are brought to you at three o'clock in the morning, the police officer threw all the clothes they could get into a garbage bag, and that's how they show up. Or you

“As Christians, we're called to do the hard things.”

meet them at the hospital, you have to bring them home, delouse them, get them clean, and then you have to deal with just multitudes of issues. Then the next day they wake up

and they don't know who you are, but they can't believe that you're feeding them, they can't believe that you're putting clothes on them. And there are issues that come with hurt children: they act out differently than other children. Again, God doesn't call us to do easy things. He can repair and rebuild these kids, but you have to be willing to do the hard things. All the stories CYFD will tell you are true, but the truth is even though we go into the valley of the shadow of death, we will not fear death itself.

PASTOR TAYLOR

What would you say to those who may be thinking that the process sounds so difficult and painful, and they can't imagine being able to go through it?

MICHELLE

Love is a choice. Love is something that you have to choose to do. There were times I would go to Clay feeling like I just can't do this. I remember talking to social workers and just saying, "I can't do this." What it really came down to was this isn't about me. This is not about you. When you choose to sacrifice, when you choose to love, it hurts. And it costs. But it's worth it. It opens your eyes to see that the Lord takes ashes and makes it beautiful.

AARON

Whenever we talk about biological or foster kids and ask, "How do I love this kid?" I just think about when Jesus said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." And for a lot of these kids, the innocence is being stripped away from them. I think for kids who are in foster care, the innocence has been stripped away. And it's our job to preserve that, to wash them in the Word, to protect them, to restore that innocence, and point them to Christ. I think with that mindset, it doesn't matter whether they are biological, foster, or adopted.

RYAN

That's good, and that takes Jesus. Jesus poured into me and then through me into these kids as we brought them into our family. So you have to have Jesus in your heart, and you have to have a soft heart in order to love those who hurt you or those who are broken.

REOYNE

It was laid so heavily on my heart this morning that children—people—are the only things we can take with us when we leave this world. I can spend so much time gathering so many things or going on so many great vacations, but heaven's going to be so much better than any vacation I could take here. I want to take my kids and as many people with me as I can.

PASTOR KEVIN

I don't know that there's a more beautiful or accurate picture of the gospel than adoption. We've all been adopted into God's family. Your kids have your name, they have your inheritance, your protection, your blessing, and they have your discipline. All of those are things that we have as sons and daughters of the King. But one theme that I hear is that this really requires a work of God in your heart. How would you speak to a couple who is in that place where one feels drawn to this and the other isn't ready? What would you say to a couple that isn't sure if it's for both of them?

CLAY

The Bible is clear that not everyone should foster and adopt, so if you're not feeling that calling, there are other things you can do. Maybe you take that first step and get into a mentorship program like Big Brothers Big Sisters. I don't have an answer to the question of a family divided over the issue other than be prayerful. Bring it before the throne of God and be obedient to Him and take a step in that direction. You don't have to make a permanent decision yet because what we're asked through adoption is not to date a child, but to marry them for a lifetime. They become permanent. But you have to start the journey with a step, and if your spouse doesn't want to do it with you, maybe you just do the mentorship program. Or why don't you start teaching Sunday school? There are so many things that you can do to impact a child's heart. We want to imprint Christ on a child's heart. We want them to see eternity because of what we've done. So it could just be Sunday school. That's a weekly commitment, and then maybe your heart softens and it's becomes a daily commitment, and soon it's a lifetime commitment.

PASTOR KEVIN

Not everyone is called to do this, but everyone is called to do something, whether that's getting involved here at Calvary Church or impacting the next generation in another way. There are lots of different ways to do that.

PASTOR TAYLOR

I want to share Psalm 68:5-6: "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy habitation. God sets the solitary in families; He brings out those who are bound into prosperity." That's what God is doing. That's God's heart—that is His desire. Whether or not you are called to foster or adopt, our God's heart is to place the solitary and the hurting and the broken into families. Let's ask how we can make that happen in this city and state. 🇺🇸



**WATCH THE ENTIRE FOSTER
& ADOPTION INTERVIEW**
cabq.us/vw16

WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU DID THE DISHES?

BY SANTIAGO LLANES

Time to come clean: I have never liked doing the dishes. From the time my mom first put a sponge in my hand to around thirty minutes ago when I was standing at my sink, I have always thought that washing dishes is the worst chore known to man. It's gross, it's grimy, it's smelly, and sometimes you've got to put your hand down the garbage disposal. Worst of all, there always seems to be one more stinking dish. It never ends! Dishes pile up quickly, and for a chronic procrastinator like me, that is a recipe for disaster. I've spent many late nights scrubbing away because I didn't take care of the dishes for days on end.

It was on one of those late nights that I had a God thought—one of those thoughts you know is from God because you aren't clever enough to

**“LEARN TO HANDLE
YOUR DISHES BEFORE
THEY HANDLE YOU.”**



figure it out on your own. *Do the dishes every day, not just when they start to stink.*

While I was thankful for the practical life advice, I couldn't shake the feeling that God had a deeper meaning in mind: taking care of your spiritual health is a lot like doing the dishes. Let me explain.

As humans there isn't a day that goes by when we don't sin. Whether it's a struggle with lying, stealing, cheating, gossiping, or even just a runaway thought life, we all (yes, even we Christians) struggle with sin. While God is aware of our imperfection, sin is not something He wants us to be ok with and let run rampant in our lives. In fact, it should be an active practice as a believer to catch our sinful behavior and give it to God as an act of worship. But what happens when we aren't careful to catch those sinful thoughts, behaviors, and tendencies?

First, God still loves you and wants to forgive you. Don't ever forget that. Unfortunately, this truth doesn't change the fact that sin is not good for you and left unchecked it causes all sorts of damage in your life. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," (Matthew

12:34) meaning even internal actions like sinful thoughts or bad intentions eventually cause damage on the outside. That's why it is so important to spend time with God every day and let Him help you with your sinful desires and tendencies. If you don't, those things pile up and xby the time you can smell them, it's too late. The damage has been done. Time for the key takeaway (make sure to write this down): Learn to handle your dishes before they handle you.

When I look around at all the scandals and moral failings among church leaders and worship artists, I can't help but think, *Man, another person who didn't handle the dishes.*



“GOD IS LOOKING FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS WITH INTEGRITY.”



What we are seeing is years of people not taking care of their dishes until finally their dishes took care of them. It doesn't matter the scale of their impact, the number of followers, nor the size of their celebrity, poor spiritual health doesn't stay hidden forever. And when it comes out, it is devastating to the individual, their family and friends, and people who were learning from them. More than anything, it makes the person they were representing—God—look bad.

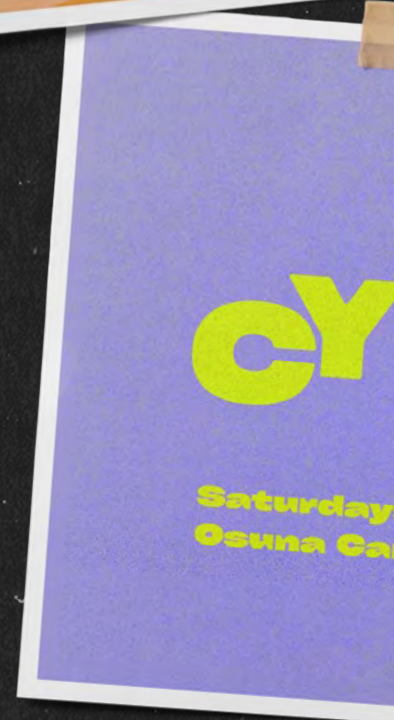
More than talent, charisma, and popularity, God values integrity. God looks for young believers like you who

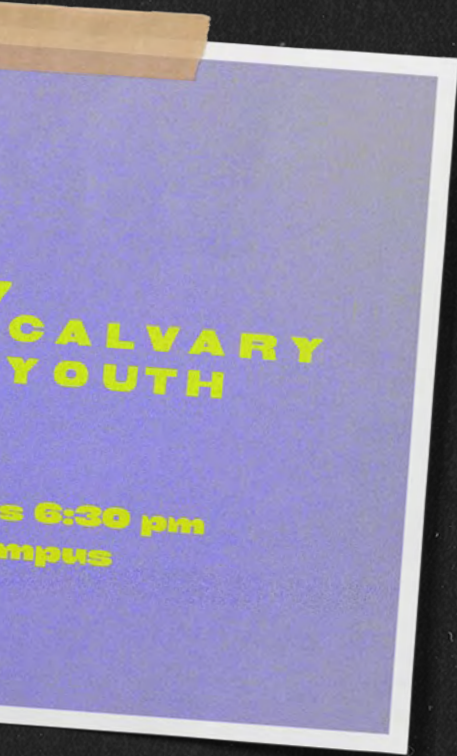
have integrity, who are willing to take care of the dishes. Even when it's hard. Even when the one thing God asks you

to do is the very thing you were hoping He wouldn't. Being obedient to the voice and truth of God brings glory to His name, not shame. The church needs young believers with integrity. The world needs you.

At this point you might be thinking, *A lifetime of cleaning myself up, trying to be perfect and not messing up a single time? No thanks, that's impossible.* Here is where both the bad and the good news come in. The bad news is you're right. You can't clean yourself up. You can't be perfect and always do the right thing. You could live hundreds of lifetimes and never be able to live a perfect life. The good news is God knows this. He doesn't expect you to clean up the constant mess. In fact, He wants

“WALKING WITH JESUS IS NOT A SPRINT, IT'S A MARATHON.”





to do the dishes for you. All you need to do is spend time with Him and allow Him to clean you up. Jesus said, "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!" (John 15:9-11, NLT).

Jesus already loves you more than you can possibly know! All He asks is that we live in that love. Spend time with Him by reading His Word, praying, and letting Him shape every area of your life. That is how you live in His love. He will clean those dishes for you and let you know exactly what you can do to help with the process. Walking with Jesus is not a sprint, it's a marathon. Right now, learn to be consistent. Day after day, step after step, spend time with God. You won't believe what He will do through you.

Young Christian, if God has given you dreams of preaching, starting businesses, being in the White House, impacting this world in huge ways, you keep on dreaming with God. Don't stop. If He's put something on your heart to change this world, just keep on moving toward what God has for you.

We will be right here next to you, supporting you and cheering you on. Dream big...but make sure you start by doing the dishes. 🏠

**“KEEP ON
DREAMING
WITH GOD.”**



this **PLACE** *these* **PEOPLE** *my* **PRIVILEGE**

