

It Takes a Mother and a Father to Raise a Child

Rich Nathan

February 3rd and 4th, 1996

Home Improvement Series

1 Thessalonians 2:7 and 2 Timothy 2:1-7

For those of you who have been here, you know that I have been doing a series of talks on the family that I have called "Home Improvement." I know that for singles and for those couples here who don't have children, some of the talks may feel like they are not really aimed at you or your situation. I would, again, remind you that a lot of the things I am talking about regarding the family could be applied in other relationships that you have.

Attempt to draw some connection to other relationships while you are listening. I will suggest some bridges to other relationships today. And, also, it is helpful while you are listening to consider how you were raised. All of us were brought up in some family or other. Did the family we grew up in conform to the pattern of family that is described in the Bible? If it didn't, how did it depart? What effect did that have on the way you feel today? I would encourage you to particularly ask the questions about the effects on your own life as you hear today's talk.

Let me begin today's talk with a story. This is a true story. In a small midwestern town, some vandals broke into a hardware store one night and spent the evening in the hardware store. When the owner came in the next day, he discovered that not only was some of his merchandise missing, but also the vandals had spent the night switching the price tags on different items in his store.

So, for example, the vandals took a price tag from a power saw that sold for \$84.00 and they put that price tag on some nuts and bolts. And then they took the price tag from the nuts and bolts that sold for \$0.07 and put it on the power saw. Of course the effect of this price tag switch was total chaos in the store. Paintbrushes were selling for \$210.00. Air compressors were selling for \$1.50 and so on.

Now, I think this true story serves as a great illustration for what has happened in modern society. Some vandals have broken into our culture and they have switched the price tags on everything. So what was formerly considered important and valuable is now considered to be cheap, worthless and valueless. And what was formerly considered shameful and base, never to be talked about in public, is now celebrated and endlessly discussed. Let's make a movie about numerous affairs. People who do those things are paid millions of dollars.

Do you want to understand life in America in the 90's? Just think about this. All the price tags on virtually everything have been switched. And the reason we look at God's word together in church, the reason why I urge you to read God's word privately is so that you can discover the appropriate price tag to put on the various aspects of your life.

What price tag ought you to put on your career? On leisure? On hospitality? On giving? On your kids? On your relationship with God?

Do you know, nowhere do I think that the price tags have been more radically switched than on the value that modern society places on motherhood and fatherhood. It is amazing that in the last 30 years, even our language has changed from “mother,” “father,” “mommy,” and “daddy” to the more distant “parents.” “Parenting” became a verb in the 70’s. Parents became even more distant by the generic word “caregiver.” A person who is responsible for raising a child is no longer mother or father, but a caregiver who is connected neither biologically nor relationally to a child.

You saw the switching of the price tags regarding motherhood in the 1960’s as moms were repeatedly bashed from every side. Betty Friedan, who later recanted her views, wrote in *The Feminine Mystique* that any woman who stays at home raising a child and taking care of a house is nothing but a parasite. You talk about a change in the price tag from the old saying, “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world” to anyone who spends their time rocking the cradle is a parasite.

The 1960’s and early 70’s were characterized by “mommy bashing.” Every mom in American was painted as a Joan Crawford in *Mommy Dearest*. All of the social pathologies and all of society’s problems – murder, arson, and rape – were laid at the feet of Mom. It’s mom’s fault. It is not a criminal’s fault, it is the fault of his or her mom.

Not only in terms of bashing, but also in terms of what was celebrated. Mothers who spent their days teaching their children right from wrong, preparing meals, keeping house, being there for one of her children when they got home from school – no one gave a passing nod to the woman who would actually give herself into motherly activity.

Chuck Colson wrote an article not too long ago in which he said, “Newspaper headlines about the disasters of drug, suicide and violence tell us loud and clear just how badly our young people need mothering. But it is the business pages of our newspapers which make great fanfare over the fact that Ms. Jones is now the first female vice president of Trendy, Cash and Now.” That is the important news of the day.

When someone gets a promotion to assistant manager of UDF, she gets her picture in the newspaper. When a mother stays up all night taking care of a sick child, she is called a parasite. Friends, somebody’s been switching the price tags!

And what happened to the mothers in the early 60’s and 70’s happened to dads in the late 70’s and the 80’s. The psychological community turned its fire from mom to dad. Dad was now responsible for all the pathological behavior in society. It was because Dad was aloof; Dad was emotionally distant; Dad was controlling or whatever that children turned out the way they did. And because Dad was so awful, the Murphy Brown generation came along and said, “Well, we really don’t need Dads. The only real value of a man is as a sperm donor. And we might need him to pay child support. We need the check and we need the

sperm, but we don't need Dad. We can do just as good a job with or without a Dad."

In fact, all of the evidence, all of the social science evidence tells us that we need dad just like we need mom.

There was an African American man who is running a fathering institute in the inner city of Cleveland whose work I have been paying attention to over the last several years. He wrote a magazine piece in which he said, "I can take you to any street in the city of Cleveland and we could walk down the street together and I can tell you just by looking at the front of a house if that house has a dad in it or not. Because if there is a dad in the home, the grass will probably be mowed, the screen door will be fixed. You might see a man standing in the front playing catch with his son. You won't see a group of aggressive boys standing out in front of the house, because dad will deal with them. If a dad is home, you will see a house that is well-managed, fixed up and sons who are under control."

So, this man, without government help, without lots of grants, started a fathering institute. And from the grass roots, he is trying to change the culture from the bottom up. He gets young men in and teaches them three things – just three things. He says, "Young man, you legitimize your children. Legitimize them and let them know that you are their dad and you do that legally. Young man, you spend time with your children. And young man, you finish high school and get yourself a job."

Not real complicated. Pretty traditional, non-philosophical, non-esoteric, lofty counsel. Just the kind of wisdom that you would find in the Bible.

Here is what I want to communicate today. Moms, Dads, the school system cannot do what you alone can do. Christian school cannot replace you; neither can a day-care system replace you. Church preachers or Community involvement, the best of intentions by special programs are not enough. Moms, Dads, you are necessary. You are irreplaceable. You are valuable. It takes more than a village to raise a child. It takes a mother and a father. Let's pray.

Before we look at the text for today, let me mention two things. First of all, single parents, don't be turned off by the title of today's message or lose hope. We're going to look at some very hopeful things the bible has to say to you in just a moment. So hand in there with me!

Second, as I look at the differing roles of mom and dad, I am talking in generalities; I do want to prevent all of us from being overly rigid in our parental roles. It is not helpful for one parent to always be the enforcer. In fact, I think it is positively detrimental to healthy relating if people divide up personality traits and say, "Okay, I'll take logic and you take emotions. You take spontaneity and I'll take planning. You be soft and I'll be hard." When I speak today in general terms, I'm talking about tendencies in moms and dads – tendencies that I think the Bible recognizes. But I am personally opposed to overly rigid role definitions that block people from growing and changing.

If you have a Bible, I would like you to turn with me to 2 Timothy, chapter 1 where Paul is writing to Timothy and he says to him in verse 3:

"I thank God whom I serve as my forefathers did with a clear conscience as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers, recalling your tears, I

long to see you that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also."

You say what is the value of a mother? You know, church, pastors, Christian schools, Sunday School, Children's ministry can put facts in the head, but what we see in this text is that mothers put faith in the heart. Moms have a unique role to play in communicating the faith to the heart.

I want to say something here to single parents or to those of you who are married to a non-Christian spouse, especially those of you who got discouraged when you saw my title, "It Takes a Mother and a Father to Raise a Child." You said to yourself, "Well, I don't have a Christian partner," or "My spouse is totally uninvolved in raising our children," or, "I am raising my child solo, what about me?" I want you to know that there is grace for you. There is grace for you. And this text ought to be underlined in your Bible, single parent or those of you who are married to an uninvolved Christian or a non-Christian spouse. Eunice, Timothy's mother was married to a non-Christian.

We are told in the book of Acts that Timothy's dad was a Greek and not a member of the faith community. I believe that Lois, the grandmother, and Eunice, Timothy's mother, were Jews and they came to faith in Christ after Eunice was married. But Eunice did not use her situation of not having the support of a Christian husband as an excuse to not communicate a deep faith to Timothy's heart. Single parents and those of you married to a non-Christian spouse, let nothing get in the way, nothing, not your spouse's opposition, not your ex-spouse's opposition, not their extended family, not your finances or your loneliness – let nothing get in the way of your communicating a strong faith to the heart of your children. That is your job in so far as you have power to do it. Whenever you have the opportunity you talk to your kids about Jesus. You pray with your kids. You let them see you praying. You take your kids to church. There is grace for you and grace for your children, but you take the responsibility of pointing your kids towards the Lord.

You know, the name Eunice comes from a Greek word *Eu-Nike*. It means "good victory." Eunice had a good victory out of her difficult situation because her son became a hero of the faith.

A while ago, I told you a part of the story before of the great Saint Augustine and how he came to faith through his godly mother, Monica, and her prayers and her pursuit of the Lord for him. But I don't think I ever read you the very sad text from Augustine's famous confessions in which Augustine talks about his father. And he said, "You know, my father was very well-respected in our city. He was one of the leaders of the community." And he said his father provided lavishly for his education, cared about the development of Augustine's mind. But then he says this, "Yet the same father of mine took no trouble to see how I was growing in my relationship with God or whether I was chaste or not [that is whether I was moral and sexually pure or not]. He cared only that I had a fertile tongue leaving my heart to bear none of your fruits, my God."

In other words, Augustine was left to himself; at least as far as his father was concerned, regarding training him up in morals. His dad never sat down and

talked to him about what was right or wrong. The fact that he grew to be such a good man after a period of struggling was due to his mother.

Single parents, those of you who are married to non-Christians, you can have a good victory. But you must take it upon yourselves to communicate the faith to the heart of your children. I would encourage you men and women who are married to non-Christian spouses to as much as possible find grounds of unity and commonality with your spouse. There are lots of areas that you can agree upon. Most parents whether Christian or not, do want to see their children do well in school. Most do want to see their children work hard. Most want to see their children successful. You can agree on many things. Everything doesn't have to be a battleground.

I would also encourage you not to preach to your spouse. That never works. Let them see your life. Let your example shine. And I would encourage you to cultivate your marriage. That even while you take your children to church and you, yourself, are involved in a small group, that all of your time is not dominated by Christian activities and that you are spending time cultivating your relationship with your spouse, if possible. Cultivating your marriage.

Mothers communicate the faith. And mothers illustrate tender-heartedness. Where did Timothy get such a tender heart? Paul says, "Recalling your tears, I long to see you." Where did Timothy get such a tender heart? The same place that most of us learned tenderness – from mom.

I want you to see this in the Bible. Flip back with me to 1 Thessalonians 2. This business of tenderness, gentleness, being communicated from a mother to a child is spoken about over and over again in the Bible, but I will just give you one other text. 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7 Paul says, *"As apostles of Christ, we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you. We were tender with you, like a mother caring for her little children."*

Mothers, make sure that your children have tender hearts. There is a difference, generally speaking, between the toughness of men and the tenderness of women. There is a difference. We certainly see it in our home when we drive along the road and Daniel and Sharon, my children, are sitting in the back and Marlene, my wife, and I are sitting in the front. We are driving along the road and we will see a dead animal along the side of the road. Invariably, my wife and daughter will immediately say something, "Oh my, what a poor dog." "Mommy, did you see the dog? Poor thing." And then they will speculate about what the owner will feel like when he finds out that his dog was hit by a car. Or maybe they will be angry. The other day they were angry with the owner for being negligent and not tying the dog up and not protecting the dog. Poor doggy.

In the meantime, Daniel and I are usually carrying on a conversation in which one of will say, "Hey, what do you say we stop and throw the dog in the back of the car? Nothing better than a little road-kill. Ummmm, doggy burgers. Sure like them cooked up on the grill." Daniel will say, "Yeah, why don't we get a spit and cook the dog over a spit." Of course, neither of us would touch any dead animal, but it is all designed to illicit from my daughter the, "Oh, gross."

Nevertheless, there is something to this business of communicating tenderness that both men and women need in their hearts. Paul talks about that

in Ephesians 4 when he says, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." You be kind. You be tenderhearted toward each other. Mothers are an illustration of tenderheartedness.

And mothers powerfully identify with their children. You know, in verse 7 where it says, "*We were gentle among you like a mother caring for her little children*", "*gentle*" can be translated, "*We were like a baby among you like a mother caring for her little children.*" There is a manuscript problem [stay with me here], but in the ancient Greek manuscripts from which the English version is translated, many of the best Greek manuscripts have the word *nepios*, which means "baby" rather than the word *epios*, which means, "gentle". Paul could be saying that we were gentle, we were tender-hearted with you, or we were *nepios*, we were like babies with you like a mother."

Frankly, I have observed both in moms relating to their children. They are gentle. But very often, they identify so much with their children, when the babies are little; they talk baby talk to their kids. Moms will lie on their stomachs so that they are face to face with their babies. They kiss their babies and lick their babies and their babies lick them. They act like there is this total giving of life and receiving life, this identification.

You know, one of the qualities that I see in moms and I see so much in my wife, Marlene, is this ability to identify not only with the kids, but also with anyone who is going through a problem. By identification, I mean, the ability to walk around in the shoes of someone else and feel what they feel. Marlene will say frequently, "I know exactly how you feel" to a friend. She identifies.

I remember that one of my major mistakes was taking Marlene to the movie, "Sophie's Choice", which was taken place in Germany. A woman was forced to give up one of her children to the Nazis. That was her choice. And it caused me great pain to watch the film, but I still stood on the outside of this woman's dilemma. I still stood on the outside and felt for her as an outsider. But Marlene didn't approach it that way. She became that woman. And she was undone by the film. She was upset for days because she literally walked in the woman's shoes. That's what moms are able to do with their children in a way that dads find much harder to do. They identify.

And moms teach their children to walk in the shoes of someone who is in pain. Communication, illustration, identification – the mother's message is loud and clear, Children you are loved. You don't have to guess at it. You know it. You are loved. Love is put in the very core of a child's being by a good mother.

Now, mothers do make mistakes. And if there is a mistake that good mothers make, it is the over-bonding and over-identification with a child. You know, from the time a child is about two years old, parenting is a game of progressive release where you more and more allow a child to be separated from mom and free from mom to learn responsibility, to learn independence, to learn how to function ultimately away from the nest. Many parents think that the way we release our children is that we dominate them for 18 years and then launch them out at age 18. Throw them out of the nest and then somehow they are to

learn instant responsibility and instant coping skills. Parenting is a matter of progressive release.

Moms, if you are making a mistake, it might be your unwillingness to let go. In most families mothers do too much for their children and in most families, dads do too little. Now, obviously, those are just bell-curves and we have people on all edges of the curve. But if parents err, that is the direction they generally err.

And you can see the effects of over-bonding in children in so many ways. Children are talking baby talk at age 9 or 10. Teenagers still have their clothes picked out for them by their parents. College students still bring their laundry home to be done by mom.

Moms, force yourself to progressively release control. This is an art. Sometimes your kids want more autonomy than they can handle, but little by little progressively let out the ropes. Not all at once, not irresponsibly, but let out the rope little by little. Encourage your children's independence. Help them to make decisions on their own.

Let me give you another little hook, since you understand what I mean by release. Parents who have not released their children are frequently involved in rescuing their kids too quickly, too often so that you reward irresponsibility. If son or daughter regularly forgets their books at school, don't keep driving them over there. If son or daughter forgets lunch, they will live without lunch. If son or daughter runs out of their allowance money, don't bail them out. Moms, release them to some natural consequences for irresponsibility. Don't rescue too quickly. You need to release. I know it's hard but if you don't you will create big problems.

Now let me take a slightly different take on the issue of over-bonding and over-identification of parents (often moms, but sometimes dads) and their kids. Sometimes good parents get so close to their kids that they become enmeshed or fused with their children. Their children's feelings become their feelings and vice versa. Their children's problems become their problems. If a child is depressed, mom is depressed; if mom is having a hard time with dad, the child is having a hard time with dad. If a child failed at school, mom or dad feels like a failure.

There is a psychological concept that is so helpful informing healthy relationships. It is called differentiation. The idea is that mom is not the child and the child is not the mom. Differentiation – I am not you and you are not me. Moms, dads when your kids complain that they are angry or sad, you are allowed to feel differently. "I know you feel angry towards your friend, but I don't. I know you want to blame me because you are bored but you can entertain yourself." Friends, part of maturity is learning this healthy process of differentiation. Yes someone may be blaming you, or the church, or your ministry because they are not happy and healthy and whole. They may be upset and say nasty things to you or try to make you feel guilty because you haven't fixed them, but you don't have to receive the blame. Our problems are not enmeshed. Their problems are theirs and your problems are yours.

Let's turn then quickly to the unique place of fathers and if you have a Bible, turn with me to 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

"You, then, my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus and the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses and trust to reliable men who will be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs, he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. A hardworking farmer should be the first to receive his share of the crops."

If a mother's message is "you are loved," a father's message is very simply, "you have great potential." You have an incredible future. You see, Paul gives us three pictures here of different occupations who always keep their eye on the future goal. In verses 3 and 4, he talks about the soldier who is looking ahead for the commendation, the "well done" from the commanding officer. In verse 5, he talks about the athlete who is looking ahead for the victor's crown, the gold medal, the trophy. And in verse 6, he talks about the hard-working father who is looking ahead to a share of the crops.

It is Dad's unique job to constantly be asking the question, "Where are my children headed?" What are they becoming? Where are they aimed? Dad, you are always playing the long game. Not only in meeting present needs, in securing the base, but Dads, your job uniquely is to think about the future and to help your children believe that they have an incredible future. That in walking with Christ, their future will be good and blessed.

And so I would draw out two principles from 2 Timothy for Dads. The first principle is found in verse 1, *"You then my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."* It is a Dad's role to anchor their children in grace and aim your children for the future.

I said before that Timothy did not have a Christian father. And in many ways, Paul served as a surrogate father. He was Timothy's spiritual father, and Timothy was his adopted son. Again, a word of hope for you single moms and women married to non-Christian men. It is possible for God to supply a spiritual Dad to your children if their natural father is not filling that role. It is possible for a Paul to come along and anchor your children in grace.

You know, I believe that Dads can root their children in grace in a way that I am not sure even mothers could do. Let me explain what I mean here. Grace means "unmerited favor". It means "generosity or a gift freely given."

Now, in a very real biological sense, a mother's love is expected. She is, at least until the umbilical cord is cut, she is physically connected to her baby. There is a naturalness to the love between a mother and a child.

But Dad, Dad comes along and in a certain sense is an outsider. And he gives his love, his favor to a child as a gift. You know, Dad can be a pretty scary person. He has a deeper voice, generally, than Mom. Normally, Dad is bigger than mom. Normally, Dad is stronger than Mom. And when someone who is a little scary, a little frightening, who has a deep voice and is strong, communicates to a child that they are forgiven or they are accepted or they are loved, that child

gets anchored in grace in a way, frankly, I don't think anyone else can do. There is something that happens in the soul of a child when their father shows them grace and mercy.

You say, "Well, how do I do that?"

We accept our children unconditionally. Not their behavior, but we accept our children and we communicate, "I accept you daughter or son – your temperament, your intellectual abilities, your athletic abilities, you are loved just the way that God made you. I accept you." Dad, you must continually communicate that our children are acceptable to us with their hair the way God made it, and their face the way God made their face, and their body type the way God made their body type and their athleticism or lack there of, and their intellectual ability or lack there of, and their musical ability or lack there of – I unconditionally accept you. And children, when you have done wrong and have been disciplined, I then forgive you and show you mercy even though you don't deserve it. Acceptance and forgiveness.

Now, of course, just as Moms make mistakes in over-bonding, Dads, I believe, err on the side of gracelessness. And the unstated message between fathers and their daughters and fathers and their sons is "you are unacceptable the way you are and must earn my acceptance and forgiveness." Your teeth, your hair, your eyes, your body, your skills, are unacceptable. You are not fundamentally at bottom okay the way God made you.

Do you wonder why there are so many insecure children? So many driven, performance-oriented adults? So many people looking to some man, some authority, some boyfriend to say, "You are all right. You are all right." Because Daddy, you never communicated it. And you don't say it enough: I love you the way God made you.

With an anchor in grace, a Dad then aims their child for the launch. I said before that Dad is always paying attention to the long game. Their eye is always on the goal. When Dad doesn't do this, you see an aimlessness in children. They have no goals, no clear vision, and no real direction. What is my child becoming? Where are they headed? How will this present decision on the part of my child or our decisions, how will that affect my child's future? And the blessing that I want to be given to my child? In psychoanalytic terms we are told that mothers bond with their children and fathers are there to help their children to separate out. To launch them in life. To pull them away from mom and aim them toward the future.

Okay, well what specifically do I want to put in my children as a father to prepare them for the launch? I think I see three character qualities that Paul is getting at here. For the soldier, he says you need courage. For the athlete, he says you need discipline, self-discipline. For the farmer, he says you need hard work. Dads, we are putting character in our children's lives. In verses 3 and 4 it says endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs. He wants to please his commanding officer. He is talking about allowing your children to be engaged in the battle without getting entangled.

What character quality does a person need to be able to be involved in the culture, involved with people who are not Christian, who don't share our values, want to be involved in this world without taking on all of the qualities and characteristics of this world? Paul is talking about courage, the ability to stand alone, to stand separate from those around us.

One of the things I try to bless in my children over and over again are those moments in time when they stand up for their convictions. I commend them regularly for courage and talk with them about the need to be courageous. I love when Daniel or Sharon will tell me a story of how they stood against the crowd or apart from the crowd. Everyone was being mean to someone at school, but I said that she is my friend, leave her alone. It takes courage to stand up for an unpopular person.

My teacher was saying in school that religious people were like this, but I raised my hand and I said that is not true. Or I raised my hand and said that I think abortion is wrong. I don't want to raise little conformists, people who are just totally dominated by the thought processes of the larger culture. It takes courage to not be entangled and to be a good soldier.

And it takes self-discipline to be an athlete. It says in verse 5, *"Anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules."* In ancient Greek athletic games, the rules did not only involve how the game itself was played, but there were very strict rules regarding the training regimen an athlete was involved in before he was allowed to compete. There was a great amount of self-discipline. It was part of the rules.

How are we going to aim our children for the launch? We encourage self-discipline. It is appropriate for Dads to underline for their children the need for self-mastery, or getting order in our child's life. When your kids are old enough to read, then part of what Dads would encourage is the discipline of reading the Bible for some period of time during the day. Set aside some time to turn the television off, son or daughter, so that you can read God's word and pray.

Don't spend all your money, instead, we are going to learn the discipline of saving some of your money in a bank account. I know you want to eat this or that, but we are going to learn the discipline and self-mastery of controlling our appetite and exercise or practicing the piano, or studying. Your children are not prepared for the launch if they haven't learned self-discipline.

And a father prepares a child for life by preaching to them the gospel of hard work. Not sing for your supper, they are anchored in grace. But like the hard-working farmer who deserves the first share of the crops, your children ought to learn the connection between hard work and rewards. You know, son or daughter, hard work pays off. We really do reap what we sow. You cannot be a success without working hard.

I talk with my kids about that all the time. Most of the jobs I have been on in most settings, tell me that most people don't know how to work hard. If an employee is asked to work a bit of overtime or to do something that is outside their strict job description, they complain. If they have to work more than 40 hours a week, they are complaining. Work hard child, it will pay off.

Friends, vandals have broken into our society and our homes. They've switched the price tags on everything. What I'm challenging you to do today especially Moms and Dads is switch the price tags back where they belong. Mom, Dad, you are valuable! You are necessary. It takes more than a village to raise a child. It takes a mother and a father. Let's pray.

It Takes a Mother and a Father to Raise a Child

Rich Nathan

February 3rd and 4th, 1996

Home Improvement Series

1 Thessalonians 2:7 and 2 Timothy 2:1-7

I. A Message to Mothers and Fathers: “You are necessary!”

A. Mother-bashing in the 60’s and 70’s

B. Father-bashing in the 80’s

II. A Mother’s Message: “You are loved!”

A. Communication of the Faith (2 Tim. 1:4-5)

B. Illustration of Tenderness (1 Thessalonians. 2:6-7)

C. Identification with Child

A Mother’s Mistake: “I don’t want to let go!”

III. A Father’s Message: “You have great potential!”

A. Anchored in Grace

A Father’s Mistake: “You must earn my acceptance.”

B. Aimed for the Launch

1. Courage

2. Self Discipline

3. Hard Work