



## **dAdvice | Wisdom from the Trenches**

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**Speaker: Phil EuBank, Bryant, Ben, Karim & Paul**

**Well, Good Morning, Menlo Church! So glad to be with you today.**

**Thank you for giving us a part of your Father's Day weekend. And if**

**you're like, "What is happening?" I've got four dads from around**

**Menlo, from different campuses, that are going to join us for a**

**conversation today. And I know that Father's Day can be a**

**complicated day, even more so this year, right? For you, maybe that's**

**your role as a father. Maybe that's the father that you had. Maybe**

**that's the idea of God the Father sort of layered into all that and how**

**you process it. And I hope that you will get something today that you**

**can take away and think about and maybe apply into your life,**

**whether you're a dad or not.**

We're also at a time where we are finding ourselves kind of just looking around the landscape of the world, and it's kind of just pick what crisis you're going to pray about right now. There's stuff happening right now in our nation, in our state, around the world, stuff that's been going on for years, some stuff that's been going on for centuries. And so wherever you find yourself today, I'm going to begin by praying. And there are going to be people that I will offend because any one of those crises, you're mad right now, depending on your situation or circumstance, that I didn't just cancel all of this and talk about that specific event and I totally understand that.

However, I think a lot of times what actually is more helpful is for us to continue to be a place where we can aim at faith principles about being ambassadors of hope in the midst of a world of crisis all the time. And so we'll have a chance to talk about some stuff in the coming weeks, but this week, I think you're going to be blessed by this conversation right now. Would you pray with me?

God, thank you so much. Thank you for these men and the stories that they carry in their life. I just think, God, the idea of testimony, that we carry our stories with us. Thank you for getting to hear a little bit of those today. Would you be in this time, God, that it would bless one another? God, to glorify You, and ultimately, just be something that gets implanted into just the right place in our heart and mind, that when it comes up, when it's needed, Your Spirit would have taught us and informed us to apply it. God, thank you for this time. It's in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right. So, I'm going to give everybody a chance to introduce themselves first. Bryant, I'm going to start with you.

I'm Bryant Barr. I've been going to Menlo Park, or my family's been going to Menlo Park, for almost seven years. My wife, Britney, I think there's going to be a picture coming soon. My wife and I are celebrating our 15-year anniversary this summer. We have four kids, three boys: Everett, Avery, and Oliver. And then we finally got a girl on the fourth try with Margot.

Nice. Was that the goal? Is that why you kept trying? No comment.

All right, good. I'm going to ask again in the third service when your wife isn't here. Maybe a different answer then. Yeah, yeah. Perfect.

That's great. Oh, yeah. And what's something that your kids would say about you? Oh, yes. Uh, I asked them all this morning.

My 8-year-old said, uh, he loves when I teach specifically basketball. My six-year-old was, he loves to cook with me. Uh, my four, 5-year-old, he's just turned five, said he likes to fight swords, and he just got a play sword yesterday, so it's the topic of the moment for him.

And my daughter was still sleeping, but typically what she says first in the morning is, "Daddy, I love you so big," which I hope she never stops saying. Yeah, that's really sweet, man. That's good.

Karim, how about you? Yeah, I'm Karim Tadros. I'm, uh, from the Mountain View campus. I've been with Menlo for just over five years.

**I'm going to start telling you about my family, by how I met my wife.**

**My family immigrated from Cairo, Egypt, back in the 70s, a population of about 5 million, moving to a small, small town in the east, east of St. Louis, in southern Illinois, called Mount Vernon - there's a population of less than around 10,000, let's say, and somehow, the smartest girl in the high school decided that I'm the right guy.**

**So a few years later, we graduate from college here in the Bay Area.**

**We get married and got to start our family here in Silicon Valley. So it's 35 years of blessed marriage from the smartest girl in high school.**

**All right. Just want to point that out.**

**Um, no, she's not here, but it's, it is being recorded, right? It is being recorded. Yeah. I'll get you that clip too. You can have that ready. I love you, sweetie.**

I have three beautiful children, as you can see in the photo there. My eldest, 27, is married in that photo. Middle is 24, the youngest is 21, a rising senior at, in Santa Barbara.

We added one to the family in this wedding - he's a wonderful young Christian gentleman, and then the one more person on the left is part of our family. On the far left, it's my 90-year-old mother-in-law, who happens to live with us. And of all the blessings in this life, I would never have imagined, my mother-in-law living with us being a blessing. And she is. She's one of the best. And I'd wish that upon any family to have a mother like.

He just said, "It would be a blessing for your mother-in-law to live with you." Non-sarcastically. That's amazing.

Paul, how about you? I'm Paul Sakamoto, and I'm from the Saratoga campus. My wife, Monica, and I have been married about 39 years this year, and we are both in middle school ministry at the Saratoga

campus, which surprises me a little bit, because, of course, our kids are a little older than that. Our son is 32 years old, lives in New Jersey. Our daughter's 29 years old and lives in the area here. They're both married. You can see the picture of us all up on the screen. One, two, right there. Okay.

So, from the left, you see myself, Monica, Tyler, son Rex, Chip, and daughter Julia. Here's a handy hint: if you ever want to get your adult family together, make sure that you have a time-share on Konopali.

Okay. Uh, works really well and, and even aside from that, we get together all the time. I'm super happy that our kids will actually talk with us, every week. You know, it's not like it's a thing where you have to go pry. Uh, and I think, the last thing was, what would they say when I asked them? My daughter said, "Dad, please try to not fall asleep like you did when you were helping me with my homework when I was a kid."

And our son said, "Go get them, and remember, you're still the guy that I would call when I was trying to decide between Makita and DeWalt tools." Okay.

So there, that's good. Which, which one? DeWalt or Makita? It depends.

Okay. All right. It depends. I have both myself. That's a good Father's Day. If anyone wants to talk about that, there's a lot of coffee out there. We can get through it. That's good.

Ben, how about you? Hey, I'm, everyone. I'm Ben, and I'm from San Jose. Yes. And, yeah, those are, those are my three girls in the third row over there. Amazing. Thank you. That's awesome. Thank you. Incredible. So I married Elaine, and she's actually across the ocean right now on a business trip, but my three daughters are here. So they are 16, 14, and 14. So I'm very much in the middle of the teen years.



They're named Alexa, Bethany, and Caitlyn. So if you caught that, that is A, B, C. That is an alphabetical order. That is by birth order. That was something I asked my wife to do when she said yes. And yes, I'm an engineer.

So are they sitting in that order right now too? No. Okay. No. Almost. Almost not. Rebellion. Rebellion.

When they were younger, I had a six-sided die that I turned. I wrote A, B, C on, and whenever they kind of fought over what to eat, who had to eat it first, I would roll the dice, and whichever one came up first, that would be it. So it's like a fair thing. So I guess I kind of set up systems like this. Yeah.

Um, my daughters would say, I think that I ask a lot of questions, uh, because I like to figure out how the world works. But there's this look they have in their eyes when they were like, "Oh, no, please no. We need to leave right now. Like, don't start this conversation." Yeah,

that's. I'll look for it during this panel discussion. That's perfect.

Thanks for sharing that.

Well, we're going to ask a few questions of different guys. So we'll start over here. Bryant, tell us maybe a moment that for you felt kind of sacred or a holy moment where God uniquely showed up for you as a dad.

Yeah. When our first son, Everett, was born, when he was delivered, his heart rate was about 300 beats per minute, sky-high, and he was swept off to the NICU. And we were there for a little bit longer than we had planned. And as a first-time father, you have no idea what you're doing anyways.

But when they sent us home, they sent us home with a stethoscope and said, "Just check his heart rate at home, and if it gets high again, come to the ER." And so went home anxious, nervous, feeling all the feelings. And sure enough, a week later, heart rate elevated, wouldn't

come down. Go to Stanford ER, and checked into the NICU, eventually moved into the cardiovascular ICU. But there was a moment in time when we were in the NICU, my wife and I, and they couldn't figure out how to get his heart rate down.

Nothing seemed to be working, and they couldn't get an IV in his arm to administer medication. And ended up having to shave the side, the hair off the side of his head, because that's the only vein they could get a needle into. And I remember a doctor very vividly putting his hand on my shoulder and saying, like, "Don't worry, we've got this." And, there was something about that moment that just brought immense peace, as if it was God saying that to my wife and I. And that was something that I have held on to for many, many years, because it took a year and a half for them to figure out the right dosing and medications that would get his condition under control.

There was a moment when we were visiting my family in Maine that we had to call an ambulance and 911 and get him rushed to the hospital. There was a 9-hour ablation when he was six years old. And,

for whatever reason, that one doctor in that one moment just put me at peace. And you learn in these moments that there's some things that you just have zero control over, and the only thing that you can do is lift it up to God and, and trust that He is in control, and you know what the outcome is His will, and what His will will be done.

So he's doing good today? Yeah. He's in the kids' ministry right now, probably causing a ruckus with tearing up. Yeah, praise God. That's good. Thanks for sharing that.

Karim, how about you? Yeah, so a moment where God showed up. So I have three children that are in their early to mid-20s, and somehow I've survived this long without having any, except one serious life conversation, which is pretty amazing considering how children go through all kinds of life challenges. Um, but this particular conversation, for those of you who've had these, I won't give you any of the details, other than to say that it was extremely emotional. I had a lot of anxiety, fearful that anything I would say that would just amplify those anxieties, create further anger and hatred or worse.

**What I did, I found myself praying, and not just praying, but asking others to pray for me and, and just leaning into the fact that I don't have control. And so I surrendered it to God.**

**Fast forward to the conversation, and it was heavy. It was, it was tangled. There was a lot of pause and empathy and self-control. But somehow, in the midst of that, I felt this overwhelming peace, something I couldn't explain, something that at the end of the conversation, I just did not know how it ended as well as it did, other than to say that I knew that God was present. There's no doubt at this time.**

**But that moment convicted me more than any other, that whether it be fatherhood or marriage, putting God in the center of the conversation makes life easier. That's a good word.**

**That probably informs your answers to the next question I'm going to ask you, Karim, which is, for you, like, if you think about fatherhood over the decades, how has it refined you as a person?**

You know for those of us who are fathers, it's kind of interesting.

There's no, there's no formal training required. We can just literally just start a family. Yeah. With the help of, you know, my wife. But, but the point is,

I wonder how she would feel about that framing. I'm sure I will hear about on the rerun on this. It's going to go on.

No, but, but the point is, there's a lot of things in life that you have to get formally trained for. And here we are as parents, as fathers, learning how to, uh, to do it. And because there's no formal training, there's not even an apprenticeship program, unless you consider growing up in a home with parents as an apprenticeship - which I was fortunate to do. Unfortunately though, both my parents died before I started the family, but I did see my father's earmarks in my fathering style.

And what I found is that at the end of the day, the realization that everything I do is being watched, whether it's something good or bad, it's with my work, with, with my relationships, when I'm in sickness or in health, children are watching. And that role modeling goes all the way, and why I'm here today is when I lean into my faith, and when I don't. And it's the realization that if I want them to follow the Lord and understand what pieces that they can find that they, I need to role model it first.

It reminds me of a recent message that you gave of how in the midst of all the noise, we can't turn down the noise, but we can turn up the peace. And that's my hope for them, is that they know how to do that.

That's good. He remembered a point that I preached several weeks ago. That's incredible. Wow. Way to go.

How about, how about, yeah, I'll shake your hand for that. Absolutely.

**Brant, how about you, man? How, how would you say your, like, who you are as a person has been refined as by being a dad?**

**Yeah, it's piggybacking off of what Karim said. It's being a dad that has kept me accountable in my faith. I was fortunate to grow up in a faith-based home where my dad, you know, still to this day, every night before bed, is in the word reading his Bible. And I saw that over and over and over again. And there's no better job than being a dad. And for my wife and I, our number one goal or hope for our kids is that we show them Jesus. We don't tell them about Jesus, we do that, but you show them Jesus, and that they are in a position when they get older to be in their own personal relationship with Jesus.**

**And, and so as I go throughout my day, it's everything that I do has an opportunity to show my kids Jesus. And so when I'm doing my own Bible study, it's in the morning and lasts just long enough so that they can see it when they come downstairs for breakfast, or when we get**



our small group together at our house and I'm putting the kids to bed and we're rushing them into bed because it takes a while with four kids - that they know that we, we're doing this because we have friends coming over to talk about the Bible and the word.

And when we put them to bed at night and we say our prayers, in my head, I kind of run through the day, and I'm thinking, were my actions today actions that will lead them a step closer to knowing Jesus, or were my actions something that maybe took a step back? And it's a constant scoreboard. It's no winning and losing in that, but, you know, can I move directionally forward so that one day, they come to know Jesus in the way that my wife and I have through our lives?

Yeah. Thanks for sharing that. Obviously, anybody in life carries lots of different weights and challenges and obstacles, but as a dad, you know, there's plenty of things pulling on you a thousand different places. So, Paul, maybe give us your thoughts on like, what's helped you stay anchored as a dad?

I think the biggest thing for me is that I know that I don't have control over the kids. I know that I don't manage them. Even my wife, Monica, who's a good manager, doesn't really manage them. So, in fact, what we do is we have a lot of influence, and the fact is that influence usually comes out in ways that you're not thinking about consciously. So if you're not trying to walk the line in front of your kids, or everywhere, you know, it's 360, 24 hours a day, 365, 24 hours a day, it's probably not going to happen for you because they see everything and they are influenced by everything.

They're influenced in ways that they may not even understand. And so as a result, that's made me just really work on it harder. You know, do they see that I go off to Bible study fellowship, every week? Yes. You know, don't, am I actually reading through the entire book? Yes. You know, would they appreciate that faith very much if they didn't see any visible signs? Probably less so, right? So that's kept me going even when I, you know, frankly, there are moments when you don't feel like it, right?

And, and the other thing, I think, is, you know, I grew up in a kind of a command and control family, which is my, I'm a little older than these guys. My father's a World War II veteran, as I was saying to some folks earlier, he was in the U.S. Army in World War II, in case anyone's wondering. And it's a longer story, but the fact is, you know, command and control seemed to win that one. Why won't it win the family battle too? Okay, well, you know, not so much today. Okay, not so much today. And so that's one of the things I have realized, and you have to kind of lean on God and lean on that faith.

That's great. Karim, how about? Same question for you. What are, what have been some things that have kept you anchored as you've been raising kids?

Yeah, I grew up in a Christian home. Um, went to church regularly. Over the years, I did my time, talent, and treasure. Thought I was doing God's work. But what was in my heart, I couldn't articulate in

words. And that came to fruition in a very challenging conversation with someone at work who was, basically, I wasn't able to verbalize my faith convictions. That motivated me to be more proactive in my faith is when I started attending Bible study fellowship, which, for those of you who don't know, it's one of the best international Bible studies available. And my wife's been attending for years, and finally, after enough nudges I was at that moment where I needed it.

I also joined, my wife and I joined a life group in Menlo Church, which is something new to us, but for those of you who think that you're living some things alone, no, there are others around you that are sharing life. We had a life group with the similar-aged children, recent empty nesting, that we just, it's just a joy to be able to share life together and understand those, family-oriented, um, life skill scenarios.

And then lastly, the Menlo Church also has something called Man Cave, which is a group of men getting together Friday mornings. These are, these are dads, these are husbands, these are just men ranging from 20s to their 80s. And we talk about things that men,

you'd think, would just not talk about, it, our spirituality, of course, but life. It's amazing how these things have helped me anchor in my faith. But the biggest anchor by far is my wife. Did that come out right?

Yeah. Yeah. You said she's not in this service, right?

Let me, let me put it this way: Uh, my wife is the one person in my life who shows me how God shows up in our family when I don't see it or I feel it.

That's good. Yeah. I mean, I think that one thing you're going to hear from these guys a lot is that breakthroughs for them as men and breakthroughs for them as dads has been going beyond just spectating as a part of their faith. They do more than just attend services, which is a really fun thing to see and hear them talk about how that has stretched their life along the way.

So, Ben, here's my question for you. I don't know if your peanut gallery is going to chime in or not. It's up to them, I guess. Uh, but if

you could go back in time, give yourself some advice or give advice to somebody earlier in the parenting journey, what would you share with them?

Yeah, I mean, I think one of the things that I was a big part of our family was, we were a softball family. So all of our girls played. We enjoyed it. We had a lot of good moments on the fields. One of our daughters became a very skilled pitcher as she grew, and she got recognition for it. So, in our county, in our age group, she was one of those kids that was known by her first name, right? And so that was extremely affirming for us. I think she enjoyed it as well. And it sort of made it very easy for us to decide that we should play at whatever that next level is and to go chase after it.

And so there are two things that I wish someone had told me before I began that journey. Um, and one is that the fear of missing out, FOMO, is a dangerous thing. When my wife and I started breaking up duties because we were traveling further and further away to play sports, you know, we'd sit around and text each other. And I looked

back on some of these text messages, and the vast majority of these messages were about one thing. It's like, how many playing minutes did she get, right?

And we would, at the end of every weekend, we would kind of evaluate where we were. The grade we would give ourselves was like, how many minutes did she play? And if it was a good number, we'd feel good. It was very validating. If it was a bad number, well, you know, we would get concerned, and maybe we would pull our daughter in to talk about this, which was, you know, not recommended, not, not a good idea. But we did it.

And more and more, my self-worth was being hung on that number. And I think there's nothing wrong with that metric. But for me, that was starting to go into this area where it was, it was my idol. And to, you know, and it was, where can I find ways to fix this if it's not working? Can I change teams? Can I go change a coach? Can I buy something? Can I do something in the backyard?

And it was this idea, the sense of urgency that was around me that allowed us to start, you know, really reprioritizing our life. And once something becomes number one in your life, it's actually really easy to make decisions. Like, I would complain about, oh, you know, we're going to miss Camp45 this year, we're going to miss this Menlo thing, we're kids. But it was okay, because even though I didn't, I would complain about it, I already made up my mind. I knew where my number one was.

And that was extremely dangerous. We were making a statement to our daughter on what was the most important by our values, and we were demonstrating to her, like, how we should respond when one of our idols tells us, "Hey, we're not, we're not doing so hot." And so I regret some of those choices.

The second piece of advice I would give myself would be, if you're choosing a village to opt into, to invest your family in, check out the



adults who are part of that, decide that's where you want to be. We have a village that raises our kids. When my kids were pre-teens, especially, I think their ability to distinguish messages from one person or another were kind of muted, right? So it's actually important who's there. And when you look at something like going to church and having your kids spend time with football like, you should get to know him, right?

And in competitive sports, you're playing, you know, 15 hours a week, probably on this team, multiple seasons a year, because we're in California. You're investing in this community. You're opting into it. And there was, was a choice that we made as a family to join this one community where in hindsight, the signs were all there, but I kind of, I was chasing minutes, and it all made sense, and I thought we could handle it. But it ultimately led to a situation where, and I've gotten permission to share the story, we had a coach through just their words alone so injured one of my daughters that we had to seek professional help about it. And I really wish someone had said, you know, make sure you understand the whole package of what you're

signing up for and make sure your advisor knows what's really going to last through this whole process.

Yeah, it's a good word. Thanks for, thanks for being willing to share some of that. Thanks for giving your dad permission to share that. I think that, you know, we have this false notion that idols, false gods in our life, are only bad things. Uh, but I've heard it put this way: that the most insidious idols in our life are just good things that have no limits, that any good thing in our life that has no boundary actually is an idol. And we live in a culture that says, take the good and just keep adding that more is always better. And unfortunately, I think we have to learn the hard way sometimes that that's not true.

How about for you, Paul? If you could go back and give somebody some advice or give yourself some advice, what might you share?

Well, uh, similarly, I had a big idol, which was work, and I just actually retired late, you know, at 68, a couple years ago. The thing I didn't

understand was, there is no catch-up. You know, you have a finite amount of time, and although intellectually you know that, I think when it comes here, because you can't put it off, well, we're going to skip this this year, we're going to come back later, we'll get more time later. There is no later. There's only now. And, and the fact is that I didn't know what I was doing at the time, as Bryant was saying, but, you know what, you did, and I have a lot of "dids." And so the, uh, the thing I, I found is really kind of having dinner with your kids via Skype.

Skype is, for those of you who don't know, it's what we used to news before there was other stuff. Okay. Uh, you know, from across the country, is, you know, not really the same as actually being there, being there to able, actually present in their face, to be able to help them with their homework.

My daughter wasn't joking when she talked about narcolepsy. I'd sit there struggling, trying to help her with her math and, and would wake up later, right, you know, on the floor. So that's one thing.

And the other thing, I think, is, uh, I mean this in a light sense, hopefully it doesn't strike a weird chord with someone someplace, but this is a piece of advice that someone actually did give me. They told me, he said, you know, if your kids are completely healthy and everything goes well, and nothing ever really bad happens, and you seemingly have that sort of average normal life with your children, you have no understanding of how many times you're going to go to the emergency room at the hospital.

And I said, oh, come on, Alex, you're, you're, you're kidding. And actually, um, Alex was right. We do know how to get to the emergency room. Everyone turned out okay, but it's just one of those things, you know, there's all of this stuff that happens that you just, you have to get through it. You have an idea, but you don't have a plan necessarily.

Yeah. I heard between services, somebody was sharing with me, and they said, "Every parent is a rookie forever. Like, you've never experienced that child at that season before." And I was like, "If your goal was to make me feel better, that was unsuccessful." So, uh, yeah.

So I, I wonder for you, Ben, tell us maybe ways that you feel like you've gotten to kind of grow up alongside your kids a little bit?

Yeah. So, um, one of the coolest parts of being a dad is feeling that you are growing up with your kids. And when my kids were younger, that was actually pretty straightforward. Um, I think that I felt at least that I was the center of their life. I thought that if they had a problem, they would know to come to me. But as they started becoming teens that changed. It was more important what their friends thought than maybe what I thought and I felt trouble connecting. And so I was trying to figure out what to do about this. And I found out that there were some positions open for volunteering at the high school ministry here.

And one of the things that's been a big influence on my kids' lives is the students' program here at Menlo. And I saw how it had changed them, and I was excited to maybe be a part of this. And so I asked one of my daughters if it would be okay if I volunteered. And so we had this conversation where she said, "Dad, well, like, you can do this, but can you make sure that you're on the other side of the room, like, from where I am?" Yeah, I think I can do that. Like, well, and also, if there's like a trip, can you make sure that we're not in the same van, because I don't think. And I'm like, "Yeah, okay, I can, I can do that."

So, um, and so with her permission, I started going, and, um, for me, it was this really big change because I showed up for two hours leading. And I'll put that in quotes, because what leading really means here is just listening and being present in the lives of the students who are there.

And where I come from professionally, leading means like having an agenda, telling people what to do, having people listen to you. And like, that's not at all what it's about. And so for me, it was really important to be able to witness that.

There was this cool little cheat code for being a parent too, which is, uh, if you're leading kids who are a year or two older than yours, you get to understand the context, some of the problems, some of the challenges of what that next stage of life is going to be. And so if you're a parent and you feel called in any way to work with youth, like, consider leading kids who are a little bit older than yours. It's like a, it's a great cheat code, actually.

And the second thing was, what it meant to actually teach in the setting. Like, you can't tell someone what to do unless you've actually lived it. And so last fall, we were talking about various spiritual disciplines. And one of the homework assignments we gave our kids was, you're going to go and let's all learn what the Sabbath is about and why we do this. Let's try it for one week. You know, pick a time

and do it for a couple hours, and we're going to come back and talk about it as a group.

And so I talked about this and went, "Oh, shoot, now I got to do it." Because for the whole, my whole life, I'd like found some excuse about why I didn't have to do this. Um, and to make a long story short, I learned a lot about myself in that process that began this journey for me that helped me understand that I have sort of another idol in my life, which is being productive. And that for me, this discipline of doing the Sabbath, which I was teaching my kids, forced me to recognize that I was supposed to sit under God and recognize that for the time I was resting.

And so the cool part was, I was able to share this while I was kind of being formed. And I was able to do this with not just like my immediate family, but also like my general community family.



**That's great. I would love to see what would happen if you showed up to student ministry with a printed agenda. Like, hey, everybody. Oh, I, I tried that, and it doesn't work. Doesn't work.**

**Well, this is obviously a really, uh, fun conversation, one that we could have all day together. And I hope for you something's resonated that you've heard, and you're going, I'm going to take this away into my parenting, into my marriage, into my key relationships. I would say, even if you're not a parent, just know, like, you get to be a part of being a safe place for kids. Uh, I grew up in a dangerous home, and, uh, the safe people, uh, in the church that I grew up in were the people that God used primarily, uh, to help shape me and really help me navigate through some really tumultuous times. So, thank you so much for being a part of a community like that.**

**I do want to give the fellas just one more chance to give you something that maybe you can pray for specifically for them, but I'm guessing maybe you're going to go, "Maybe I need to be praying that for me," or, "I need to be praying that for the dads in my life." Bryant,**

**I'm going to start with you. How can people be praying for you in this season?**

**Prayer for empathy, I think. As you raise kids, you learn that not every one of your children are the same. They don't react the same. They don't feel the same. My 8-year-old, very logical, if this, then that. My six-year-old wears his heart on his sleeve. And, you know, you come home from work, it's a stressful, tough day, whatever the situation may be, and your kids just want Dad. They just, they just want to be with you. They want to experience things with you. And, how I have learned to parent and teach and discipline my 8-year-old is very different than my six-year-old, and than my 5-year-old.**

**And, and so it's just empathy in those moments that you can set kind of what you're carrying aside and be who they need you to be, because that's more important than whatever you're carrying into the situation. That's good.**

I noticed you didn't mention how you parent your 2-year-old, because you don't parent 2-year-olds. She parents me. You just survive. How about for you, Karim? How can folks be praying for you?

Yeah, for me, the children are rarely around anymore, empty nest scenario, uh, the fleeting moments that we do have, I just request prayers for wisdom of how to be present, what to say, what not to say - just to enjoy the moments and at the end, hopefully, reflect God's love such that they will draw closer to God themselves.

It's good work. How about for you, Paul?

Well, you know, my kids are the oldest ones that any of us have around here, and that makes sense, since I'm the oldest person by some margin. But in any case, being 29 and 32 and being married and on their own and being successful professionals and having their own health care plans and, and paying taxes and everything, yay. Uh, you know, it's a, it's a different relationship.

They're my kids, you know, I want to tell them, uh, you should be doing this, think about this, think about the other thing. But at the end of the day, you sort of have to remember, most of the time, they're getting along fine without that extra advice. If they need help, they'll come and ask you, and my kids do. And if I want to keep that happening, the thing I need to remember is, answer the question that was asked, offer the help that was requested, and, uh, and that's actually a difficult thing to do when you spent four or more decades actually being paid to go off and preemptively going in and offering advice and doing things. So, that's kind of a big change, and I think just in general, just for continued health for everybody, and just continue to have the great and loving family that we do. Uh, especially with my wife. Saint Monica, if you're watching, that's great.

And then, how about for you, Ben?

I feel like my family is at this really interesting, like, inflection point. Um, like my kids are old enough where we're an active part of our community, and we're still trying to figure out how to, you know, be

present as a family for our community. And I want to figure this out before, like, they all leave. Yeah. Yeah. Um, how can we love families around us? What can we do? And so, um, if you're, "Hi, San Mateto," if you see us, like, say hi. That's good.

That's very good. Well, I'm going to pray in just a second, but would you join me in saying thank you to these guys for giving up their Father's Day morning to be with you? Would you pray with me?

God, thank you so much. Thanks for the gift that You've given us of being able to be here with one another, and to be able to, hopefully, God, by the power of Your Spirit, hear directly from You today for some things that we didn't know we needed, but You knew we needed. And so, would You take those things and help them to linger in our heart and soul this week? Help us to show up as better parents, as better spouses, as better friends, as better roommates, as better work colleagues, uh, because we spent time together and with You. God, be with us now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

