

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

Are You Searching for Wisdom? - It's Just a Phase

May 31, 2021

Findlay Campus Pastor Chris Baney helped wrap up our current series, *It's Just a Phase*, by introducing an important part of the conversation—wisdom. At this weekend's service, a panel of parents discussed a variety of parenting topics and offered us wisdom on navigating them in our own families. The panel included a variety of insightful voices, representing different stages of life and different family dynamics.

Although I am single, I'm figuring out what I want my family dynamic to look like in the future. No matter the phase we are in, we can all gain wisdom from those who have already experienced what we have yet to go through. The bottom line is: "Wisdom applied today produces God's greater story for your family in the phases of tomorrow."

The Book of Proverbs in the Old Testament of the Bible is an excellent source of wisdom. In it, King Solomon writes letters to his son about searching for wisdom. This guidance is so precious because it challenges us to think about our relationship with wisdom.

Proverbs 2:2-4

² Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. ³ Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. ⁴ Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures.

These verses challenge us to search for wisdom. We should all seek it as if it is a hidden treasure. When I was a little girl, I once found an oyster shell on the beach that I hoped might contain a pearl. But instead of opening it, I kept it in my room and never even attempted to break it open to see what was inside. When I was older, I threw it away, and consequently, I'll never know what treasure it might have had.

Wisdom is a lot like that seashell. When you find something of potential worth, you are not meant to store it away. Instead, you should seek it out, pray for God's guidance, and then take a step of trust and follow through. Apply the wisdom

you are pursuing today to produce God's greater story for you and your family in this phase and the next .

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Questions:

What would you do if you knew gold was buried somewhere in your backyard?
Do you search for wisdom with the same energy?

How do you pursue wisdom in your life?

Next Steps:

Join a group and listen for wise voices to speak into your life. Challenge yourself to pursue wisdom.

Check out more family hacks from the weekend panel.

[How to Parent Through Conflict and Lead Your Family Spiritually](#)

[How to Parent Through Teen Years and Prepare for an Empty Nest](#)

[How to Parent in a Blended Family](#)

[How to Navigate Cultural Questions You Are Not Prepared For](#)

Prayer:

God, I pray for wisdom. I am dealing with tension in my family, but I don't have all the answers on how to navigate it. I trust you. I want to search for wisdom like hidden treasure. When I find it, I pray I won't hide it but embrace and utilize its worth. Show me what path to take. I pray for your will, even though I don't have all the answers. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Becca Roberts, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Who is Ahead of You?- It's Just a Phase

June 1, 2021

At 27 years old, I was a bachelor who said, "Oh, I'm never getting married and having kids." Now, as I inch closer to my 42nd chapter in life, I couldn't imagine not being married for almost 14-years and having four uniquely different kids.

During my first year of marriage, I became a father to my 7-year-old son and my firstborn daughter. Doubling the challenges of parenthood brought a lot of questions. Add to that, as a military family, we moved a lot! Our oldest child started elementary school in Germany and later journeyed to D.C., San Diego, and suburban Virginia, where he graduated high school.

I had no doubts about whom I wanted to be to my children, but navigating toward the answers wasn't easy. A pastor in Washington, D.C., told me, "You don't have room to grow if you're always the smartest person in your core group of friends." There's value to gain from those who are one or more steps ahead.

Unfortunately, my father wasn't an option as a source of wisdom, my mother's time in this world had long ended, and too many of my friends with kids weren't ready to grow up. My grandparents raised my siblings and me to the best of their abilities, but they relied on the knowledge of their adult children to help them parent us in the 1990s. My wife's (Erica) parents did a splendid job raising her and her brothers. However, they didn't have experience parenting in so many different environments or raising a family in the digital age. Fortunately, Erica did have experience as a single mother. Still, parenting as a team was uncharted territory for her as well.

Proverbs 13:20

Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

Proverbs 27:17

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.

Luckily, we leaned on other military families over the years who had similar experiences and challenges with their children. It has been a blessing to be able to rely on the knowledge and experience of our friends and family who had traveled the road before.

When it came time to equip two of our children with cell phones, we asked other parents how they handled things. Their advice on safety and mentorship of our kids was invaluable. Some parents recommended great apps they had safely and successfully used for their kids.

As Proverbs 13:20 says and we chose to abide by, “Walk with the wise and become wise ...” It’s essential to have quality mentorship. If you only surround yourself with others at the same level of experience as yourself, you will learn how to fail more than how to succeed.

Questions:

Do you see yourself more as a frustrated parent than a successful parent? Do you seek advice from experienced parents?

Next Steps:

Look for adults who have more parenting experience than you and ask them for mentorship. Go to cedarcreek.tv/groups and find a parenting group to join.

Our series, *It's Just a Phase*, is ending, but the Family Faith Plan remains available. If you haven't checked it out yet, [check it out today](#).

Prayer:

God, thank you for charging me with the responsibility of parenthood. Let me remember that my kids are a gift from you to raise and equip to go out into the world. Forgive me when I fall short of expectations. Humble me to ask my children for forgiveness as you have forgiven me. Let me discern between the parenting advice I receive to help make the best decisions for raising my family. Amen.

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Did I Blow It? - It's Just a Phase

June 2, 2021

I was not a Christian for the first 23 years of my daughter's life. Despite being brought up in an intact home and attending church several times a week, I left that faith to pursue my own definition of happiness. That decision, while an unconscious one, took me places I never imagined in my worst nightmares. It also meant I did not create the loving, safe, and secure environment my kids deserved.

Thankfully, God waited patiently for me to come to the end of myself, but much damage had been done in the process. My daughter had fled to Florida to pursue her idea of happiness, far from her now (overly) enthusiastic, Jesus-loving mother. Just because God had forgiven my sins didn't mean she would. I had been attending a 12-step program for a couple of years when I decided to apply those same steps to my relationship with her.

For those who have previously listened to me talk about my story, you may recall how passionate I am about it. It's my belief that many could take advantage of the perspective working through the 12 Steps can bring. For those unfamiliar with the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, you can easily Google them. Steps 1-3 are about acknowledging our need for God to help us change our behavior. Step 4 requires that we take a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. I needed to take a look at my past and write down the ways I had participated in hurting and alienating my daughter. Step 5 instructs us to share that list with God and someone else—how humiliating but necessary!

James 5:16

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Step 6 says we are entirely ready to ask God to remove these defects of character, while in Step 7, we humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings. Now to the nitty gritty! Step 8 required me to make a list of all the persons I had harmed and be willing to make amends. In Step 9, we make those amends, unless doing so could injure someone.

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then offer your gift.

Over a period of years, my daughter and I began to establish trust again. We talked about the harm and injury that were done. I took responsibility for my neglect and my selfishness. I apologized for the hurt I caused her. I communicated my love for her and my desire to restore our relationship—with Jesus at the center.

After 14 years of praying, talking, not talking, and the misunderstandings and clarifications that go with restoring a relationship, my daughter came to know the Lord. She experienced the forgiveness and love Jesus offers us all. Through that mutual love and focus on Jesus—and his forgiveness of us—we restored our relationship. The sweetest words she has said to me are, “Mom, I love you. You did the best you could at the time.”

Ephesians 4:32

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Steps 10-12 are maintenance and opportunities for on-going repentance, restoration, and telling others about God’s goodness! My daughter and I are committed to working these steps and proclaiming God’s goodness in our lives!

This weekend, Dr. Jason Brouwer shared a few key steps to repairing broken relationships. He encouraged us to put things in perspective, acknowledge the fault, and apologize. By using the 12 Steps, I was able to put things in perspective and not only acknowledge my responsibility but also what hadn’t been my responsibility. I apologized for my part in our dysfunctional relationship and received the forgiveness my daughter offered! I didn’t blow it after all—all thanks be to God!

Questions:

Have you ever thought about making a list of people you have harmed through your words or actions? Who in your life needs to hear you say, “I’m sorry”? Can

you say it without a “but” where you try to justify your actions based on something they did?

Next Steps:

Look up the 12 Steps of AA or the steps of Celebrate Recovery. Take a personal and searching moral inventory of yourself. Share your inventory with a trusted friend, and prayerfully consider what God might want you to do with it.

For more information on Celebrate Recovery click [here](#).

Prayer:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with you forever in the next. Amen (Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr).

The Wisdom of Listening - It's Just a Phase

June 3, 2021

Last weekend, Findlay Campus Pastor Chris Baney led a discussion with a panel of parents who offered their wisdom specific to various family phases. What a wealth of information! The discussion about the art of listening hit me hard. As often happens, my thoughts turned to my unfulfilled wish that I had known, better understood, and practiced the art of listening. Undoubtedly, it would have served me in meaningful ways in multiple relationships over the years. Possibly you can relate to this same harsh reality.

If a redo in life was possible, I would have made a point of becoming a better listener. As I reflect, decades ago, when one Christian friend reached deep into my heart and soul by engaging in the simple (but challenging) act of listening to comments I shared in an adult Sunday school class, I sincerely regret not intentionally developing that skill.

To this day, it moves me when I recall that encounter. The genuine care and concern exhibited by his words were undeniable. He listened to my words with his heart. Consequently, he took what I shared and made them a matter of weekly prayer alongside his wife! Now, *there* is a gift you cannot buy at the store or purchase online! To receive such a gift is beyond description. In retrospect, it is now clear that offering such a gift is similarly beyond description!

How different would our immediate families be if we decided to give the gift of listening to one another—even to the ones with the innate ability to push our buttons? Engaging in healthy dialog truly takes effort, but it is so worth it! In an emotionally healthy family, kids (young and old alike) know it is safe to come to us about anything—no matter the topic! Requesting feedback is never without merit, nor is asking: “What do you think?” “Where are you at with it?” “What is your goal?”

Be encouraged—having difficulty listening is not a new problem! And having listening difficulties is not going away anytime soon. But the good news remains: *“If God is for us, who can ever be against us?”* ([Romans 8:31b](#)). As we lean into him, he welcomes us and offers his strength to us. So, give the gift quickly, as James suggests: *“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry”* ([James 1:19](#)).

Questions:

Do you consider yourself a good listener? Would your closest associates consider you a good listener? Do you step into intentionally listening when others speak? Do you find yourself frustrated by not being heard when you speak? Have you experienced *really* being heard?

Next Steps:

Reflect on recent verbal interactions. Identify both strengths and weaknesses exhibited by others when conversing with you. Identify both strengths and weaknesses exhibited by you when conversing with others. Identify steps you can take to become a better listener. Ask God to reveal areas of brokenness that may possibly be making it difficult for you to *really* listen to others.

Check out more family hacks from the weekend panel.

[How to Parent Through Conflict and Lead Your Family Spiritually?](#)

[How to Parent Through Teen Years and Prepare For An Empty Nest?](#)

[How to Parent In A Blended Family?](#)

[How to Navigate Cultural Questions You Are Not Prepared For?](#)

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for your great patience with me as I uncover yet another area of weakness in my character. Thank you for not condemning me in these areas. Thank you for the opportunity to improve my interactions with others—particularly becoming a better listener. Please empower me with your strength in applying the powerful healing salve of your word to the broken areas buried in my soul. May your power in me push aside my own thoughts and my own agendas when others communicate. Help me to always communicate to others that they matter to you and that they matter to me. In Jesus' name, amen.

This post was written by Karen Peck, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Model It - It's Just a Phase

June 4, 2021

"Do as I say; not as I do."

Most of us have heard this admonitory phrase at some point in our lives, but how many of us know its origin? In doing some research, I found that variations of this phrase have been penned for generations.

- June 24, 1911 the Spectator published this advice: *"It has always been considered allowable to say to children, 'Do as I say rather than as I do.'"*
- The book *Table Talk*, written by John Selden in 1654 and posthumously published in 1689 says, "Preachers say, 'Do as I say, not as I do.'"
- In 1546, John Heywood was quoted as saying, "It is as folk do, and not as folk say."
- In the 12th century, the Anglo-Saxons were known to say, "Although I do worse than I teach you, do not do as I do, but do as I teach you if I teach you well."
- And I saved the best for last—between 80 and 90 AD, Jesus said, "So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don't follow their example. For they don't practice what they teach" ([Matthew 23:3](#)).

Last weekend, we had the privilege of listening to a panel of parents who are in different phases and stages of parenting bestow pearls of wisdom they have amassed over the years. Ben and Lauren Snyder gave us three clear, repeatable values with which to equip our kids to be capable in life and to win outside of the home environment. These three values are:

1. To be respectful—treat others as they would like to be treated.
2. To be responsible—take care of others' things as they would like their things to be taken care of.
3. To be safe—make wise choices given the circumstances around them.

Ben and Lauren model these values, keeping in mind the family goal of "relationship." A foundation on a relationship with Jesus is primary, and they are always striving to maintain relationships with their children. They also navigate

the challenges among their kids so they will maintain relationships with each other. Their hope is to build a foundation, so 50 years from now, their families will be drawn to each other and want to spend time together.

Remember that our kids are watching and listening to how we respond to life's challenges. We need to equip them with positive techniques so they will be prepared for the future when they too face difficulties.

1 Corinthians 11:1

And you should imitate me, just as I imitate Christ.

The Apostle Paul wrote this to the Christians in Corinth because he knew they needed an example to follow, and he was willing to be that example. It was not "Paul" whom the Corinthians should follow, but rather, "**Paul the Christ follower.**"

As Christ followers, we need to model Jesus' teachings to show others what life is really all about. We should forgive everyone and get our satisfaction from helping and serving others, just as Jesus did. He washed the disciples' feet so they would understand why he was here and what they needed to do. Being a role model was an important part of his ministry; similarly, role modeling should be an important part of our lives.

Questions:

Have you ever told your kids to *do as you say and not as you do*? If so, how could you have handled this in a way that reflects Jesus?

Are you modeling a life worth imitating, a life as a Christ follower? If not, what could you do to rectify this?

Can you see any benefits of modeling Jesus to others? If so, what are they?

Next Steps:

Make a list of characteristics that Jesus exhibited while he was on earth. Now decide how to incorporate these characteristics into your life. Make a plan of how to overcome the challenges of truly modeling these characteristics.

Our series, *It's Just a Phase*, is ending, but the Family Faith Plan remains available. If you haven't looked at it yet, [check it out today](#).

Prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to this world. Grant me wisdom so I may know the characteristics of Jesus. Give me the courage to be a role model to others, just as Jesus was a role model to the disciples. Open my eyes so I may see the benefits of modeling Jesus to others. In his name I pray, amen.

This post was written by Jennifer Macke, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut