

# ETERNITY IN A SPAN

by Matt Whitling, Logos School

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Part of my job this morning is to remind you of a few things. When we heard Doug Wilson speak yesterday, a lot of his thrust was: *Remember. Don't forget.* In order to be thankful you need to remember those things which we should be thankful for. And so I want to start with just a little bit of context for who you are, where you fit, and God's plan for [the] education of his children.

The basics are simply this: when God gives children to parents, to a husband and a wife, that little person is a gift from Him; that child is His, and, in a very real sense, He's loaning that little person to those parents for sixty years maybe. The normal course of events is that you die before your kids do—it doesn't always happen that way—but the Lord blesses you with this little person and there are strings attached. "Number One," He says, "This little person is Mine and I'm giving him to you." It's like Christmas and [they are] a present. You bring a present down and think it's been unwrapped [but when] you look at this little person, the Lord says, "Just wait!" You're looking at it and you have no idea the adventures they're going to take you on. The Lord says, "This little person is Mine; the strings are [to] bring him up in the

nurture and admonition of . . . Me."

And it makes all the sense in the world. It's God's child. God wants that child to love and know and fear Him. So this is the beginning of what we could call education—or somebody might say discipleship or evangelism. It's the Great Commission—you are fulfilling the Great Commission with this gift that God has given to you. And as we start to realize what it means—that the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or the *paideia* of God, is what God has commanded parents to give to their children—the more we start to grasp what that means. This is God's child—how high is the bar for the quality of education? You're preparing this little person to reign.

The New Testament says, "Don't you know that you will judge the angels?" (1 Cor. 6:3) And you're raising this little person to do that. This is a prince in the kingdom of God, who will reign with his Father, and the implications are far-reaching. As a father, when I look at my kids and I hear that command from my heavenly Father and I say, "Yes sir," my next response is, "Help. Help me to be . . . fitting." I mean we're trying

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to provide an education that fits their actual position in relation to their heavenly Father, and I know I can't do it on my own. So for Christian parents to raise their kids faithfully they need tools; they need resources. A wise parent, after the panic has subsided, starts looking around and thinking, "I've got the most important job in the world."

People [say things like], "You may be raising a senator or you may be educating the President of the United States" (or whatever the top of the pile is in your mind). It really is different. It's more personal. You are raising *God's child*. *His* kid. And regardless of whether God calls him to run a backhoe or work at McDonalds, whatever vocation he has for the 80 years that he's here on earth, this little person is a prince in the Kingdom of God. So you start to realize that we need resources in order to raise him well.

And that's where you come in. Schools have not been given children directly by God. God doesn't say, "I'm going to give this group of kids to that particular institution so that institution can raise them." That's not the way it works. Individual kids are given to individual families and those parents who need help look for a school to help serve them.

At Logos, we have steps going down from our building to the main parking lot, two rows of steps, and in our little mental image there, I picture all fifty of our teachers standing on those steps dressed up because [we are] preparing to educate God's children this year. So we brush our teeth and we take a shower in the morning and try to get ourselves ready for this. And we're standing on the steps with a little white towel over our arm and when parents come to our school we say, "Can we serve you?" We are servants of parents as they fulfill what I think is the most important calling in the world and possibly the most challenging to do well.

And so I'm trying to paint a picture that shows you the high calling of parenting and the high calling of being a teacher. And I'm starting with the fact you are

servants. You work really hard for parents as they keep covenant with God. Your job is to be their lackey. "Yes, sir. I want you to love this place. I want you to know that I'm working my tail off for you." And I want my teachers to see that when you come to Logos School, our goal is not that you'll come into a place where we tell you your place and say, "We're the educational professionals here, and therefore we're going to dictate to you what your job is." It's a very different perspective that we have. We see God the Father giving parents commands and we see those parents saying, "Yes, sir, we're going to do that," and coming to us and saying, "Help me do that. Help me keep covenant with the Lord my God."

I've seen some young people at Logos School where I think, "They should just be a teacher." There's an eleventh-grade boy who's helped me coach elementary basketball at lunchtime, and I watch him work with the students, and I think, "He should just be a teacher." It's very difficult for a junior in high school, a young man who's in high school, to imagine himself becoming a third grade teacher or a fifth-grade teacher, because the polish doesn't shine as much as it does in other vocations. Imagine a ten-year reunion and you come back and you're talking to someone who is a dentist (and, just to remind you, dentists are people who pick at teeth all day). They're like those birds on the hippopotamus. [Dentistry] is a lawful vocation and the Lord calls people to do it. But in your mind, as you think through the role that you have in Christ as you serve these parents, and you talk to somebody who's a dentist, you should think, and not say, "That's wonderful. What you do is great. [But] I *make* dentists." And somebody says, "I'm an engineer—I design bridges—or I design roads" or whatever it happens to be, and in your mind just think: I design *engineers*. I influence the affections of humans.

If you're a mom at the ten-year reunion, and you've got three kids, and you're talking to the dentist or whoever it happens to be and you say, "I graduated from college and I have three kids" or "I have five kids," . . .

those are *souls* that you have made. By the grace of God you have created humans and you're raising them and you are ordering their affections, you're teaching them what to love and what to hate, how to do those things. And again, when you look at it, you are people-makers. Teachers are people-shapers.

It's funny that oftentimes we think that's not a noble thing to do, [but] it's hard to imagine a higher calling than that—souls that will always be around. I've learned over the past 24 years at Logos [that if] you go to a small town and you stay long enough, you can see the generations go through and pass by. So when you go to work in the morning during the school year you should just think, "Alright, today I'm going to create some board members for Logos School." And we [at Logos] can actually see it because four of our ten board members are alums. They graduated from the school. I had the privilege of coaching all four of them.

So we're going to practice with you. What are we doing today? Well, we're going to make some board members. We're going to make your boss. Or [maybe it's] the next day, and you need a little encouragement and you think, "Today I'm creating and shaping my children's teachers. This coming year seven of our teachers at Logos School are alums. So they were in our classes. They were our students for years. They graduated and they came back. If you're one of those teachers that taught one of those teachers, you were preparing your grandchild's teachers. "Just spend a year with my grandson, spend a year with my granddaughter. Teach them what I taught you." For us, there are seven of those.

Or you go to school and you think, "Today I'm creating more Logos parents." For us, last year, a fifth of our students were alum kids. So if you're in the hallway and you see five students just ask, "Which one of your parents graduated from Logos School?" 1 in 5. This coming year it looks like we'll be closer to a fourth—so approaching 100 students out of 400 kids. The work that we're doing during the day [is] marketing. Look at

your classes—are you advertising to your constituents? They're here! They're third graders right now! Just wait a few years!

One of the exciting things for me is, my son Jed is one [of those seven teachers]. He was hired just recently. He's going to be our AD this year and half-time fourth-grade teacher. And you can't imagine the delight of being able to work with him, to go to work with Jed again. [. . .]

When Jed was in first grade he received his first office visit. And I was not the principal at that time, Larry Stevenson was. Jed was taking a spelling test—and spelling was challenging for him. The teacher says the word, [Jed] gets it right, and he took the spelling test. Gets done, passes it in, teacher grades it at recess, [and] Jed gets his back: 100%.

He was so excited. [He] went to his teacher at lunchtime, dropped the paper, and said, "Did you see?"

And she looked at him and said, "Jed, you got a hundred percent! You must have worked so hard this week!"

"Nope!"

And she said, "What do you mean?"

"Wrote the words down before the test!"

That's kind of quintessential Jed—what you see is what you get. And he was not confessing anything. He had played this game for a number of weeks and he was having a hard time figuring out how everybody else was being so successful. Finally he [had] realized the difference, and solved the problem and was proud not just of the hundred percent; he was proud that he had figured out the system!

He went on to unpack it for his teacher and [she] said, "Oh no, we need to go talk to Mr. Stevenson!" And so they went down—Jed's first office visit. Larry spanked him! Was Larry thinking, "Here's a little staff development right now"? That's really what was taking place! He's thinking, "Okay, we've got a future administrator—Jed—and right now, here's the professional plan!" And that's exactly what it was—

forming the affections.

Jed only had one other office visit, 8th grade. 8th grade, Jed's in class, teacher's talking, turns around to write something on the board, friend of Jed's next to him. [As] soon as the teacher turns around, [Jed's] friend flips the teacher off. Hopefully this can be an encouragement to you. Some of you come to the conference and think, "Logos School—I mean the school culture must just be . . . They don't sin at that place!" We sin *just fine*.

So Jed looks at this kid—he's got his finger up—and he looks back at the teacher, and the teacher turns around—finger goes down. And the teacher talks a bit, turns around and writes something on the board and the kid does it again—flips the teacher off. And it didn't take that long [before] Jed had a plan. [The] teacher turned around, and finger went down, and then Jed was ready. Next time the teacher turned around and the finger went down, [Jed] leaned over his desk and just punched him right in the nose, and pushed his nose into the side of his cheek. And when the teacher turned around, everything had changed.

It sounds like this heroic thing and everything goes right after that, but it wasn't really great for a while, because Jed had an office visit at that point. I abstained because he was my son, so I pushed it to my boss to handle it. Jed's not a man of many words, so in the office not a lot of the details came out; he had to apologize for punching the kid in the face and making him bleed during class which is not a nice thing to do. But then afterward as we debriefed and I heard the details, I just thought, "Silver dollar, Jed." I didn't know what else to do. I just said, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Sometimes when we hear George Grant say—and it's so encouraging and motivating—"Go change the world," we think, "Yes, do that!" And if you're like me you get to Saturday—and I love the ACCS conference—but the part I love best is going home. I'm just ready. And I want to be faithful right now [ . . . ] and then we're on the plane, we're going home, we're going to hug our wives and tickle

our kids and just spend time with our families because home is where we belong. [But] sometimes there's a mom and she thinks, "I'm not changing the world, I'm changing diapers," or "I'm changing *laundry* again." It's kind of the monotony. I believe that some of the most effective and profound ways that you change the world are pedestrian. It's the little things. Love your kids well. And sometimes it's hard because we're short-sighted and we just see what's in front of us, we just see the little picture. I was reading this morning in Genesis 22 where God says to Abraham, "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies." (Gen. 22:17 ESV) It is one grain at a time. And in this passage God says, "Look up, you're at the beach, look at the shore, count them." And we say, "Okay, I see it."

I walked into the conference a couple days ago, and a friend said, "Is it always this big?"

And I said, "Yeah, it's usually something like this." It looks like this: grains. But when you get home, you're looking at one grain at a time. Your job is to be faithful with one grain at a time, with the pedestrian jobs that God has given you. Do the little things well.

Last night I was checking emails and I've been convicted because I told the Leaders Day [session on] Wednesday, "Eleven hours. I've got eleven hours to turn emails around. So I'm checking my email, and had a young lady email [me]. She writes, "Mr. Whitling! This is 'Susie Q' I'm married, and I have kids, and I live in a different town and I found this classical Christian school. Do you know anything about it?" So I read the email and all I can think of is black garbage bags. Because I had this little 8-year-old girl years ago.

My second or third year of teaching third grade, this little girl, big blue eyes, comes in with this large object with two black garbage bags, one on either side. And she brought it in and she said, "Mr. Whitling, you're never going to guess what I've got inside these bags."

Now, I was pretty new to Northern Idaho, and it [the object] was big. I looked at it and said, “I don’t know! What do you have?” And she said, “It’s show and tell! It’s show and tell today, and I’m on! Can I go?” And I said, “Please, go!” So she goes to the front of the class and says, “Guys, you’re never going to believe what I have inside this bag.” And so we’re all sitting up, straight and tall, and she opens up one side of the bag, and all I saw was a bloody stump. And she peeled back the bag—it’s just *hair*. Hair, all brown, and then a big hoof at the end. And the bags kind of fall on the floor and she’s holding this bloody stump with a leg—she’s got an elk leg in her hands. And I’m from Central California, right? And I just thought, “Is this *legal*?”

She brings it in and she says, “Guys, this morning we were driving in and my papa sees forty elk in our front pasture.” And he stopped and shot one before school and hung it up in the barn, and she asked if she could bring the leg to show and tell. And she looks at me and she says, “Can I pass it around?” And I said, “No, don’t, maybe just . . . walk it around.” And she did! She walked it, and we were all petting it, and it was like a “Welcome to Northern Idaho, Mr. Whitling” moment. And there were a few like that.

But it was *that girl*, last night. She’s typing away, “So I’m married, and I’ve got these kids and I want to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and I want a school that’s like Logos.” So she’s asking, “Is this [school] good? Are my kids going to receive something like I received? Is that the sort of thing that we’re looking for?” And you’re just looking at a grain, just one grain. And the Lord says, “Get counting.”

So I just want to encourage you. First, the interruptions in your day. For me, what does an interruption look like? It’s usually an office visit, or a parent that’s not happy, or whatever it happens to be. Those are not things I put on my calendar. [And] I’m pretty tied to Google calendar. I look at it, I think, every 23 seconds. Every time I flinch I check my email, I check my calendar, check my email,

check my calendar. That’s why I have a really hard time thinking in my office. Because when I get in my office I just keep flinching and I just look and I try to think about something for longer than 20 seconds and I can’t. I just look back at the calendar.

You don’t put office visits on. You don’t know when that’s going to happen. You’re just loving your kids at home this summer, and you don’t plan for the sin to take place. It just happens. And then you’re in the moment with that little grain of sand. Just realize that the way you handle those interruptions is staff development, it’s the professional plan, it is shaping culture—it’s changing the world. And as you change those diapers, do it to the glory of God.

When you get home today go and serve. Dads, especially when you get home to your house, you’ve got to kiss and hug everybody. Check the sink—are there dishes that need to be done? Mow your lawn. If you have to, spank somebody that needs a spanking, hug someone that needs a hug. Do those things and just think, “It’s what God’s called me to do. What I’m doing, I’m going to do it as for the Lord.” You are transforming the place where you live.

So how do we do it well? We’re talking about serving parents and being good servants and changing the world. Over the course of years of ACCS conferences we have focused on different things at different times. And one of our focuses has been, years ago maybe, you could sum it up by saying, “Ideas have consequences.” (Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*, USA: University of Chicago Press, 1984) Or you could say, “Hey, that’s just 2 Corinthians 10, ‘take every thought captive,’ or Romans 12, ‘renewing our minds’ or ‘thinking God’s thoughts after Him.’ ” Whatever the passage or book title is, the focus has been, “Thinking the right thoughts is important.” Other years you could say our focus for these years has been, “Worship has consequences.” And if you needed a book title, [there’s] G.K. Beale’s, *We Become What We Worship*. And we agree with that and

we see it in Psalm 115: “those who make them become like them” or Isaiah 6, “people that have blind eyes and deaf ears.” And the focus has been worshipping God right and how it transforms a person.

And this year is different. This year the focus is, “What you love has consequences. Who you love has consequences.” It’s all about the affections. So it may make you think of *Desiring God* by John Piper or it may make you think of James Smith’s *You Are What You Love*. Or Psalm 37: “Delight yourself in the Lord.” But we’ve been trying to focus on cultivating our affections or loving well. So that’s what I want to turn our attention to for the remainder of our time—simply that.

And so first I want to try to define what I mean by *affections*. C.S. Lewis said there’s your head which is your reason, there is the chest—or your heart—which represents your affections, the things that you think, the things that you love, and then there’s the belly which represents your appetites, so more nerve-ending level issues and things that feel good in the moment right now (Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, “Men Without Chests”). And our focus here is the heart and the affections, what you want most, your greatest desires, what you love, what you value, what you worship, what you long for, what generates the choices that you make. We are not talking about undisciplined emotion or what necessarily feels good or what has been logically proven to you, but we are talking about your trained affections or your trained emotions.

And the next question that I have is, what are they worth? So before you give your whole conference to talking about affections, what is their value? We see [in] Proverbs 4:23, Solomon says, “Above all else, guard your heart. For everything you do flows from it.” Above all else. That means above everything else that you can think of. This is the most important thing, guard your heart. Everything you do comes from it. It’s hard to imagine, something more important than that. We’re talking about shaping people—making and focusing

people in a certain direction and influencing their heart. Their affections, what they love, is in the center of the target. Augustine said, “My weight is my love. Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me”—what drives him where he goes, what he does, what motivates us (Augustine, *The Confessions*, 13.10.10).

The next thing is *right affections*. What should be the goal? What is our target? We know that we want to order the affections correctly. I just printed out a copy of the Logos School Vision Statement. That’s been on my mind this year because I was reading through the vision statement. I try to do it a couple times a year because I see the vision statement as our marching orders from the Logos School Board to me as a principal [and] to our teachers, and we should know it! If your boss says, “Here’s what I want you to do,” or, for me, as a basketball coach, if I’m in a huddle and we’re at the end of the game and I’m looking at my players, I say, “I want to see us in red [until] we get down to eight seconds, and then you’re going to run Indiana—everybody got it?” And they say, “Yes, sir, we got it,” and then I say, “Good, what are we going to do?” And they [stare blankly]. I say, “C’mon, I just said it to you! We’re in a thirty second time-out, I gave you your marching orders, what are we going to do?” There are times I’ll look at twelve young men in a moment like that and think, “No one is home; no one is with me at all!” I say, “Listen to me! It’s not that hard! We’re in red until eight seconds and then we’re in Indiana, do you got it?”

They say, “Yes.”

“What are we doing?”

“Red, we’re in red until eight seconds and then we’re in Indiana.”

“That’s exactly right, now go and do it!”

“Yes, sir!” And they go and do it.

As a teacher what are your marching orders? You almost don’t even know sometimes. You’re just trying to teach *the thing*! [You say,] “I don’t know that I’m understanding this historical event accurately—they’re

talking about the War Between the States or the Civil War, and I'm just trying to learn the stuff and pass it on." When your school board says, "Look, this is the vision statement of the school—this is what we want to see in our graduates," I think you ought to stop and take it seriously.

So it struck me this year—I just thought we should know it. If your boss says, "Here's what we're running," you should be able to say, "Yes sir, let me tell it back to you; here's what we're running." It [Logos School Vision Statement] was painful. It's more than just a couple sentences. We've memorized our way through it as a staff elementary and secondary and admin, learning it, and it was hard. I had a teacher at the end of the year—I'm so thankful for my teachers, they work hard, they're sacrificing the whole time. I throw something else like that on top of it, and I say, "Now, not only are you going to raise your family faithfully and give yourself away teaching your students, but now I want you to do a bunch of memory work for me at the same time and just cheerfully dive in." A teacher at the end of the year said, "I did not enjoy that assignment. It was really challenging and really hard. Thank you for making me do it. It was on my mind, thinking through: what is our goal? What are we trying to do in the classroom? What are we trying to take these kids to?"

So you could look at ours, or maybe yours is better or different, maybe it's shorter. I wished ours was shorter this year. It was fascinating the number of secondary teachers as they were memorizing the words, their response was, "I wish I could rewrite this; I feel like I could do a better job." Elementary teachers just thought, "I wish this was a little shorter." It was hard! It was a challenging thing to do.

But if you have to boil it all down, the hinge pin in the whole thing is love. It's focused in the same direction, it has to do with your affections. We see this in 1 Corinthians 13. You can take that and apply that to your vision statement at your school.

If you look at our vision statement:

*Though I listen carefully with discernment and understanding but have not love, though I reason persuasively and articulate precisely, and have not love, I am nothing. It is worthless.*

Your classical Christian education that you're communicating, that you're giving, that you're investing in your children, if it has not love—[and] the name of that love is the Lord Jesus Christ—if your kids, your students graduate loving Jesus, how many concerns do you have for them? If He is their greatest desire, if He is what they most want in the world, everything's good. Academically, we talk about [giving] them the tools of learning, and they will be set to learn for the rest of their lives. We don't have to teach every fact to every student. We teach them how to learn and they will be able to do it, they will be set. And when it comes to the affections, teach them to love the Lord their God, and they will be set to live for the rest of their lives.

So that's what we're all about. If you're like me, you think, "That's really it! Do you mean we could really influence our children and our students to love God more, to lean in that direction so the things they want the most are the things they ought to want most, so that they love what God loves and hate what God hates?" And we say, "Well, that's why we're doing this. That's why we're here, why we have our school. Because that's what God's commanded us to do." He said, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of Me. I want them to love Me, I want them to know Me, because I'm their Father."

And your Father is telling you this and you say, "Yes, sir! I'm going to do that, I'm going to look for my resources," and you get your resources, your servants, and you say, "Servants, here are your marching orders! Teach my children with me to love their Father, teach them to *know* Him." And we say, "Yes, yes sir, that's exactly what we're all about."

And then we spend [time at] the conference. I've gone to a number of talks [at the conference], I've given some

talks, and you guys have been talking about discipline and school culture, and many of you have been talking about loving poetry and loving history and joy in the class, and that's the direction that we are running right now. And you know it's funny I keep coming back to John Milton's quote on education.

John Milton said, "The end, then, of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents (he's talking about Adam and Eve) by regaining to know God aright and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, and to be like Him" (Milton, "Of Education").

And so we're here focused on the cultivation of the affections: how do we do it well? We've been talking about it for a number of days [and] I want to conclude with [this]:

Number one, as an encouragement, *Go and do more and more*. That is the bullseye on the target. But I want to give a few cautions or clarifications as you go and do, as you chase that down. And the first is that, whenever you ask the question, "How do I do that, how do I really change the affections of my son, and focus them in a certain direction?" the answer to the question is found in the character of God. You don't go and do a bunch of scientific experiments to see what changes the thinking of a young person—put him in a laboratory and then do carrots and sticks. [That] is not what drives us as Christians. What drives us as Christians is: What's my dad like? What's my heavenly Father like? And then Ephesians 5 says, "Imitate Him! Copy Him. Follow after Him." How does God influence the affections of His people? That's what we're all about, that's what we want to do. That's what the plumb line is, His character, how He interacts with His people.

In that dynamic, there [are] a few cautions. Number one, that *God is not confused by the governments that He has established*. And what I mean by that is He's established family, He's established the church, and He's established the state. I think there's an element of sphere-sovereignty that we all understand, that's why

we're here, we're a part of this movement. The church has not been given the Sword. You don't take a murderer to your pastor so that he can execute him or to your elders so that they can lay hands on him. That's not what it means! We're not talking about the Sword. In a like manner, we would also say, it is not the state's job to educate my son—to tell me what should be a part of his curriculum, who his teachers should be, what the goal of education is—it's not the state's job to influence his affections. We absolutely agree with that.

I would say in a similar way, *your classroom is not a Sunday morning worship service*. Practically, what does that mean? If you have a fifth grade teacher who wants to serve communion every morning before the first recess—we're going to do the bread and we're going to do the wine—you'd say, or you should say, that's not appropriate, that's not the government that God has put you within.

Or if you have a third-grade teacher who says, "I'm just really into covenant renewal worship. What I'm going to do is organize my lesson plan around covenant renewal worship. So in my math lesson we're going to start with the call to study math, and after that, we're going to do the corporate confession of our math sins," which is, "Please forgive us we're tempted to look at our neighbors paper during a math test, or the teacher gets the stopwatch out and before she says go and after she says stop I'm just tempted to write two more." We don't do corporate confession during math class.

At the end of the lesson if the teacher says, "I just want to do a little benediction," I say, look there is overlap. We're Christians. When we sin against each other we ask each other's forgiveness, but you are not the pastor of your classroom. And you are not preaching a math sermon right now. Teach them how to divide as unto the Lord. Certainly, there should be song and there should be prayer and we understand it is an act of worship—we understand that—but it is not Sunday morning. And so be wary. Especially as we try to influence the affections,



just keep in mind your place. Know where God has put you—what government are you in?

Second caution: *A liberal education does not produce true freedom.* Reading old books does not make you free—even if they’re really good, even if they’re really old. Learning Latin and Greek and Hebrew, as wonderful as those things are, will not set you free. A man’s problem is not that he is uneducated. It is that he is dead. Ephesians 2 says, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins . . . but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) . . . for by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God. A dead man with a good book in his hand is still dead. A dead student dressed up in all of the virtue that your school can adorn him with still stinks of death. We do value the liberal arts education and we value a classical Christian education—but dead people need good news about God’s kindness and mercy, they don’t just need more coaching or more practice or more habits.

This leads me to the final point which is similar. *God is not muddle-headed about sanctification either.* Romans 6:22–23: “But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Classical Christian education will not save your children. Classical Christian education will not sanctify your children apart from the grace of God. Sanctification is the result of being set free from sin. It is not the means by which we attain our own salvation.

And you can see this paradigm. There are people that try to work on virtues, to instill virtue, or character—public school, charter school, or Christian school. I’ve been a part of public school efforts where the focus has been: today or this week we’re working on integrity, and

then next week we’re working on honesty, and then the following week we’re working on self-control. And so it’s this instillation of virtue apart from Christ.

The problem is that one question destroys it all. The elementary age kids never ask that question, but as soon as you get into junior high or high school, as soon as somebody asks, “Why?” it all falls apart. There’s no foundation for it. It’s just like putting perfume on a dead man. Or—something that you may be able to relate to more closely—it’s like putting perfume on a junior high school boy who has not learned he needs to shower *every single day*. You put a little Axe on top of that, it just makes it worse, makes it stronger. That’s the reality that we have when we try to dress up dead people. They need good news.

So we should be concerned about the focus of the right ordering of the affections, how to do it well. If someone says, “Yes, we’re after the heart or the affections of our kids,” here’s what you do. If the first thing out of their mouth is “habit,” “liturgy,” “practice,” [or] “discipline,” you say, “[Those are] not going to get it done. Nothing, nothing, *nothing* but the blood of Jesus can accomplish those things.” And in that context if someone says, “Saved by the Blood of the Lamb,” in that context teach them, train them, work your butt off trying to educate your kids.

Do habits matter? Absolutely. Does liturgy form you? Certainly it does. Get after it. We’re all about working really, really hard in the power of the Holy Spirit by His grace, but our eyes are on Him.