

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

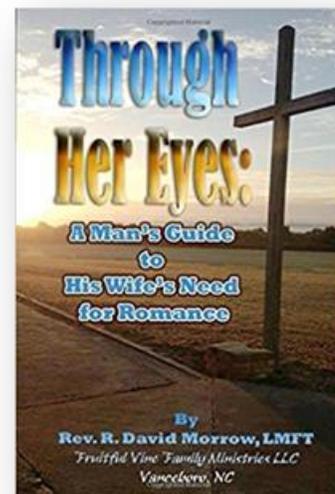
May 1, 2018

It's just two weeks until Mothers' Day (I'm trying to help you, guys!), and, since I'm going to be on vacation next week (I won't miss any Sundays), I've been working ahead to get a sermon ready for Mothers' Day.

My first working title for Mothers' Day was "Raising Heaven-Bound Kids in a Hell-Bent World," but I decided to take the sermon in a different direction. While I was pondering the title I didn't use, though, I brainstormed a bunch of things that may have some value. This list is fairly random, but it might spark your own reflections on these things.

I claim no special knowledge or ability as a parent or as a husband, and I hope I'd do a lot of things differently if I had another shot at it. I feel rather like the fellow who had seven theories about parenting, but no children. After a few years, he had seven children and no theories ☺. So here's my random list:

- It is more effective to guide behavior with natural consequences than with punishment.
- Avoid discipline when you're angry or tired.
- Love your children unconditionally.
- Give your children clear-but-generous boundaries for behavior, and enforce those boundaries, but give lots of freedom within those boundaries.
- With few exceptions, don't protect children from the consequences of their behavior. Being a "helicopter parent" is not helpful.
- Avoid reading romance novels. Create romance in your marriage.¹
- Avoid pornography in every form. Create a respectful, realistic, and rewarding sexual relationship in your marriage.
- Your children don't really want a lot of stuff. They want you.
- Sports teams wouldn't play on Sunday mornings if Christian parents stood firm against it.
- Many of the athletic and other "enrichment" things in which we involve our children are a lot more about our own status and possible scholarships than anything else.
- Our culture doesn't really value children except as status symbols. Be counter-cultural.



¹ Guys, I recommend a new, short, humorous book by one of my former students, which you can get here: https://smile.amazon.com/Through-Her-Eyes-Guide-Romance/dp/0692944583/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1525206992&sr=8-5&keywords=david+morrow

- If a church really wants to make a difference in the world, it will encourage young marriages, young parents, young children, and young people.
- If we really care about families, we'll lobby for livable wages.
- God loves our children far more than we do.
- We need to give our children roots, and then give them wings.
- If a growing faith isn't obviously and genuinely important to us, then it's not going to be important for our children.
- Encourage your children to be what God has created and called them to be, no matter where that takes them.
- Pray for your mate and for your children every day. Recruit a "prayer umbrella" of friends to pray with you.
- Give your children memories worth having.
- Self-esteem doesn't come from lots of the latest stuff. Self-esteem comes from being loved unconditionally.
- It takes us a long time to realize that the fancy cars and the fancy houses and the fancy vacations we bought frequently had negative effects on our children.
- Our kids don't want a private school as much as they want a private parent who genuinely delights in them.
- Marry carefully. Marry Christianly. And stay married.
- Parenting is not technically nor conceptually difficult, but it IS DIFFICULT.
- "Garbage In, Garbage Out." Do your best to monitor and to control what your children read, see, and listen to.
- Parenting Motto: If this doesn't actually kill you, we'll get through it.
- Have family devotions every night. Take your own spiritual growth seriously. Let them see it.
- Treat your children, not your career, as your legacy.
- Don't try to change the world. Invest yourself in shaping your children's character.
- God will help. Always. Every Day.

