

We Are Made Good by God

John 14:15-21

05/14/2023

One of the most important decisions you will make about the success of your future depends on who you will marry. This has been studied by church leaders, cultural pundits, and financial advisors.

A marriage partner can make or break you.

3 of the key success factors for a child are a good school, a two-parent household: mother and father, and regular church attendance.

Now, that's not anything any major study has found over a detailed 20-year peer reviewed assessment.

This is simply my experience in the ministry and my time working as a youth volunteer before I became a pastor.

I saw most children who do incredible things that had these advantages. I did witness other kids rise to this level without two parent homes, poorer schools, and spotty church attendance, but they were truly exceptional.

Simply put, your child is much more likely to become a productive member of society and better for everyone if they have a good school, attend church regularly and parents who have kept their marriage together even if just for the sake of the children.

Now, let me be clear. This does not make them Pulitzer Prize winners. This does not guarantee a first-round draft pick. This may not even mean they go to college per say.

But it does mean they are far more likely to have meaningful income, willingness to finish college or like vocational or other business training, marry a good friend for life, and raise their children to value service to others, and over all; be a productive member of society that doesn't depend on taxpayer assistance or is a burden to society in any way.

As we celebrate Mother's Day today, we see the perfect picture in our Gospel of a mother's love where God demonstrates His love for us so we can be successful for His' Kingdom's sake every day!

When I was a little boy, my mom spent a lot of time with my brother and me. Dad travelled a lot, so it was pretty much Mom and us during the week!

That meant when the lawn needed to be mown, or the leaves raked, or the driveway shoveled

after a snowstorm, mom was out there making sure #1...We were doing it, and #2...Doing it properly. There was the right way to pull weeds, the right way to secure the trash bags, the right way to push the lawnmower in circles around the yard so that it looked properly mowed.

They say the oldest daughter in the family is the female version of their father, so I figure she must have learned all these skills from her dad, emulating him, and then imparting them to my brother and me.

I don't remember much about Grandpa Everts, but I imagine much of who he was lives on in mom.

The one thing that really made a difference in my life was a simple phrase my mom would say every time I successfully accomplished a task she had given to me.

And the phrase was simply, "Good Boy!"

I heard a baseball coach up at Lake Sumter Community College say that to the boys in a baseball camp one summer, and just like that scene in *Ratatouille* when Anton Ego eats the peasant's dish in the restaurant and is instantly transported back to his days as a little child with mom serving him his favorite dish in all her glory! So I was transported back to when my mom said "Good Boy to me"

"Good Boy!" man, I would kill myself to get that compliment, because deep down I knew I really made my mom happy.

Just the other day Anne was telling us about Camden, when he was a particularly good boy! Jeremy was gone and Ms. Anne had to get all the kids ready for school by herself, a doable task, but much harder without Jeremy doing all the early rising duties. And as she was getting Miller taken care of and worrying about Ebbits at the same time, she came out to get Ebbits and discovered that Camden had gotten him up, got him dressed and ready to go! "Way to go Camden! Good Boy!" Anne, shocked, immediately told Camden how much she appreciated it, and asked if he could do that every day!

I was lucky to get this in for Mother's Day, but it is a story I will tell amongst my peers for years to come! Just like I treasure my mother's encouragement to me, I treasure these stories when other mothers show their unrelenting love for their children especially when they celebrate them be good little girls and boys!

When God tells us in our Gospel, "If you love me, you will keep my commands", this is what God is talking about.

Will you take these encouragements and instructions from God to heart?

Will you honor them as this incredible motivation for all you do and say just like you honor and praise the wisdom handed down to you by a great mentor, teacher, commander, mother, or father?

Will you keep this as blessed wisdom that you will be able to impart to others so they too can benefit as you have benefited from them?

For those that know that Jesus loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins! For those of us who know the Easter message that He has risen from the dead. For those of us that know He has sent a helper, a counselor, a coach, a guide, a legal advocate, an intercessor, and a comforter all wrapped up in the Person of God, the Holy Spirit, working through God's Word and the visible means of God's grace in Absolution, Baptism, and communion!

Then resounding answer to all of the above questions for you Christian is, "YES!"

Yes, because you know this is the truth. And you also know deep down the sinful world cannot receive this truth in and of themselves, so we must make every effort to give them this truth in a way they can hear so they can receive it and believe it just like we do.

Because, the only thing that is gonna make this world a better place for our children is Jesus and the only way we can truly honor what our mother taught us is, to love the Lord Jesus they first shared with us.

They say the best way to love your children is to love one another. You all know my children are now gone forever! Thank God their still within driving distance so we get to have them home for holidays, but they have reached that stage of life where they are now making their own lives apart from us.

As much as that crushes every fiber of Mine and Marcy's very being, we do understand it and accept it. And honestly appreciate that we have more time than ever to finally just love one another. I know this will sound crazy, but raising two boys didn't give me much time to look at Marcy and I am sure it didn't give her much time to pay attention to me, after all we were always keeping our eyes on the boys!

While we understood we needed to love each other for their benefit, I'm not sure it wasn't just entirely on autopilot!

Because once the boys were gone, once we had them officially out of the nest and began to reflect on what our life meant now, we really got a chance to take a long hard look at one another, and in one of those nights where we looked each other up and down like we hadn't looked at each other since the boys were born, we came to this grand epiphany and said to each other in the most loving moment we have had in a long time, "Honey, I think we gotta get back in shape!"

My dear brothers and sisters, the church is out of shape. Our devotional lives could be better, our adherence to the Gospel could be firmer, and our witness to the world for their sake, that shows our undeniable love of God, could be communicated better!

After all, we are the Bride and Christ is our groom, and for the sake of all the children of the world who do not yet know Him, we can indeed do a better job of loving our Lord Jesus who undeniably loves us.

The day is coming when they will no longer have a choice and our Gospel lesson makes it clear, that day, you will know Him no matter what. The only difference is will they love Him like we do, or will they be terrified unto the damnation of their souls?

So, let's keep these commandments, instructions, and encouraging exhortations for the treasures they are! Not to make us rich but to distribute to the world, not because *we are* good little boys and girls but because God made us good for the sake of those who are not good, and need to hear more than anyone, "Good Girl, Good Boy, enter the Kingdom of Heaven for in you I have made and found MY JOY!"

Now may that peace which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus always.

AMEN

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