

Series: Father's Day

June 17, 2018

## **Title: Dad's Toolkit**

### **[Slide 1]**

**Text: Exodus 20:1-17**

## **Design**

### **Your greatest building project:**

Dads, I want to talk to you today about your greatest building project: your family. There is no more important thing that you will do with your life.

Building a family is a way that we reflect the God who created us. After all, God Himself is a family builder! In the book of Hebrews we read:

### **[Slide 2]**

*Hebrews 3:3-4 NIV*

*Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder everything.*

One of the ways that God builds His house is through us dads. We're on His construction team.

So what are some of the tools that we need in our toolkit?

### **Tape Measure:**

### **[Slide 3]**

The first tool I want you to think about is a measuring tape. You can't actually build anything with a tape measure: you can't cut boards, drill holes, or smooth surfaces with it. But without it, you can't even get started on your project!

So what is our tape measure for building a family? Well, a good place to start on our search for the perfect tape measure might be Exodus 20. In this chapter, Moses gives God's instructions to Israel for how to be God's family.

We call those instructions the Ten Commandments. These commandments are the standard for everything we build into our lives.

- The first four commandments remind us to always put God first. No competing gods, no false gods. We're to make Him first and foremost in our lives. Believe me, your kids know if you are measuring up in this area of your life! If you're letting your wife do the "spiritual stuff," your kids get the message: The spiritual stuff isn't really that important. They know what you watch on TV; they know when your words and your actions don't match. The *most* important thing you can ever do for your family is *put God first*.
- The fifth commandment reads:

**[Slide 4]**

*Exodus 20:12 NIV*

*"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."*

A family is built on a foundation of respect and honor. And the work of laying that foundation begins with you. How do you treat your own parents? Do you honor them, or their memory? When talking with your kids, focus as much as possible on the good things about your parents. Don't expose them to your issues!

And most of all: how do you treat your children's mother? Showing her respect shows your kids what honoring their parents looks like. This is especially important with ex-spouses. Don't make your kids take sides – even if she is playing that game. If you can't say something nice...

- The last 5 commandments focus on how we treat each other.
  - Our home is not to be a place of hostility and resentment. Remember, Jesus redefined the command not to murder in terms of holding grudges and hatred toward one another.
  - Our homes are to be a place of sexual purity: no cheating on each other; no midnight porn sessions; no dirty jokes. In an "anything goes" culture, we need to build very carefully in this area if we want our children to be equipped with God's values.
  - Our homes are to be a place where we honor each other's possessions. You don't want your kid going through your wallet

for spending money. But make sure you don't steal time from your family that could have been better invested in going to a kid's soccer game or taking time to sit and talk something over!

- No lying! We work hard teaching a young child to always tell the truth. Make sure that you do the same. If you say you're going to do something, do it. Make your home a place where your kids can come and talk frankly with you about anything. And NO secrets from your spouse. As if you think you could actually fool her.
- Finally, build a family that roots for each other. Kids are by nature self-focused, and will quickly point out ways in which they feel that they are being treated unfairly. The best way to combat those bad feelings is to be *fair*. Don't play favorites. If you do something nice for one kid, make sure you do the same for the others. When my oldest daughter was in grade school, I started taking her to McDonalds for pancakes as a reward for getting to school on time. Guess what? The other kids found out what I was doing and wanted their special time too. So, I took one kid per week out for a breakfast date.

God's Word is your tape measure. Keep it handy and use it often.

## **Construction**

### **Skill Saw:**

#### **[Slide 5]**

When I take on a little building project, I usually end up at the lumber yard looking for boards or plywood. And they almost never have materials the exact size that I need. That's where my tools come in. It's up to me to measure the length of board I actually need and then cut it to size.

The same goes for putting holes in boards or cutting a piece of plywood to a special shape. The raw materials at the lumber yard need to be customized for my particular project.

### **Customizing the Culture:**

Our society provides us with many of the raw materials for building our families. It provides entertainment, sports programs, education, medical services, food, transportation, cell phones and a host of other things that we can build into our family.

But beware! The stuff our culture provides must be customized to your project. A cell phone plan may have unlimited data, but does that mean that you or your kids should be spending 12 hours per day streaming movies? Cable offers over 100 channels, but do you really think you can grow a family by doing nothing but watching TV? Our schools and other athletic programs offer a wide array of opportunities, but we must make the decision of what's enough for our children and our family.

That means cutting these things down to the right size for what we're building. Remember those first commandments about putting God first? If we're not careful, we can get so over-committed and busy that there's no time for God in our lives. We don't have time to eat dinner together, much less pray at bedtime! Church becomes just another option squeezed into a hectic schedule.

Moral of the story: it's up to you to do the cutting and shaping of what our world provides.

## **Finishing**

### **Sandpaper!**

#### **[Slide 6]**

The last stage of a building project is in many ways the most important, because this stage determines what the project will actually look like. The sawing and drilling are done. Everything has been nailed or screwed together. The glue has set. Now it's time to sand the project smooth and put on the finish.

Sandpaper comes with a number on the back of each sheet. The number tells you how abrasive the paper is. A low number means it's really scratchy. A high number means it's really smooth. You start with a low numbered paper to rough sand the project, but you always finish with a high numbered paper to get a smooth finish.

Only then are you ready to apply the paint or stain that everyone will see. That's why they call it "the finish."

### **Finishing well:**

When it comes to building a family, there eventually comes a time for applying the finish. Raising a preschooler is totally hands on! You exercise a great deal of authority over an elementary aged child. But things change when your child becomes a teen!

This is not a time for heavy handed tactics. It's time to transition to the finishing process. Over the 4 years of high school, for instance, you will find that you need to keep switching to a less abrasive sandpaper!

The final stage of finishing requires a light touch. That means lots of listening and lots of negotiation. Sometimes your child will be acting like the adult that he or she is becoming. No need for correction there. Sometimes your child will be acting like the child that he or she still is. Maybe this is the time for the right grade of sandpaper.

### **[Slide 7]**

The goal: finish well! And with God's tape measure, His wisdom and guidance in customizing what the world offers, and a commitment to seeing the project through to the end, that's what you will do.

Happy Building, Fathers!