

Family Matters
Connect 4 series
by Bill Aumack

There was a man sitting in waiting area at the airport. You've been there, right? It's a horrible place to have to wait. And a cute girl caught his eye. So he decided he was gonna go over and talk to her. Now like most men, he didn't have a good pickup line. So he just walked over and said, What kind of guys do you like to go out with? Horrible first line.

And she says, Well, you know, I like going out with Native Americans. They're chiseled, good looks. They're strong, muscular. I like going out with them. Because I also like going out with Jewish guys. They're usually well off financially and they have a rich history and traditions. I enjoy that. But I really liked those country boys too. They know how to have a good time. They're fun.

She looks at him says By the way, what's your name? He says, "Me? My name is Geronimo Bernstein. But you can call me Bubba."

What's in a name? What's in a name? Have you ever had your parents tell you Don't embarrass us? Don't I heard somebody say yeah. Don't embarrass the family name. We have a good name. Don't embarrass us. Don't you know that us insert last name we don't do that. We don't behave like that.

Have you ever wondered if all the effort you put into your family name ever mattered? I know I have. They did some studies on two individuals that both lived in American colonial times. The first guy his name was Max juke, interesting name. He lived in colonial times Max Juke. The other one was Jonathan Edwards. Now, different researchers research their families and the legacy that these two men left behind. Let's let's check it out. So Max Juke, he was researched by a man named Richard Dugdale. And Max was a man who he was free spirited, okay. He was an atheist. He promoted free sex. He didn't like to live under the laws. He didn't want anybody telling him what to do. He would just work enough to earn a little bit of money for what he needed to get by and then he would quit and go hunting and fishing. He just did what he wanted to do. Now according to the researchers, he was... they said he was a hunter and a fisher. He was a hard drinker. He was jolly and companionable. He was a nice guy. But he was averse to steady toil, working hard by spurts and idling by spurts. In other words, Max was neither principled or industrious.

Jonathan Edwards, on the other hand, he was his family who was researched by name by AE Winship, and Jonathan Edwards was everything Max juke was not. He was a God fearing man. He was Bible believing. He was a godly minister, who is credited with starting the Great Awakening that happened in early colonial times. His sermons were at the start of that great awakening. He also served for a brief time as president of what we now call Princeton University, just before he passed away. And so they looked at these two men and the legacy they would leave and Max juke had 1000 descendants they could find just a little over 1000 and Jonathan Edwards had a little over 900 almost the same, a little bit different but almost the same, and they looked at their descendants. And so of the family 1000 descendants of Max 310 died as poppers. 300 of them were convicts. 27 were murderers. 190 of them were prostitutes. 509 of them had wrecked their lives with either alcohol or drug. 60 of them were thieves. 20 of them became tradesmen, that's good. But 10 of them learned their trade while they were

in prison. And the researcher was able to estimate that the Jukes had cost the state of New York \$1.4 million, the house and institutionalize this family, that's an 1877 dollars. So it was a lot of money \$1.4 million, a lot of money in 1877. I mean, it still is, I'd like to have \$1.4 million. Contrast that with Jonathan Edwards, and his 900 Plus descendants had 13 college presidents, 86 college professors, 430 ministers, 314 war veterans, 75 authors, 100 lawyers, 30 judges, 66 physicians 80 holders of public office, including three US senators, seven congressman, mayors of three large cities, governors of three states of Vice President of the United States and the controller of the US Treasury. What a difference the legacy that these two men left on their descendants.

Don't ever underestimate the impact that you have on your family and on our world. From this generation to the next and beyond, okay, don't ever underestimate that.

We're doing a series right now called Connect Four. We're talking about relationships. Last week, Pastor talked about relationships with our spouses, you can check that out online, if you missed it. But today, we're gonna be talking about kind of our more family relationships, parents to siblings, or cousins with our aunts and uncles, or grandparents ... Some of you thought that Oh, good. I don't have to listen. Because my kids are grown. Or I don't have kids. He's talking to those AUS parents not to me. Nothing could be further from the truth. Number one, there's your parenting responsibility end when your children turn 18? Do you stop caring for your kids when they turn 18? No, no. So, you know, we want that to continue on. It's different. But we want that to continue on. And secondly, everything I was going to say about the children could apply to cousins and our aunts and uncles, but we have a responsibility to our extended family too, not just to our children. Amen.

All right, so um, you know, we want to we want to talk about this want to keep going being parent being a parent is a lifelong calling. It doesn't end when the kids turn 18 years old. And the book of Ephesians kind of talks about this a lot. Right? It says, as Christians, we're supposed to be different. We're not supposed to be like the world. We're called to walk in light, not darkness. We're called to walk in the wisdom. Not foolishness. We're called to be in the Spirit, not the flesh. We're supposed to be unique. Why? Because we have knowledge of God. Okay, we have knowledge of God, and that makes us different.

Let's look at what God says in Leviticus chapter 18. Turn with me to Leviticus chapter 18. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, third book of the Bible. I always do good with the early books, but you know, I kind of start at the beginning Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, when those later books are hard to get to. Leviticus 18 Verses one to five. The Lord said to Moses, speak to the Israelites and say to them, I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do where in Egypt. Where are you used to live. And you must not do what they do where? in the land of Canaan where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD." We are called to be different. God is saying doing it my way. Frank Sinatra said I did it my way. That song always weirds me out, I'd much stand before God and did it your way instead of my way. Last week Pastor talked about the song "I am a rock, I am an island." Maybe we should do a whole series on wisdom we can learn from songs.

So we need to think about the mission. What is the mission we need to raise our children. let's think about this just for a second. I think sometimes we unintentionally get things in the wrong order. We don't mean to, but it just kind of happens. And so we have to talk about the mission of being a parent.

And our default is always what our parents did to us. Right? That's our default parenting is how our parents parented us. Now, if you had great parents, that's all good. If your parents were less than all that. You need to be aware of that to make adjustments. Let's talk about what parenting is not. Parenting is not raising your children to develop their full potential. What? I thought we were supposed to raise our kids so they could be all they could be right? That's an army commercial be all you can be. What does that even mean? How can you be all you can be? When you stop and think about it doesn't even make sense. Right? Raising children is not helping them be all they can be. If you ever met parents, none of us in here. You know, we're talking about other people. Okay, none of us in here. Do you ever met parents? That they're all you know, my kid is the greatest. My kid gets the best grades. My kid is gifted. My kid is this my kid is that. You ever met somebody like that? Yeah. Have they ever talked about how kind their child is? Or how loving their child is? Or how merciful their child is? Be All You can be ends badly. Now, I'm all for helping our children develop and grow amen. We need to provide them with the skill set they need to do well in life. But that's not the primary goal of parenting. The primary goal of parenting is not to produce clones of ourselves. Little mini me run around, just like me. That's not what we want to do either. The primary goal of parenting is not to expose our child to every possible life experience. Because sometimes that happens too, right? We got soccer on Monday, we got dance on Tuesday, we got karate on Wednesday, we got band on Thursday. Right? This is like the ADD way of parenting. It drives you crazy. This is not what parenting is supposed to be. Now it's okay to expose our children to some of those things. But the goal of being a parent is not exposing your child to every kind of life experience there could be. Being a parent is not raising your child to try and fix your broken marriage or relationships. Sometimes we have kids because that'll save our marriage. I've never seen that work. Okay. So these are all the things parenting is not and some of these things are good. But these are all the things, parenting are not.

What is it to be a parent? I wanted to play the opening song to the old TV show Mission Impossible. Right comes walking in your mission Mr. Phelps should you choose to accept it is... but you know, it's copyright. Can't play that. So just imagine it in your head. Well, what is the mission? The mission is to prepare your children for eternal life. I would gladly give up all success on this earth for my children, if I could get them into heaven. Live as a popper, homeless, if I can get you into heaven, it was worth it. Now those other things are okay, it's okay to experience some of the things in life. It's okay to be successful. It's okay to do well. But those are subsequent, they're underneath to getting into heaven. Heaven is the number one goal right?

Let's look at another text Deuteronomy if you're still in Leviticus turn over a couple of books into Deuteronomy chapter 6. Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy chapter 6. I'm trying to bust through this really quick Is it hot in here? Is it just me? It's hot. All right, Evan is gonna turn on the air Amen Evan.

Deuteronomy 6:1-2. These are the commands and the decrees and the laws your God directed me to teach you to observe and the land you are crossing over Jordan to possess so that you and who else? your children and who else? their children, after them may fear the Lord your God, as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you so that you may enjoy long life. Not just long life here on Earth, but long life eternally.

Let's turn over real quick to Psalms chapter 78. Psalms is about the middle of the Bible. Psalm 78:1-8. Psalm 78:1-8. my people hear my teaching. Listen to the words of my mouth, I will open my mouth with a parable, I will utter hidden things, things from old things we have heard and known that our ancestors

told us, we will not hide them from their descendants. And we will tell the next generation, the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established law in Israel, and he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, and even who the children yet to be born. And they would in turn, tell their children, and they would put their trust in God, and would not forget his deeds, but would keep his commands. And they would not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts are not loyal to God whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Just like the difference we saw between Max Juke and Jonathan Edwards, that trickled down through the generations, when you're telling the people about God. It matters. And like I said, this applies to our children, but this applies to the rest of our family too. I mean, how many of you wants your cousins in heaven? Let me see your hands. How many What's your aunts and uncles in heaven? How many wants your grandparents in heaven? You gotta tell them. We got to tell them. It's got to make a difference right.

Now, sometimes when we're parents, there's a lot of things.... life happens. And we get all worked up over messy rooms, strange haircuts that the kids want. Why don't you get your hair cut normally, which means the way I cut mine. There's a lot of minutia that happens in life, and sometimes we get all worked up on it, and we major in the minors. Don't Major in the minors. Its hair. It will be okay. Right? Yeah, he wants to dye it blue. Hopefully he'll grow out of that someday. Right? Do you think... Can you picture Jesus walking along with the disciples, it's time to camp for the night. They set up the tents. And Jesus going around and inspecting the tents going. Did you do that right? What about that? Hey, are you cooking supper right? You're not doing that right! Can you picture that? No, I can't either. I think Jesus was worried about some eternal things. Some things he was trying to get into their hearts. And he was trying to prepare them for ministry and what was going to happen, and he wasn't so concerned about how the tent was pitched. That should probably be a lesson to us. Amen. Aman, somebody up here, agreed.

By the way, it's great leading the songs when the kids are up here singing, that's cool. You guys can come back and sit in the front and sing with us anytime. That's awesome.

You know, if you heard the saying, it takes a community to raise a child. I hate that. I really hate that saying. Why? it takes parents to raise a child. God's called the parents to raise a child. Now it's nice to have a community with a little help. Right? When you want to go out on date night, it's nice to have a babysitter that you can trust. Right? When I was a kid, and some of you may relate to this, if you went over to a friend's house and you were messing up, it was perfectly okay for their parents to yell at you and get you back in line. Amen some of the older voices that you hear saying amen to that. Right, and that was okay, it's good to have some support. But the community doesn't raise the child, the parents do. It's not up to the Sabbath school teachers. It's not up to the youth minister. It's not up to the pastor. It's not even up to our great Christian educators that we have. Some of them are Christian schools, we've got Christian educators here, they're working in public schools, they're a lot more limited to what they can do in the public school. And I'm grateful I'm so grateful for Christian education. It is worth every penny. And more. Because I'm viewing that as increasing the odds that my kid gets into heaven. And I would pay any amount of money for that.

See, we're reaping the results of a generation of kids that were grown up, but not brought up. They grew up, they aged, they got older. But nobody brought them up. Because it was always somebody

else's responsible. It was the school's responsibility. It was the karate teachers responsibility. It was always somebody else's responsibility. The biggest problem we have today is not what we've done to kids. But what we haven't done to kids. We haven't brought them up in the way that we should have. We haven't been good parents to them sometimes.

Okay, now, real quick here. We'll finish up. I know your stomach's are growling. It's time for lunch, right? I want to talk about three responsibilities that different people have if we're going to bring kids up the right way. What are the responsibilities? Number one, God has a responsibility. Turn with me to Ezekiel 36. God has a responsibility and how we parent our children. Sometimes we don't think about this, we think it's all mine, but it's not. God has a responsibility to Ezekiel 36:26 and 27 everybody there. It says I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit in you. I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit in you and I will move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

What is God's gonna do? Give us a new heart. You cannot give anybody else a new heart. No heart surgeons here today are there? Other than those guys, the rest of us can't give anybody a new heart. God only can do that. Right? We can try to coach our children and we have a part to play in bringing them up, right? And doing some things, but we can't give them a new heart. And we can't pass laws that make this happen, either. You see, people say, we need to put prayer back in public school. I love prayer. Prayer is a wonderful, great thing. But you can't pass a law to make people pray and expect that to work. That's not how this works. Right? We can't mandate somebody to do this. It has to be that they have a new heart, and they want to do it. We can't look to the politicians to fix this. We can't look to other people to fix it. This is fixed in the home. Way, one of the ways to do this is to be like Joshua, and say, for me and my family we will serve the Lord. Right. Me and my family were serving the Lord, I don't know what the rest you're gonna do. You want to come along with us come along, but there's no doubt about what we're doing. Okay? obeying God. And God will give us a new heart. All right.

Secondly, the children have a responsibility. The children have a responsibility. We don't need to look this one up. I think you guys know this Exodus 20:12. The fifth commandment, what's that? Say? Honor, right, Honor your father and your mother, that you may live long in the land that your Lord your God has given you. Now, we need to talk about this a little bit. Because when you're little kids, you learn to obey, because I said, so. Right. Parents are dictators when kids are little. We dictate what they do. Hopefully, we're benevolent dictators, bet we're dictators, right? And as the kids get older, you kind of relax that a little bit. And now you can't tell your 15 year old, because I said, so. You ever trying to tell a 15 year old because I said, so. Did that work out for you? I see some people shaking their heads. No. Right. You have to have a reason why. And help them understand. They're called into obedience. But this obedience starts almost because of threat of punishment. Right? When they're little, you have to be good or you get in trouble. When you're getting older, sometimes you think I can take the pain. I want to do that. And I going to get in trouble, ground me for two weeks. Worth it! Right. So you can't just rely on the threat of punishment, there has to be a reason why. And the kids begin to learn, honor, not just obedience. The honor comes with this thought of I love my mom and dad, and they've asked me not to do this, and I want to please them. I'm not just afraid of two weeks of being grounded. But I want to do something that will please them. You see the difference there? It's it's subtle. We have to help our kids grow into that. Okay. And when you put these two things together, this obedience and the sense of

honor and being able to honor somebody, you get what we call self control. You ever met somebody that doesn't have self control? What a train wreck, right? It's usually a train wreck. They get mad throw stuff and yell at people feelings get hurt. It's wild, because they have no self control. Like I said, Nobody here, right? We're talking about other people. You got to have self control. We want our children to have self control. And they learn that by learning how to obey and honor their parents.

Last one. Parents have responsibility Ephesians turn with me to Ephesians chapter six, verse four. You'll probably recognize this verse Ephesians 6:4. Everybody there? Ephesians 6:4 Fathers do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. And King James says don't bring your children to wrath. Don't make them angry. Have you looked at the younger generation? Sometimes they seem pretty angry. Why? Whose fault is that? Theirs? No, that's our fault. That's our fault. We were the ones that are supposed to raise them up not to be like that. Okay, this text is interesting, because it has a negative, do not and then has a positive. Instead, do this. So let's look at the negative don't exasperate your children, right? We're not supposed to make our children angry. Now, if you've ever had a teenager, you're gonna make your child angry, because you're gonna say no, when they want you to say yes. That's not the kind of anger they're talking about. Right? The kind of anger they're talking about is the kind of anger a child would have towards a parent, because the parent is not doing their job being a parents. Children need parents.

Have you heard of The ABCs of parenting, may want to write these down, I just discovered these, I wish I'd have known them earlier. ABCs of parenting pretty easy A affection, we have to give our child affection. And sometimes we got to figure out how to give them affection when we don't approve of what they're doing. They may become adults, they may make decisions we don't like, we can't just say hey, man, you're out of my life. That makes them angry. We're not supposed to do that we got to keep showing affection. Even when we may not approve, that can be a challenge. But A is affection. B is boundaries, we got to have boundaries, what are the boundaries that the family has, and C there has to be consequences for those boundary excursions. And if your child is like me, there's gonna be times in life where they're gonna go, yep, that's worth it. I'll take the two weeks grounding. I'm just gonna do it. That's okay. But there has to be consequences. There has to be consequences. And when these children learn that there's affection, and there's love all the time, even when there's boundary excursions, and there's consequences that will help them.

Real quick, let's reflect a little bit. How is your relationship with your children and your parents and your extended family? Are there any relationships that need some attention? If you're a normal family the answer here is yes. Right. Most of us have some relationship in our family that could use a little attention. And so you may be saying you don't want I don't know how to do that. Because it's been 30 years since I talked to that guy. And I'm not real anxious to talk to him now. Well, put on your big boy pants and go over and say two words. I'm sorry. That's all it takes. I'm sorry. Even if they were the one that did it. You were innocent. I know. You are innocent. Go over and tell him I'm sorry. And begin building that relationship.

Then what are we gonna do this week? What's our challenge? Pray. We can't do anything without prayer and take the necessary steps we need to begin building rebuilding those relationships.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, help us to be the kind of parents that are bringing up our children the way you would have us bring them up. Help us to be the kind of parents that are working and actively trying to do our best with these blessings that you have given us these children and not just our children, Lord,

but all our family our cousins our aunts our uncles our grandparents Our parents, everybody, help us to be the kind of people that are continually pointing them to you. And they want to live the way we live because they see what you have done in our lives. Be with us this week, and then the coming weeks and years to come. until you come again. Help us to be a good example. Our responsibility doesn't end because our children turn 18. Help us to continue to pray for them to never be one prayer short and to pray for them. And we can all be in heaven when you come on that day. Be with us now. In Jesus name, Amen.