

Old Testament Law and Rebellious Children, Part 2  
*Scandalous Texts*  
By Bob Vincent

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 6:7-20; Ephesians 6:1-4  
**Preached on:** Sunday, July 30, 2023

**Trinity Presbyterian Church**  
2623 N Robison Road  
Texarkana, TX 75501

**Website:** [www.rbvincent.com](http://www.rbvincent.com)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/rbvincent](http://www.sermonaudio.com/rbvincent)

**(N.B. I repent for my slander of fellow believers.**

**I acknowledge that I unintentionally misrepresented what the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly adopted.**

**I did this because of what some of their commissioners had stated publicly. I disagree with those commissioners but not with an adopted position of the PCA.**

**What they have actually adopted requires a position to be confirmed by their presbyteries and then sent back to their general assembly for final adoption.**

**This is a summary of where things stand in the Presbyterian Church in America, written by an Evangelical Presbyterian Church pastor who was in the PCA until 2021.**

**“The question of whether a non-practicing, non-identifying, same-sex attracted man can be a pastor/elder in the PCA has not fully been determined. There are those in the PCA who prefer to forbid any same-sex attraction, celibate, repentant, or otherwise. That is not, however, the majority position.**

**“Given recent voting, the majority cannot conscientiously prohibit SSA men who are walking in repentance and celibacy or marriage. Put positively, the majority of the PCA allows for SSA men to hold office so long as they are walking in genuine repentance and engage in humble mortification of those disordered elements of their hearts.**

**“The key issues under debate in the PCA, and which have been largely resolved as of this last GA are:**

**“1) Denying the Roman Catholic doctrine of concupiscence and supporting total depravity. So same-sex attractions are sinful in and of themselves, whether or not they are conscious or acted upon.**

**“2) Hyphenating the name of Christian with a sin, or any other modifier is a grave error. This is the concern over self-description. Are they identifying themselves by their sinful lusts?**

**“3) An affirmation of the power of progressive sanctification and necessity of mortification. While many may struggle with SSA for a majority of their lives or entire lives, true deliverance and change is possible and to be desired. The sinful desires are to be mortified at every turn and not indulged.”**

**I do not disagree with that summary, and I publicly repent for my unintentional misrepresentation.**

**In keeping with the theme of my sermon, I affirm Regular repentance is the mark of people who are genuine Christians.)**

## **The Sermon**

As you know, I have been preaching on scandalous texts, that is, those passages in the Bible that disturb people when they read them: How could a loving God have said this, done this, commanded this? And so last week, we focused on that passage in the Old Testament dealing with rebellious children that were commanded to be stoned, and we concluded, as we looked at that, that that has passed away because everything in the entire Old Testament has been passed through the matrix of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

What I mean by that is this: Everything in the Old Testament is still here but it is radically changed as it comes over in the New Testament. So, for example, do we observe the Passover today? Of course, we do. We do it every time we do the Lord's Supper. Do we observe circumcision today? Yes, we do. We do it every time we do baptism. And we can go on and on and on so that we accept the Old Testament as God's infallible Word, and it applies to us today through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, as we saw last week, two death penalty offenses, one was adultery and the other was incest, when a man in the church in Corinth, and that was our text in 1 Corinthians 5, when a man in Corinth was guilty of both adultery and incest because he was in a relationship with his father's wife, not his mother. Instead of stoning them as the Old Testament commanded

(Leviticus 20:10-11) —that commandment has been fulfilled in Christ, and I'll teach on fulfillment in Christ on another Sunday—but the point I want to make is we no longer do that. How did the New Testament Church deal with this man guilty of two capital offenses? They disciplined him by removing him from the fellowship of the church until he repented, and the moment he repented, they restored him to full fellowship in the church, and it's always the way of the New Testament: Full fellowship.

So today we want to look in that light at page 1,756 for a moment and I'm not going to read the entire passage, but I will begin with verse 14. Romans 7:14.

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Now, I want you to look down at the last statement in verse 24.

24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

The word of the Lord.

May we pray.

*Lord, help me as I apply this Scripture and others today that everyone here may have encouragement, hope, the ability to deal with our past and the ability to go forward in confidence through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Now it's interesting if you follow this through, the answer to the question of Romans 7 is found in Romans 8. The point I want to make is that the Christian life is a struggle, and he says, for example, that in Romans 8, and in verse 20 he says,

20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21

that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

So, the point in Romans 7 is life is a struggle, and so now I want us to look at two passages on parenting. The first is found in Colossians 3, if you'll turn there, Colossians 3 on page 1,835, Colossians 3, verse 20, page 1,835.

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.” Then he says in verse 21,

“Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”

Do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. A lot of things that we might say about dealing with rebellious children can be traced right back to how they were raised by their parents, and I think it's striking that he says in verse 21, don't embitter your children or they'll become discouraged.

And then flipping back to Ephesians 6 for a moment, Ephesians 6, and he says in verse 1, page 1,823,

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—3 that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'

Now look at verse 4,

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

What is it that if we do not instill in our children? What is it that if we do not instill in our children, we are going to turn them into rebels, or people who are so destroyed inside that they don't know how to function in the world? What do we have to instill in our children? And the answer to that in one way is found in the book of James 3. You'll turn there for a quick second. James 3:14 speaks about two kinds of wisdom and he says there on page page 1,883, looking down there, he says in verse 14, James 3:14, he says,

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such ‘wisdom’ does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

And what he’s saying here is this: it’s earthly. We have this statement about the world, the flesh, and the devil. What we have to instill in our children is that they’re born in a fight, and that fight never ends in this life. It never ends until we go to be with Jesus. And what we’re teaching our children to fight about, or fight against, is the earthly, that is, this world and its value system.

The second thing is that unspiritual is a translation of the Greek word from which we get the word soul (*psuchikos*, ψυχικός). The Greek word for soul is *psuche* (*psuchē*, ψυχή). We get psychology and psychiatry from that. And so, he’s saying when it’s unspiritual, he’s saying it has to do with the human mind. The human mind, that is the fallen human mind, that is our sinful nature.

And then he says it’s demonic, it’s of the devil (*daimoniōdēs*, δαιμονιώδης, related to *daimonion*, δαιμόνιον, but different from the word for the devil, *diabolos*, διάβολος).

And so, what we have to teach our children is that we’re in a struggle and how do we teach our children that we’re in a struggle?

The first thing that we do is we have to be honest with our children. Parents who never level with their children, parents who never tell their children about their own struggles, are parents who are failing to do their job, and the end result is that the children become angry and frustrated.

We must always as parents —and I do not hold myself up as a paragon of parenting. In many ways as I look back on my parenting with all the optimism I had when we were first married, and then coming to the reality of how deodorant changes people [laughter], I realize in many ways I was a failure as a parent, and one of the reasons is that I was so devoted to my job that I was out night after night after night after night. I did come home to eat supper, but then I left again. And so, I think of my three girls who were the first three of our children, and how neglected they were by me, and felt neglected by me.

So, instead of sitting down and doing things, I’m out, night after night: session meetings, visiting visitors, visiting people in the hospital, doing this

and that, some of which I did, of course, during the day, but much of the work I did, I did at night.

And so, I look back on that in many ways and say, if you want an example of parenting, take my failures as a parent of my three daughters.

By the time my sons came along, I had wakened up. I had begun to realize that my neglect, my failure to spend time, intimate time with my three daughters, had sown in them a sense of, he doesn't really love me.

You know, if children know you love them, if they really know it, if they really feel it, if they really sense it, it makes a profound difference in how they act.

And so, the parent who does not instill in his children love, convincing them that they are loved by spending time with them, and when they do things that are good, praising them, that is a parent that's not doing the job. And so, I did try to praise my children, all five of them, when they did things that pleased me. But the trouble is that it takes a lot of positive to counter one negative. And so, as my boys began to grow up, I realized I was in trouble as a parent, and I want to thank God for an assistant pastor who roped me in to becoming an assistant scoutmaster.

I was having trouble with my oldest boy, and I said to my assistant pastor, if you can get my son involved in scouting, I'll help you out, because in those days, Boy Scouts had what was called two deep leadership. They still have that. You can never be alone with a child in scouting. You have to have another adult with you. And so, what happened is that I helped him, and then the rascal decided to join the Navy.

He became a navy chaplain and abandoned me, and I didn't want to have happen to that scout troop what had happened at my scout troop when I dropped out of Boy Scouts without making any ranks. And so, I decided I'm going to get involved, I'm going to get involved in it full-time, big-time.

I did, and it made a profound difference in both my sons because I spent time with them. I sat down with them and planned meetings, planned camping trips, helped them do it. They did it, but with my help and supervision.

And I got so involved in scouting that I not only became the Scoutmaster, but I got on the board of the Boy Scouts locally, and I was a National Jamboree Scoutmaster, and I was the last president of the Attakapas Council, not because I was great, but because the head of Christus St. Francis Cabrini Hospital, who was the CEO and the president of scouting, didn't want to go

down with the ship. And it's kind of like Captain Smith saying to you as a kid on the Titanic, "Young man, would you like to be the captain of this ship?" "Oh, yes, sir." So, I took the ship down. I merged it with the Ouachita Valley Council out of Monroe.

And then I had a strange experience on Halloween 2013. The Boy Scouts of America flew me to Salt Lake City, and they wanted me to give the keynote address to the Southern Region. It was celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of scouting in the LDS Church, which in the western part of the United States comprised a huge number of scouts. And so, I gave the keynote address, and in that keynote address, I talked about homosexuality, and I told them that the approach of Boy Scouts at that time was identical to my approach as a pastor. What do you do with a young person who indicates that they are same-sex attracted? And what you do with them as a pastor is exactly what you do as a parent.

You don't kick them out. You're kind to them. You listen to them. You guide them. You direct them. And so, I was supporting the change at that point in scouting, but I didn't support the second change that came along where they changed for adults who were openly and actively practicing same-sex things to be scout leaders. So, I did not support that, and I left the Boy Scouts.

So, I want to talk to you about that because I think it's a burning issue in our time. How do you deal with your children if they begin to open up to you and share their struggles?

The point I want to say is, if we've read Romans 7:14 and following, the true Christian life is a struggle. The true Christian life is a struggle. It's a struggle against sin. The difference in the Old Testament and the New Testament is, in the Old Testament, Joshua engaged in a jihad against the surrounding nations, wiping them out.

In the New Testament, that jihad is with ourselves. It's the struggle within myself. It's the inner fight. I have to fight against nature. And so, the point I want to make is this: If we look at Scripture, if you go back to Romans 1 for a moment. Romans 1. It's very plain that the New Testament condemns behavior, and this is page 1,747, that is a certain way. And he says in verse 21, page 1,747,

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the

glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Now look at verse 24 and ask yourself this question: As students of history, do we see a pattern with cultures who reject the knowledge of God and his standards and these kinds of things? And the answer is, yes we do. Look at verse 24.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

No one can read that passage of Scripture—no one can read that passage of Scripture and have an unclear view of these matters. And furthermore, our Lord Jesus Christ, in Matthew 19 quotes from Genesis that God, in the beginning, made human beings male and female, and he put them together, and he quotes that with approval and applies it to today. What God has joined together, let no one put asunder (Matthew 19:4-6, quoting Genesis 1:27; 5:2; 2:24).

So where do we go with these things? Where we go with these things is this: We have to have a rigid and absolute standard of truth. Standard of truth.



But how we apply that truth does not need to be harsh, rigid. It needs to be kind, tenderhearted, loving, and inviting.

So, what does this boil down to? Turn with me over to 1 Corinthians 6 for a moment. 1 Corinthians 6. What this boils down to is this, starting in verse 9, 1 Corinthians 6:9, page 1,777.

9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Look at verse 11.

11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Let me see if I can tie this together because it's so important. We live in an era where our world, the world, that's the philosophy of a current culture in a current age, has utterly rejected the standards of Christendom for the past (roughly) 2,000 years (AD 325). That's undebatable. And what we find in our modern world is that we must teach our children to resist the thinking of the modern world, because the modern world tells them, in essence, there's no God, and if there's no God, there is no right or wrong.

Murder is wrong for one reason only, because God says it's wrong, and God says it's wrong because it's contrary to his nature. God never murders anybody. God kills people every day. He may kill me this afternoon as our granddaughter and Sandy and I drive to Memphis to take care of grandchildren. I have no promise from God I won't die today. I do have a promise from God that because I trust in Christ, that's going to be a great day for me, absent from the body, present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21, 23-24). But I don't think my work's done yet. But the point is, God never murders anybody.

God never steals. God never lies. God never commits adultery. We can go down the list. The Ten Commandments refract, as light is refracted in a prism, God's own character. And so, what we need to understand is that Christendom, which is not Christianity, Christendom is what came into effect in the wake of Constantine's unfortunate approval of Christianity as

state religion (AD 325), but the standards of Christendom have pretty much remained the same wherever the gospel has been preached.

But those standards are no longer the standards of our culture and our civilization here in America, in Western Europe, in much of the world, and so we need to raise our children in such a way that they understand that they have to resist the thinking of the modern world.

And then we see as we think about the flesh, we need to teach our children they're going to have to wage a lifelong jihad against their own natures. What is the mark of a Christian? The mark of a Christian is somebody who is more sinful than he wants to be. Let me say that again. The mark of a Christian is somebody who is more sinful than he or she wants to be.

In other words, if I am a real Christian, I am never happy with my own spiritual attainments. I always see the need to continue to fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil. I have not attained to what I want to be, and I'm not the person I used to be before I was converted, but I'm not the man I'm going to be when I'm with Jesus (Philippians 3:12-15; 1 John 3:2).

So, we need to teach our children they've got to fight against nature. What do I mean against fighting against nature? Let's take just one of Jesus' commandments. He said if somebody strikes you on one cheek, turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:38-39).

Did that hurt? Oh yeah. Is that natural? No, that's not natural.

The purpose in parenting is teaching our children to resist their own natures, because if they don't resist their own natures, if they give themselves over to their own natures, terrible consequences will come. Somebody hits me, what is my natural response? I want to hit them back, and I want to hit them back with a two-by-four. And I think of one particular President who made some comment about one up this and one up that and how sad. The point is that Jesus' standards of life go against nature—Go against nature.

So, let's think about this for a moment. How is it that some people come to be attracted to people of the same sex? And the answer to that is it's the same way that people are attracted to people of the opposite sex, and it has to do with several things.

One is genetics and people: Because of original sin, we're not the way that we used to be before Adam and Eve sinned, the genetic code of humanity was warped profoundly when our first parents sinned against God, and so what we inherit genetically is not what we would have inherited genetically had our first parents not sinned.

You want an example? Just look at my hands. I've got age spots. I have to tell a story about my granddaughter who's here today. When she saw my hands one day, she said, she commented about my hands not being attractive, and I said, well, those are old people's hands, and one day you're going to have them too.

"I don't want to have old people's hands!"

But sadly, Zoe, you're going to have old people's hands, and the other thing you're going to have is, one day, if you live long enough, you're going to have a surgeon gouging out pieces of meat from your body because of skin cancer and other things. I've had two kinds of cancer, squamous cell, and basal cell. Thank God I have not had melanomas. But if you live long enough, you're going to have cancer. You're going to have heart disease. You're going to have all these things. You're going to have bad knees.

And so, our genetic code was altered when our first parents sinned and so some things are passed along genetically.

But then there's also the issue of environment, and we cannot dismiss environment. When a father is distant and harsh, and over-controlling, and constantly condemning, and never praising, he is setting things in motion with his children that would not have been set in motion without that bad parenting.

And so I need to be a good parent. I need to be a kind parent. I need to be a parent who opens his ears and opens his heart when his children talk to him, and listen to them. And what happens when they share something bizarre?

You don't want to appear shocked, but neither do you want to approve of certain ways of doing things. And so, again, you have a standard of truth that's absolute, but you need to be kind and gentle in dealing with your children, because there are genetic things that flow down our bloodline, and there are environmental things that exacerbate those things, the world and the flesh, and James adds, there's the demonic (James 3:15). You can think about the demonic like this.

Many of us grew up without tapes and all of that, we had record players. When you take a record and put it on a platform with no electricity and put the needle down and turn the platter with your finger, you can hear faintly the music. What happens? That's the world in the flesh. But Satan, through demons, amplifies that so it can be 50,000 watts of power. Whoa! And I read in the news recently that there was a concert that actually registered as an earthquake. It was so loud

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/03/garth-brooks-concert-earthquake/>).

So, you've got the world, the flesh, and the devil. What do we do with our children who struggle? We need to affirm our children with their struggles. We need to listen to them. We need to guide them. We don't need to cut our children off because they've done some terrible thing. And so, we go on further with this, this is the great truth here.

He says in verse 11, "That is what some of you were" (1 Corinthians 6:11). We need to hold out to our children, whatever they struggle with, there is power in the Holy Spirit to overcome sinful nature. Is that perfect in this life? No, it's not. What the mark of a Christian is, is I'm a struggler. And original sin expresses itself differently in this person than in that person. You may never have been tempted towards same-sex attraction. You may have been tempted to stealing, and it's been a real struggle your whole life not to steal. Kleptomania is a real mania, and what kleptomania is, is that natural impulse of a person to steal, amplified through experience and through Satan, to become an irresistible thing. The point is: Original sin expresses itself differently in one person than in another.

Now I want to commend to you our denomination. As I look at denominations in America, I see the EPC has a balanced view of things.

Recently, the Presbyterian Church in America took a stand, a strong stand that said that people that struggle with homosexuality should never be ordained as officers.

(Please see what I wrote at the very beginning. This was an unintentional misrepresentation of their position.)

I disagree with that. Notice what I said, people who **struggle** with homosexuality. The Christian church is made up of strugglers, and officers in the church should be strugglers.

It makes no difference if your struggle is with adultery or homosexuality or lesbianism. It makes no difference. The point is: No one should be an officer in a Christian church who is not a struggler.

The people who are in danger are those who give themselves over to things and plunge on madly into behavior that is so contrary to Scripture that it's condemned throughout Scripture, even in the teaching of the Lord regarding male and female (Matthew 19:4-6, quoting Genesis 1:27; 5:2; 2:24).

So, should someone who struggles with homosexuality be allowed to be an elder or a deacon in our church? And the answer to that question is, “Yes.”  
“Really?”

Yes. And that’s the position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (<https://epc.org/wp-content/uploads/Files/1-Who-We-Are/B-About-The-EPC/Position-Papers/PositionPaper-HumanSexuality.pdf>).

Christians struggle, and officers should exemplify struggling and as we mature in Christ, we mature and grow in grace so that our struggles are not as intense as they once were. Is complete perfection demanded of an officer? And the answer to that question is “No.”

What happens when an officer falls into sin? If the officer repents, that officer should be restored to fellowship. If they don’t repent, that’s when discipline and being put out of the church comes into play as we saw last week. But the point is as people struggle with sin, that’s the exemplar. That’s the example. That is the standard and that’s what we hold out.

So, I disagree vehemently with the decision of the Presbyterian Church in America that singled out homosexuality as a sin of all sins, that people who struggle with that sin should not be ordained as elders or deacons in the church, and I’m saying strugglers are welcome in the church.

Strugglers should be enabled, if they are seeking God for his victory and gaining victory day by day, should be allowed to be elders and deacons in a church.

This is a controversial position. I also disagree with the position of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that just accepts these things carte blanche, without any standard of truth (<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/church-and-homosexuality/>). And I’m going to give you a couple of personal examples.

Many years ago, my wife and I took an unwed mother into our home, and in the course of time, she gave her baby up for adoption. That was a very painful and traumatic thing for her, and shortly after that, in the place where she went to work, she encountered a significant number of lesbians, and she became embroiled in lesbianism.

And I went and talked to her, and I pleaded with her. I said, “Do you want help? We can get you the help that you need.” Because there’s help. The help that people need, as we see in 1 Corinthians 6:11, “Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified,” —the Holy Spirit if a

person will be accountable to others, and pray with others, and seek God's help, that person will get help.

And so, she said, "I don't want help." She quit coming to church. But then I found out she was going to our youth fellowship on Sunday nights and giving rides home to our youth. And so, I led the church, the elders, and we publicly, on a Sunday night, because the parents were there on Sunday night. and children were at risk, we excommunicated her from the church.

You say, "Wow. You really did that?" We did it.

Now guess what happened several months later. And that was all done in love and reaching out. On December 31, 1983, when we were having a watch night service, about five minutes to midnight, my wife cried out in the prayer time as we were praying in the New Year, "Lord," and she named the young lady's name, "life is in danger! Please help her, O Lord! Please rescue her, O Lord!" December 31, just before midnight, 1983.

What we did not know then, I learned the next morning when I went to church, which was Sunday morning, before the days of cell phones. My phone rang in my office before church. It was Huey P. Long Hospital. Back then we had charity hospitals in Louisiana. And they called me, and they said, "Someone is desperate to get a hold of you and your wife."

And what it was, was this, she was shot through the chest and a bullet missed her aorta by smaller than you can see, and what did she say when they carried her in the ambulance before she went into surgery?

"Please get a hold of Bob and Sandy Vincent. Have them come to me and pray for me."

The point is that she knew what we did, we did in love. It's like dealing with children. We have to let our children know we love them and we're dealing with them in love.

That doesn't mean that you allow a child to live in your home in open rebellion, eating your groceries, despising your standards. There's a point to say, "If you're not going to live by our standards, you cannot live in our home." Now, we're not talking about eight-year-olds. We're talking about young adults.

So, I'm saying there's a place for discipline. The important truth is that the Christian church and the Christian home have to maintain a standard that conforms to God's Word, God's law, but as we do that, we have to do that in kindness, in gentleness, and in love.

And now I want to address myself to anyone who may be watching this online. I want you to know that if you struggle with homosexuality, you are welcome to be part of our church. We welcome people who struggle with homosexuality. We welcome people who struggle even with many other things such as pedophilia, alcoholism, stealing. The church is a place for sinners.

The church is a place we might call Sinners Anonymous. It's like an AA meeting, but not limited to alcohol. It's all sin, but we have to say to you, because God requires us to say it to you, that if you persist in acting out same-sex relationships, if you persist in this, if you go on and on and on in this, without ever repenting, you are going to go to hell! (1 John 3:4-10; Mark 9:43-48)

I say that with tears in my eyes. You cannot sin on and on and on, whatever that sin may be without risking your eternal soul. And so, I want to invite you to come to this church.

You will find this church to be a strange church in some ways. We're small. We're dominated by older people. But we are a church that, while not tolerant of sin itself, are very tolerant of strugglers, people who say, "I don't want to be this way." This is the church for you.

This is the church for you. Come and welcome to the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ with fellow strugglers who struggle with this issue or that issue or other issues. We're not sinlessly perfect. We don't make ourselves out to be that way. We're never going to say to you, "Get out of here, you filthy sinner!"

We're going to say, "Come and welcome to Jesus Christ." We'll pray **with** you. We'll pray **for** you. We will love you. We will accept you as you are, as you struggle with sin.

So, I want to say to you, and say to all of you, be honest with your children. Be honest with one another. Face the fact that we all struggle with things that are not good and face the fact that our struggles are rooted in our genetics because of a fallen nature, in our environment, how we're raised — a distant father, a condemning father, has a profound effect on both sons and daughters in their sexual maturity —and on the devil.

And I can tell you this, again addressing myself just to those watching, you have no power to resist the pull of the devil, and if you yield to his temptations on and on and on, you will end up on a road you do not want to

be on. And that road, in this life, is worse than death, and in the world to come, eternal death.

May we pray.

*Lord, bless this message as we reflect on texts in the Bible that disturb people.*

*Lord, there are texts in the Old Testament that disturb people.*

*And Lord, we pray, as we take an application of that, that we would learn to be good fathers and mothers.*

*Lord, that we would deal with our own parents who, Lord, like me, fumbled their way through parenting in the early years, to forgive our parents whether or not they ever ask us to forgive them.*

*And Lord, for those of us who struggle with this sin or that sin, to be encouraged and comforted that all real Christians are strugglers with sin.*

*For Jesus' sake.*

*Amen.*