

# “When Parents Lose Control”

(Luke 13:20-21)

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November 13, 2011

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## I. Introduction

### A. Visiting Savannah, Georgia

1. Bonaventura Cemetery....hanging moss
2. Most famous monument
  - a. On the cover of “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil”
  - b. Exact replica of their 10 year old daughter
  - c. Because of the positive influence she had on others
3. In another cemetery a little white stone marked the grave of a dear little girl, and on the stone were chiseled these words:

*A child of whom her playmates said, “It was easier to be good when she was with us.”*

### B. Your influence on those around you?

- a. Can be *intentional*...or *unintentional*
- b. Can be *positive*...or *negative*
  1. Wedgwood pottery

Josiah Wedgwood, maker of the famous Wedgwood pottery, one day showed a nobleman through his factory. A boy who was an employee of the factory accompanied them. The nobleman was profane and vulgar.

At first the boy was shocked by the men’s irreverence. Then he became fascinated by his coarse jokes and laughed heartily. Mr. Wedgwood was distressed. At the conclusion of the tour, he showed the nobleman a vase of unique design. The man was charmed with its exquisite shape and rare beauty.

As the man reached for it, Mr. Wedgwood purposefully let it fall to the floor. The man uttered an angry oath: “I wanted that vase for my collection,” he shouted, “and you have ruined it by your carelessness!”

Mr. Wedgwood answered, “Sir, there are other ruined things more precious than a vase, however valuable, which can never be restored. You can never give back to that boy, who has just left us, the reverence for sacred things which his parents have tried to teach him for years! You have undone their labor in less than half an hour!”

## 2. Influence on your children

- a. Preparing them for the day they leave home
- b. Are they ready?
- c. *My burden for our children*

## 3. When your kids go off to college

- a. After one semester many return home as different people
  - 1. Not always for the better
  - 2. Their faith in God seriously challenged
- b. Email from a member of our church.
  - 1. His 23 year old grand daughter

*Hi Grandpa,*

*Good to hear from you. Moving back home has been pretty nice, although I'm antsy to get back to Africa or someplace else. We'll see!*

*In regards to the sermon you sent, I would like to be honest. I think the Bible is a beautifully written book but do not consider it fact, and do not believe in hell as a real place. No sermon could convince me otherwise, and I hope you respect my beliefs. I do good work for the world, I am a kind person, and I have some direction in life. I do not think you need to worry about me.*

*Thanks and I hope all is well*

## 4. Not an isolated story

5. Most won't openly admit how they feel
6. Why do so many kids seem to leave their faith when they leave home?
7. What many face
  - a. Intellectual assault on their faith
    1. Kids without answers
  - b. A smirk and rolling eyes
    1. "Oh, you're one of them"

### **C. Some frightening statements from educators**

1. Philosopher Richard Rorty

*Rorty noted that students are fortunate to find themselves "under the benevolent Herrschaft (rule) of people like me, and have escaped the grip of their frightening, vicious, dangerous parents." Indeed, parents who send their children to college should recognize that as professors "we are going to go right on trying to discredit you in the eyes of your children, trying to strip your fundamentalist religious community of dignity, trying to make your views seem silly rather than discussable."*

2. Dinesh D'Souza (President of King's College)

*This is how many secular teachers treat the traditional beliefs of students. The strategy is not to argue with religious views or try to prove them wrong. Rather, to subject them to such scorn that they are pushed outside the bounds of acceptable debate.*

*This strategy is effective because young people who go to good colleges are extremely eager to learn what it means to be an educated Harvard man or Stanford woman. Consequently their teachers can very easily steer them to think a certain way merely by making that point of view seem fashionable and enlightened. Similarly, teachers can pressure students to abandon what their parents taught them simply by labeling those positions simplistic and unsophisticated.*

3. Biologist Kenneth Miller, who testified in favor of evolution in court trials

*He admits that "a presumption of atheism or agnosticism is universal in academic life...The conventions of academic life, almost universally, revolve*

*around the assumption that religious belief is something that people grow out of as they become educated.”*

## **D. How to get your kids ready to stand on their own**

1. The current attack on the very existence of a god
  - a. **The Atheists**
  - b. **The Agnostics**
  - c. **The Apathetic**
2. Why I'm doing these sermons
3. My goal will be to present a reasonable and intellectually sound argument for the existence of God
  - a. To see science as the handiwork...not the enemy...of God
  - b. To understand that faith and reason are not at odds with each other
  - c. To see that the preponderance of evidence supports the existence of God
3. Coming attractions
  - a. **November 20**

*“Evolution and Other Proofs for the Existence of God”*
  - b. **November 27**

*“The Biggest Elephant in the Room”*
  - c. **December 4**

*“The Scariest Verse in the Bible”*

## **E. Today...your influence as a parent**

1. Will use Luke 13:20-21 as a starting point
2. Parents have absolute control in the early years
  - a. When they eat...

b. But, there comes a time when parents can no longer control their child's life...but must rely on "influence"

1. Once they start driving

c. Part of the natural circle of life

d. *"Me: The Narcissistic American"* by psychoanalyst Aaron Stern

*Adolescence is a time characterized by the teenager's ingenious efforts to maintain the privileges of childhood, while at the same time demanding the rights of adulthood.*

*The more we do for our children the less they can do for themselves. The dependent child of today is destined to become the dependent parent of tomorrow.*

2. What kind of influence are you?

a. You may have no idea who is being influenced by you

b. What will your kids remember most about you?

c. What will your obituary look like

3. Funeral for Dan Curtis

a. Missionary in Oklahoma

b. People stood and spoke of his influence on their lives

3. Today, what Jesus had to say about your influence

## II. Review

### A. The Kingdom Question (Luke 13:18)

*(18) Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?"*

1. Kingdom

a. Spiritual and physical

2. Church

- a. The great mystery about to be born
  - 1. Day of Pentecost
  - 2. Small in size
- b. The church is his kingdom in the here and now
- c. We're the kingdom of God in Hudsonville
- d. Not the only part

## **B. Two key characteristics of the kingdom/church**

### *1. It will start small and grow large*

*(19) The kingdom is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in the branches.*

- a. The mustard seed
- b. Smallest of all their seeds
- c. The church will grow exponentially
  - 1. It awoke at Pentecost
  - 2. And continues to grow

### *2. Followers of Christ will have an influence on everyone around them (Luke 13:20-21)*

*(20) Again Jesus asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? (21) It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."*

- a. They all understood how yeast works
  - 1. Working it into dough
  - 2. Causes the bread to rise
- b. Yeast is also called leaven
- c. Unleavened bread for Communion

## C. The two influences of yeast in the Bible

### 1. Bad influence

#### a. In the church

##### 1. Galatians 5:7-10

*(7) You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? (8) That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. (9) "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." (10) I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.*

##### 2. Can wreck a church

##### 3. Rumors or false teaching

#### b. No yeast brought out of Egypt (the Exodus)

##### 1. Yeast symbolized sin and its ability to spread

#### c. False religion

##### 1. Matthew 16:11-12 Jesus asked....

*(11) "How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." (12) Then they understood that Jesus was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharosese and Sadducees.*

#### d. Contagious

### 2. Good influence

#### a. Paul....imitate my life

*"You've seen my life....now imitate it"*

#### b. Paul's influence on Timothy

##### 1. His life

##### 2. His teaching

##### 3. His prayers

c. II Timothy 2:2

*(2) And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

#### **D. So how should we influence?**

1. Act like salt

2. Matthew 5:13

*(13) You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.*

3. What does that mean for us?

### **III. Lessons from Salt**

#### **1. Salt has incredible value**

a. Value of salt during the time of Jesus

1. Roman soldiers were paid in salt

a. Even today we say “He’s worth his salt”

2. Petra

a. The salt caravans

3. Different salts were prized for—

a. Flavor

b. Purity

b. Salt was more valuable than gold!

1. Our bodies must have salt

2. Prized by the ancients

c. Remember....Christians are called the “*salt of the earth*”

1. Each of you has incredible value in God’s eyes

2. We are His “ambassadors”
  3. We are the sons of God!!!
  4. He gave His son to die for you
- d. You may at times feel worthless....but you’re not
1. You’re “priceless” in the eyes of God
  2. God cares about every detail of your life
    - a. Including your pains

## 2. Salt has incredible influence

- a. Salt influences everything it touches
  1. Even if unseen
  2. You can taste its presence
- b. Your influence on those who don’t know Christ
  1. Colossians 4:5-6

*(5) Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. (6) Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

### c. The power of influence

#### 1. Voltaire

Voltaire’s agnosticism and skepticism are traced by some to a priest of the church of Christ, sowed the seeds of deism in his youthful charge and introduced him to dissolute companions.

#### 2. John Wesley

At Oxford, John Wesley determined to have no companions except those who would help him in the life of faith and righteousness that he was trying to lead.

#### 3. Who has influenced you the most in your life

- d. Your greatest influence is at home
  - 1. How to be a positive influence on your children
    - a. Example
    - b. Consistency
      - 1. Both parents in agreement
    - c. Openness
    - d. Allowing for failure
    - e. Letting them suffer the consequences of their mistakes
    - f. Never give up on a child
    - g. Remember the faithfulness of God
    - h. Giving them back to God
    - i. Nurturing their particular strength
    - j. Taking advantage of casual experiences
      - 1. What they'll remember
      - 2. On the surf with John
      - 3. "Deer Camp"
    - k. Treating them as adults as they grow older
  - 2. Mistakes parents make
    - a. Comparing them to others
    - b. Making everything "black-or-white"
    - c. Harsh comments they'll never forget
    - d. Unwilling to admit you made a mistake
    - e. Making all the decisions for them

1. Even if your motives are good
  - f. Expecting them to be perfect
  - g. Hypocrisy
  - h. Holier than thou
3. It doesn't stop when they're 19...
  - a. Some of their toughest years
  - b. When you grow closer

### **3. Salt's influence is directly proportional to its purity**

*(13) You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.*

- a. When parents lose what is called "moral authority"
- b. The first to see it are the kids