

Series: **JESUS...INTERRUPTED!** May 10, 2009

**DON'T BOTHER HIM...HE'S BUSY!**

**Mark 10:13-16**

1. Does anyone know what this is? It's a kit for building a plane! Yeah, yeah, yeah—I know. I've used this before! But there *is* a point, so be patient!

-All the parts are in this box. Glue—and the other stuff for building the body, tail, and wings. There's a propeller—*very* important for a plane. And, of course—**plans! Instructions!** Turning all these chunks of wood, plastic, metal and silicone into an actual plane that flies—takes a great set of instructions. If you can follow the instructions—you can build the plane.

-Having a baby is a little like this kit. Now, it *hurts* more—but you know that inside that little wrinkled package *you* once came home from the hospital in was everything necessary to produce...*you!* A fully operational adult. Like the *kit*, your parents really didn't know what you would look like—how much time and energy—and *money* it would take to build. Or the mistakes they'd make along the way.

-The *biggest* difference, of course, is that babies don't come with set of point by point instructions. Parents *wish* God would include an instruction booklet. A *thick* one. **Day 1.1, 1.2; Month 3.1..** And in big red letters: **AGE 13: Warning: READ BEFORE PROCEEDING!** And appendices would be nice, right? **10 easy lessons on relational intelligence; How to talk about sex so they don't snicker and squirm! How to like your teenager! How to let go!**

-Buuuuut? Doesn't happen. And parents don't get one of these, either. Know what it is? R/C. Radio control Move the switches and you can make this plane do *anything* you want. Kids are more like free-flight planes—where you build them to go in the right direction—and *let them go!*

2. Typically when we start anything—whether it's building a plane or raising a kid or starting a business—we have a dream. Parent's dreams are especially tender. When they look into their baby's eyes—they imagine that child having the friends, the personality, the skills—the life they didn't.

-At *some* point, dreams—particularly parenting--gets so tiring and so constant—and so *confusing* that you raise your hands toward Heaven and beg, **OH GOD! PLEASE HELP ME!!!**

-This morning, I want to talk about parenting for a few minutes. Now, I know some of you groaned inwardly, because you're thinking, "This *so* doesn't relate to me!" Question. How many of you *are* parents? How many of you *might* be parents some day? How many of you *have* at least one parent? How many of you *know* a parent?

-See, it **does** fit! Actually, I think what I'm going to talk about fits in lot of arenas of life. And it **is** Mother's Day, right? Most seasoned Mom's I've met don't say things like, "I've got what it takes to raise this child to be a **winner!**" In fact, sometimes **honest** parents say, "I don't think I can do it! Nine months wasn't enough **time** to read all the books and prepare! **I...need...God!**"

3. And the **great** news about that is...God wants to help! And that's where we pick up the story of Jesus—and some parents who interrupted Him with...**We need help!** Let's read the story:

**One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him. When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16 NLT)**

- a. Jesus has a month, at best, to live—and there is **so** much to do. **So** little time. **So** many sick and hurting people. **So** much for his disciples—who will carry on his mission—to learn.

-Parents, who believed that Jesus was a great prophet and Rabbi showed up to ask for his blessing on their children. I don't know what they were thinking, but perhaps it was something along the lines of, "Maybe if this man who can heal any disease and even raise the dead **touches** my child and blesses them, they will, in fact, be blessed!

- b. Enter...the disciples! Historical evidence suggests Peter was married, but the others may not have been. Most young single guys are a little impatient when it comes to kids. Whatever was going on, they shooed the parents and their kids away—probably saying something like, "He's **too important and busy for this kind of stuff!**"

-Well, Jesus sees this all going down—and this is one of the times when the wording is clear—Jesus is **angry!** Ticked. Frustrated. And, He lets them have it! He says, **Don't you ever presume to stop parents...and little children from coming to me! Truth is—this kingdom can only come to people who will become little and helpless—like kids.**

- c. After teaching his disciples a lesson I'm sure they **never** forgot, Jesus wrapped his arms around these kids, held them close—and **blessed** them. And it became clear how Jesus **loves** children. You know the little song kids sing, **Jesus loves me, this I know...?** It's more true than we'd ever dare to believe. If you're a parent you need to know that Jesus is **crazy** about your kids, even when you're not—temporarily, of course.

4. Now, here's what I thought about. What kind of blessing would Jesus give on a child's life? We tend to confuse money and stuff and success and good health with **blessing**. Someone comments on how good life seems to be going for us and we say, "Well, I'm **blessed**."
- a. Most parents want to see their children do well—and land good jobs, make enough money to care for themselves and their families, right? Would Jesus have laid his hands on the heads of these children and said, "May you have the skill to make a lot of money honestly so that you can have **all** the blessings that plenty will bring your way?"
  - b. Most parents these days try to get their kids into a **ton** of different activities—hockey, music, soccer, dance, horseback riding, baseball—you know, so the family can live and eat in the van as God always intended, right? Would Jesus have said, "May your life and your schedule be **jammed** with activities and lessons so that you will be a multi-skilled person—and be at **least** as good as the other kids on your block!"
  - c. Of course, education is a big deal for us parents. Would Jesus have blessed these children, saying, "May you have the very best in education! May you do math at 2, read at 3—and have your little brain jammed with information so you can attend and graduate from the very best institutions in the world!"
  - d. And **friendships** are important, right? We spend a lot of time and energy helping our children socialize properly—by providing parties, cell phones, IM and overnights. Would Jesus have said, "May you be blessed by being endlessly connected with your friends!"

-That's **our** culture—and these are not bad things. How many of you think the blessing Jesus asked for the children that day may have been a little different than this? It's possible that we need to **re-think** what kind of blessing we leave!

5. I've been studying Jesus for over 35 years. From what I know about Him, what He taught, and how He lived—I think his first blessing would've been about **love**. I think He would've said, "May you always know without a shadow of a doubt that your parents **love** you; and you're your Father in Heaven is **crazy** about you! And may that give you the foundation you need to truly love God—and truly love others your whole life!"
- a. See, Jesus said that **love—loving and being loved**—is the most important thing in life. He said that if we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength and all our mind—and love our neighbor as ourselves—we would live out all that God intends for us. **Love** is the bottom line—and the right motivation for all of life!

-We were created in the image of a God who **is** LOVE. Every person craves love and acceptance—no matter how tough they act. And if that love tank in us doesn't get filled—we will go through life trying to fill that emptiness with other stuff.

- b. In defining love, one of the things God's Word stresses is **accepting** others. When it comes to our children, the kind of love they crave is **unconditional** love. Not, "I love you **if...**" or "I'll love you **when...**" No, "I love you—and I will **always** love you—even in those moments when I don't **like** you!"  
-We live in a culture that is heavily tipped toward performance; toward parents all trying hard to get their kids onto the **most likely to succeed** page of the world. If a child feels that they have to **perform** to be accepted—that can mess with their heads their entire life.
- In a world that celebrates the outer layer of talent, looks and success, **every** child needs to be accepted and celebrated for **who they are**, not for **what they do**.
- c. Here's the deal about love. How much you love someone doesn't count unless you can effectively **communicate** your love with them. A guy named Gary Chapman identifies five different love languages in his book, **The Five Languages of Love**. My point is that we need to make sure we take the time to find out how our kids best understand and feel love. It would be a shame for a parent to be thinking, "Wow, I love them so much I could burst!" and the son or daughter to be thinking, "How come they don't **love** me?"
- d. But if all you do is love your child to death—you may just create a self-esteem junkie. You've seen me use the teapot as a prop—too many times to count. But kids have to learn, not just to receive love, but to **give** love. On a teapot, there is a place to **receive**—but the point of a teapot is about giving.  
-I think teaching children to **give** love is tough—especially in a world like ours that thrives on the **survival of the fittest**. Here's the question: If You and **I** don't teach our children to love, to accept, to forgive, to treat others as **they** would want to be treated—who will? The school system won't. Universities don't have any classes on it. Sports teams, dance teams, neighborhoods? They don't teach this stuff.
- Learning to love God—and love others is **the single most important lesson in life!** You can spend a ton of money and time on lessons, education, hobbies and great stuff—but if you miss **love**—you've missed the most important advantage you can give your kids. Because, see, ability, education, success, money and fame is **not** the measure of a life. **Love** is. And the best time to learn it is right in your home. Make sure that you leave time and energy for love in your home!
6. I remember talking once about how, if your kids know you love them, it makes up for most mistakes you make as a parent. One Mom blushed and said to me, "Yeah, well I think I gave my kids a little **too** much love." I wondered how that was possible—until I talked to her and realized that what she **meant** is that she had given a **lot** of love—and almost no **LIMITS**. We tend to like limits a **lot** less than love—but love without limits isn't really love.

-And I think that would be the second part of Jesus' blessing. "May you have people in your life who love you enough to stop you; people who teach you to say **NO** to yourself when you need to say **NO!** May you learn to respect the speed limits and guardrails of life—so you can **survive** and then really **live!**"

- a. I'll tell you why we need limits very early in life. Being created with a soul in the image of God isn't our only heritage. We are born with a bent toward rebellion. Proverbs 22:15 says,

**Folly is bound up in the heart of a child...  
(Proverbs 22:15a TNIV)**

Quick question—any of you parents ever have to teach your child how to lie, pull a tantrum, lie or hit? The actual **expression** of rebellion varies. Some kids are quite outwardly compliant. They say **NO** with a smile on their face and a twinkle in their eye! Or they smile and say **YES**, then do what they want anyway. Other kids are quite surly; it's like they're born with a cigar in one hand and a cocktail in the other! Say **NO**, and they will make you pay! The point is, from early in life, we don't like **anyone** saying "NO" to us—even God!

-But that doesn't intimidate God. He has lovingly built what you could call **guardrails** into this planet. One obvious guardrail is the law of gravity. Hopefully you learn that while your center of gravity is still quite low! There's the law that fire burns! There's the law that when a car or motorcycle stops suddenly, **we keep going!** There's the law that even water is hard if you hit it going too fast.

-We are **not** doing a child any favors by wimping out when we need to say, **NO!**

- b. Here's the deal. If you allow your child to act however they **feel** like acting and treat other people however they **feel** like treating them and to take what they **feel** like taking and do what they **feel** like doing—you may avoid a scene, but that is **not** love. The wisest man who ever lived says ...

**Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.  
(Proverbs 13:24b NLT)**

-See, living in the real world means understanding that there are limits. If you don't teach your child where the guardrails are--then someone else will have to; the school, the university, an employer—or the police. People who don't know how to say **no** to themselves are not safe people.

-Friends, let me just be as clear as I can be: **Everything** is at stake. A child's whole **future**—in fact, their whole relational world is at stake. How many of you enjoy being around someone whose moods, mouth, temper, or selfishness is out of control? To not set and enforce fair limits for your child is to sabotage their future.

- c. Setting limits—and consistently, lovingly reinforcing them—may be the toughest thing parents do. I think it's the toughest thing God, as a Heavenly Father, has to do. The Bible talks about this as **discipline**. By the way, discipline is different than punishment. Discipline is not about **denying** gratification; it's about **delaying** it—so that you have what you need to do something **really** worthwhile. Discipline is what keeps talent and opportunities from getting wasted.
- But **limits--guardrails** are not just about achievement. They are about averting spiritual disaster. See, truth is that we often don't see what lies **behind** the guardrail. We just see this annoying piece of steel blocking us from where we **think** we want to go.

**[picture]**. This picture is of a pick-up truck, traveling about 130 kph that slammed through a guardrail—and landed on the other side. The second picture **[picture 2]** shows **why** the guardrail was there!

-Everyone...**everyone** needs love **and** limits. Will you have the courage to set them and reinforce them?

7. I think there's a third blessing Jesus would ask on these children. I think he would say, "May someone **lead** you well! May they inspire you! Point the way—**lead** the way! May they give you freedom to fall—and the courage to get back up again. May you have leaders who **don't** disappoint you—and, if they do, have the guts to admit they were wrong! May they be examples of how to live a powerful life; an **excellent** life!
- Now, who do you think is in the best position to lead children? My guess is that, as a parent, that would be you. Being a leader takes courage, character and discipline. Leading your kids—and not **following** them, hoping to be their best buddy—may be the most difficult thing you do.
- a. See, leading involves not just telling people what to do—it means **showing** them by your life. The best way to teach your kids how to love—is to actually...**love**. To give them the time it takes to show your love. To put people before achievement and acquiring more money and stuff.
- If your children **ever** learn to love someone who's difficult to love—it will be by watching **you** do it! If your children learn to be kind--not vindictive and jealous and mean—they will learn that from you. If your children learn to show compassion and generosity and grace—they will learn it from you. Prayer? They'll likely learn that from you. A love and respect for what God has to say about life? They'll learn that from you. A love for people who are far away from God—for people shoved out to the margins of life—for people who are stepped on, used, shoved under the surface—kids learn that from their parents, too.
- And they also, generally speaking, learn their love and respect for God and what He's up to in this world from us parents. See, the deal is that you can't **say** that God is more important than anyone and anything to you—when it's

clear from the way you spend your money and time and energy that He's really about 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> on the list. Our children are pretty smart—and they know! Our children will learn that Jesus is Lord—by watching Him be **our** Lord!

- b. Something else. Our kids learn about **limits** from us. Whether we see limits as something **they** should follow and **others** should follow—but we don't **have** to. I talked to my daughter Kelly recently about taking her driver's test for first time—and asked her why she failed it. She said, "Because I drove like you! I went over the speed limit, through yellow lights—and just **slowed down** for STOP signs." I was embarrassed! But it was true. However—I've changed. **I got religion!**

-Someone once said that our children follow in the steps we **thought** we covered up! Kid's have this funny idea that **we** should abide by the same rules we tell them to abide by! If we tell them to stay away from pornography and wait for sex till marriage—then **we** have to abide by those limits. If we tell **them** not to bow to peer pressure—then we shouldn't. If we tell **them** they don't need the latest thing everyone else has—we don't. If we tell them that money and achievement success isn't everything—then that's how we need to live.

-Are kids expecting us to be perfect? Well, pretty much! No, actually, what they're looking for is parents with the guts and the humility to **admit** when they've been wrong and when they've violated their own convictions. Good leaders do that.

- c. See, the deal is that if our children are going to follow a good leader, a person of character—someone worth respecting—someone **worth** following—they will need to know what that looks like. Children will naturally follow our lead when they're little—they don't know anything else. But as they get older, we have to earn the right to lead.
8. Now, how many of you could say, "Yeah, Ken—**love, limits, leadership?** Got it nailed!" I wish I could say that I've done that. I wish I could say that I have always been able to make my kids all feel that they are loved—but I can't say that. The **limits** thing—discipline—consistently setting limits—and honoring them myself? I've screwed up there. And the **leadership** thing? Always led my kids in a God-honoring way? Haven't done that either.

-But there's **good** news! Jesus says something in this passage that is really comforting.

**He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." (Mark 10:14b-15 NLT)**

-Jesus says that His Kingdom—with all of its power and goodness and love and healing and grace **belongs** to those who are **like these children**. And that **anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it**.

Children are not afraid to need and ask for help. Children are not afraid to be little and weak. There's no pretense. No show. Not usually much pride and arrogance. Just these eyes that look up into your eyes and say, **I need you. I'm just a little kid**. Jesus words are powerful; that He offers all the life and power and grace of Heaven to people who can be small and admit their need for help—and He apparently **looks** for people just like that.

-I take that to mean, in part, that if I say, "I can do this on my own—I don't need your help," He will let me do that. But if I will admit that I'm small and flawed and weak—He pours all the power of Heaven into hearts like that. In fact, He said to an early church leader, **My grace is enough for you; my strength is made perfect in weakness!** I've found that God offers me love when I run out of love. He offers me wisdom when I'm fresh out—bankrupt. When I have **no idea** where to lead—I follow Him, and it works!

9. Mom's—Jesus leaves a blessing for you.

#### **Blessed are the poor in spirit**

\*How many of you Mom's have ever felt like you're absolutely at the end of your rope? Well, this blessing is for you--**for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**.

#### **Blessed are those who mourn**

\*How many of you Mom's have ever cried yourself to sleep because you were exhausted, or because one of your children got hurt—or because you felt so **very much alone**? Well, this blessing is for you--**for [you] will be comforted**.

#### **Blessed are the meek**

\*How many of you Mom's have spent whole days changing poop diapers and cleaning up barf and running after kids—and then been **humiliated** by how your kids have acted in public? This blessing is for you: **for [you] will inherit the earth**.

#### **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**

\*How many of you have ever longed to be the person—the Mom—you've always dreamed you'd be? Well, Jesus' blessing is for you: **for [you] will be filled**.

#### **Blessed are the merciful**

\*How many of you Moms have ever been angry, indignant and ready to kick some serious butt—until you looked into your child's sad eyes—and hugged them instead? This blessing is for you: **for [you] will be shown mercy**.

**Blessed are the pure in heart**

\*How many of you Mom's have your moments, but at the core of your life is a heart that is passionately in love with your children and longs for their best? This blessing is for you: **for [you] will see God.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers**

\*How many of you Moms have **ever** broken up a fight between two of your children and made them say they're sorry—even if they didn't mean it? This blessing is for you: **for [you] will be called children of God.**

**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness**

\*How many of you Moms have ever wondered if you made the right choice to have children? Or felt others—judge the job you're doing? How many of you Moms have ever felt marginalized in your job—because you had to take a call from home, or stay home because a kid was sick? How many of you have ever had a child—someone you'd give your life for—tell you they didn't like you, or make you feel like you're doing a crummy job—when what you're doing is the most important thing under heaven you can do? If you have, then this blessing of Jesus is for you:

**...for [yours] is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3-10 TNIV)**

\*And all I really have to add to that is—**Amen! YES! May it be so!**  
And **HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!**