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a preacher.

Kids' interests and goals for "When I grow up" change over the course of childhood, which is to be expected. It's a good thing, too, in that it reveals exposure to many different opportunities.

I never became an airman, a policeman, an artist, an architect, or even a "China man." Through those shifting interests, though, there was one constant. I always wanted to be a daddy.

Long before I figured out I liked girls, when they were still icky to me, I wanted to have my own kids. If there were babies around, and I knew the parents, I wanted to hold them. I wanted to rock them, feed them, and play with them. I delighted to become an uncle when I was sixteen.

When Rachel and I were contemplating marriage, we discussed how many children we would want. I suggested three to five. She said five!

That was as far as our "family planning" went. We wanted plenty of kids, we got married, and we left the rest to the Lord. Within a span of fewer than eight years, God rewarded us with six babies. These children of ours aren't accidents. They're not mistakes. Each one is a blessing. *"Behold, children are a heritage from Jehovah, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate"* (Psalm 127:3-5).

Our children aren't burdens either. Hard work, yes, but worth the effort. *"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"* (Proverbs 22:6). I have a solemn duty as a father, bestowed on me from above: *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4). So, I have worked since their births to instill in each one a sincere and personal devotion to the Almighty.

Thus far, I have beheld my eldest four put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism and I eagerly await the days when my youngest two will do likewise. I have seen my firstborn convert her boyfriend to the gospel, and I observe that young man's progress in the faith with great satisfaction. I have watched my two older sons lead prayers, lead songs, read Scripture, serve the Lord's Supper, take up the collection, and, in recent months, undertake the work of preaching brief exhortations to the church. All the children have been good about

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"JESUS WEPT"

Jacob Hudgins

When Jesus arrives in Bethany, Martha and Mary both reproach Him with the same words: *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died"* (John 11:21, 32). They have faith that Jesus could have healed their brother, but the path forward now is unclear.

Martha still believes — *"even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you"* (22) — but seems reluctant (24). Mary breaks down at her brother's tomb. Seeing these ebbs and flows of grief, Jesus is affected. *"When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled"* (John 11:33). His emotions overcome Him. *"Jesus wept"* (35). *"Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb"* (38).

It is easy for us to overlook this detail because we know what happens next in the story: Lazarus is going to live again. John highlights that Jesus is touched deeply and moved to the point of tears. This is particularly amazing because Jesus knows that Lazarus will soon be raised, but it still affects him to watch people grieve.

I don't have to wonder if Jesus cares when I hurt and grieve. Even though there is ultimate hope, grief and sadness are a part of the life Jesus experiences in the flesh. They are part of our lives, too.

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inviting friends to church. As they mature in the grace of the Lord, I begin to see other qualities that impress me and reward me as a father: generosity, responsibility without grumbling, and, most of all, mercy and forgiveness. And when I see it in them, it strengthens me to improve in those qualities, as well.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3rd John 4). I am glad when my kids excel in academics, succeed in the workplace, or gain some new skill or experience. I am glad when they're strong and healthy, when they're handsome or pretty. Yet, nothing fills this father's heart more than knowing Christ is in the hearts of my young. It is what I have lived for all my days.

**"WHAT MUST I DO
TO BE SAVED?"**

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN
ANY TRESPASS...
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

PROVERBS 25:11

"If you didn't come from a godly family, make sure a godly family comes from you."

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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WHEN I GROW UP

Bryan Matthew Dockens

My mother delights to tell the story that when I was three, I told her I would be a preacher when I grew up because "I have three ties." I don't remember the episode except through the frequent retellings it gets from Mom. Needless to say, I have many more ties these days, and I really did turn out to be a preacher. To be fair though, I'm not sure I said I **wanted** to be a preacher, only that I **would** be on account of the requisite accumulation of neckwear. Around the same age, evidently, I divulged that I wanted to be a "China man" (If that's an insensitive description, keep in mind I was a toddler); that goal did not bear fruit despite mom letting me check out a library book to learn the language.

What I do remember was a few years later, age five or six, confidently wanting to be an airman, like my dad, and a policeman, like my dad, and an artist because I enjoyed drawing. Those goals stuck with me until I was about twelve, when I befriended the son of a general contractor whose hobby was drawing house-plans. I took up the same interest, drawing hundreds of floorplans over the next several years, taking a few drafting classes in high school, and even interviewing Eric Lloyd Wright, the grandson of renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and an accomplished architect in his own right, for a school project. Before I could turn that assignment in, however, I became active in evangelism, and concluded my class paper with the acknowledgment that, despite the work I'd done, I had shifted goals and would become – Continued on page 2 –

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