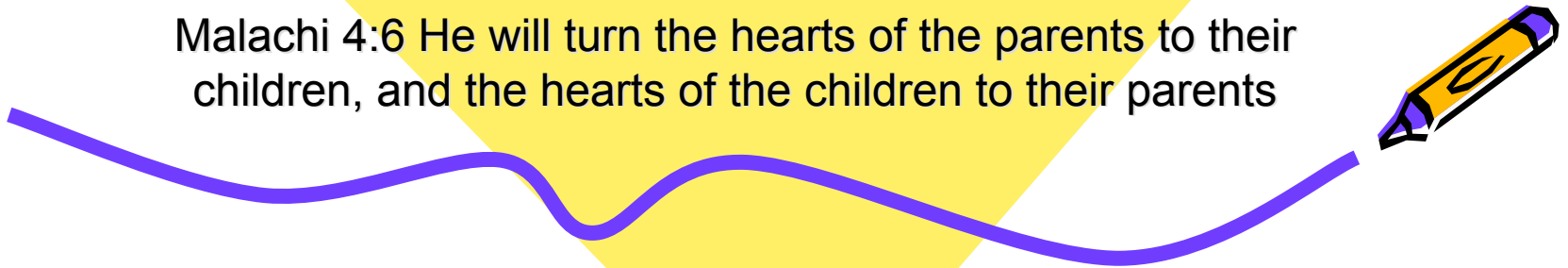




# Where's Your Heart?

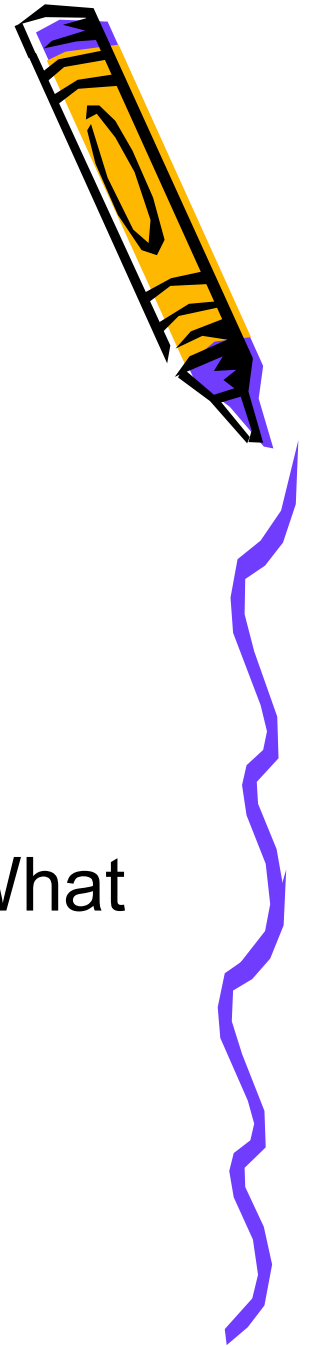
Prov 23:26 My son, give me your heart  
and let your eyes delight in my ways

Malachi 4:6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their  
children, and the hearts of the children to their parents



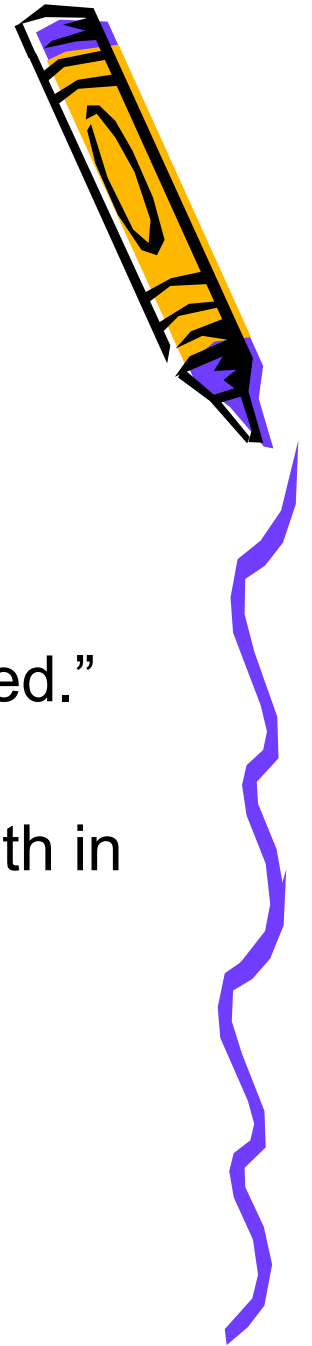
# A Case Study

- Target, 9:30 PM, Thursday evening.
- Disobedient child, aggrieved parent --> Shouting parent, aggrieved child (and still disobedient).
- What's going on?
- Is Parenting primarily about managing? What are more biblical models?



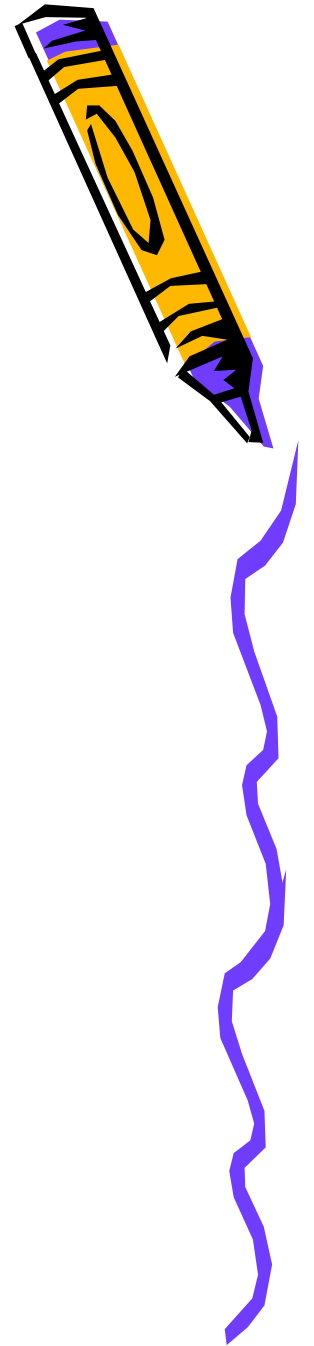
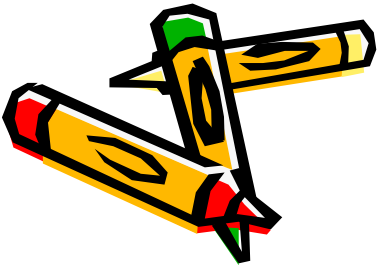
# Unpacking the Case Study

- Parenting often addresses behavior modification. Analogous to “crisis management.”
  - Problem: people aren’t “things” to be “managed.”
  - What affects behavior?
  - CBT - Cognitive Behavior Therapy? Some truth in this. Other therapies have elements of truth.
- God addresses the heart.
  - Heart stands for the whole person. Deepest desires/longings/core individual.
  - God addresses the heart of parents and of children.



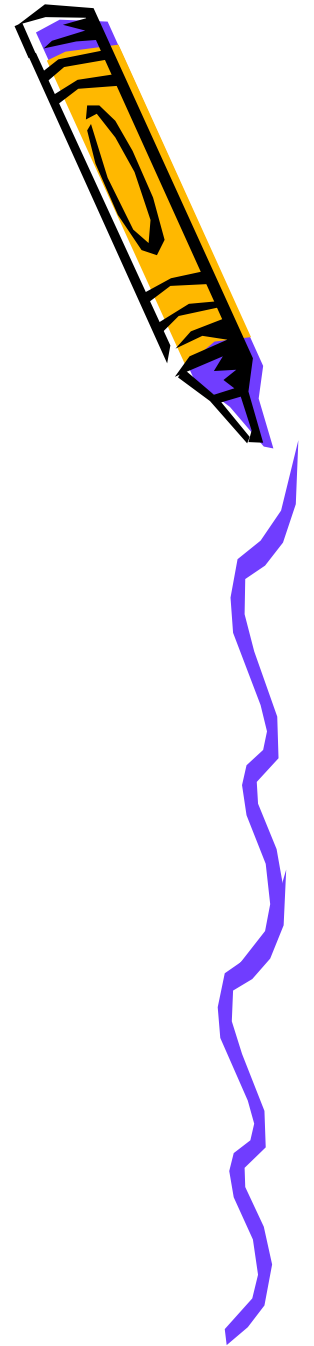
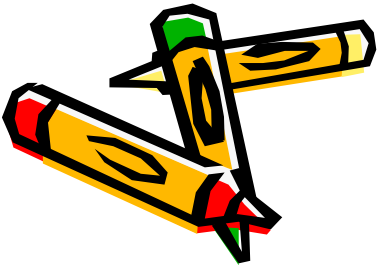
# Today's Outline

- The problem
- Digging Deeper
- The path forward
- Practical suggestions



# The Problem

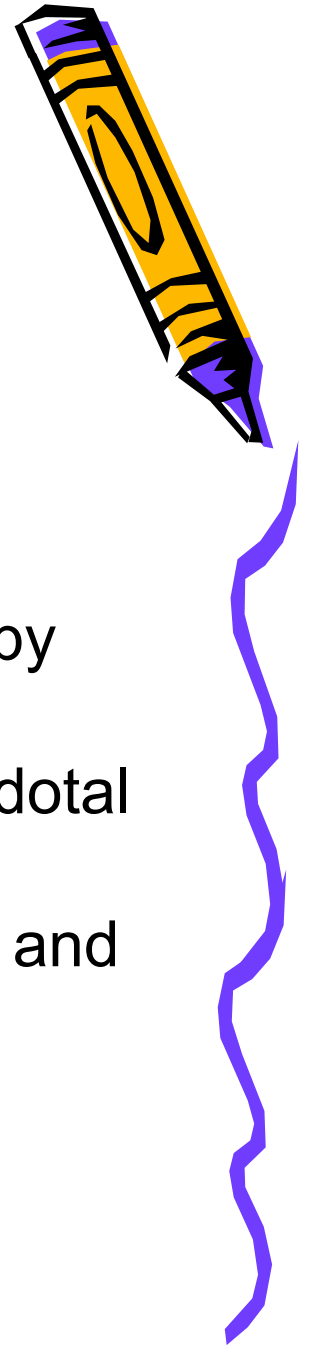
- What's the issue?
- Generation Gap? What is it?
- What causes it?
- Is it new?



# The Problem

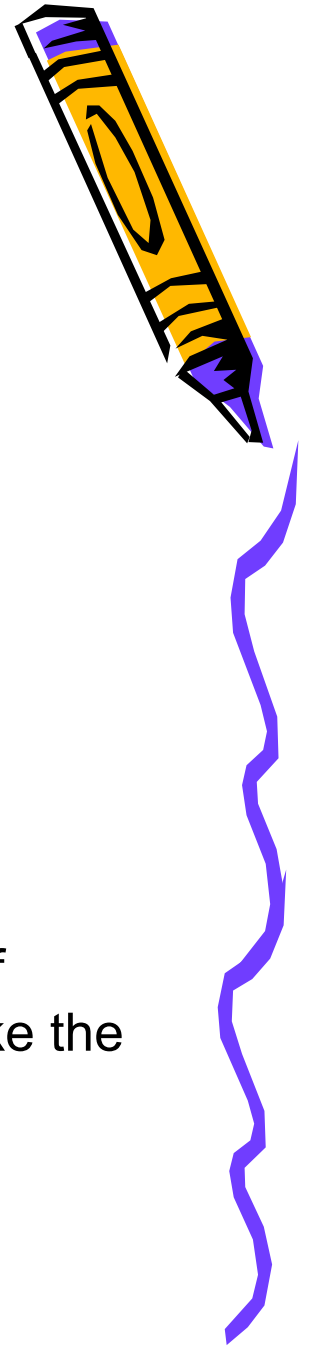
Chap Clark "Hurt"

- His proposal: systematic abandonment.
  - What he's proposing: Institutional, external, internal abandonment of the next generation by the adult generation
  - How does he know? His method - more anecdotal and personal.
  - So what? The result? Increased adolescence and increased aloneness.



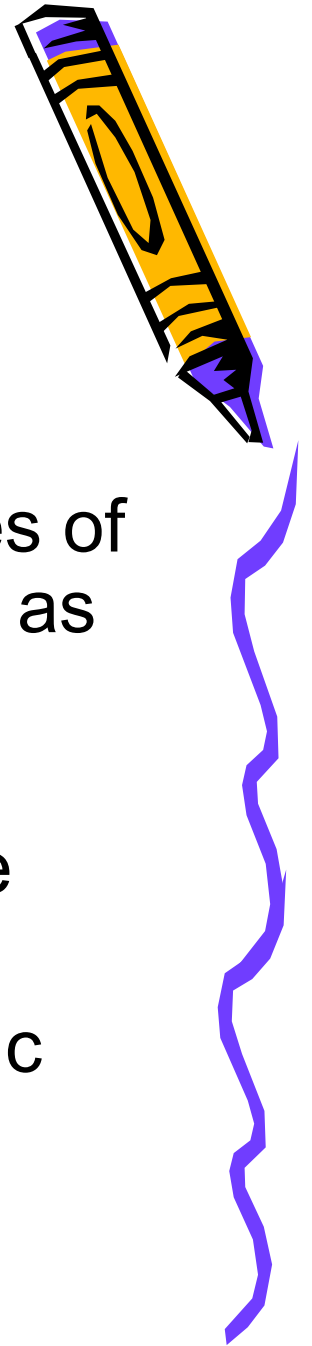
# The Problem

- My take on Chap Clark's thesis:
  - He has some insights.
  - Allow his questions to provoke thought.
  - Simplistic picture.
  - Is this new?
    - Heart issues are not new.
    - What is new is the changes in society as a result of technology, globalization, and economics, that make the heart issues more blatant.



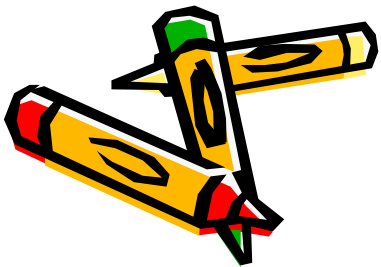
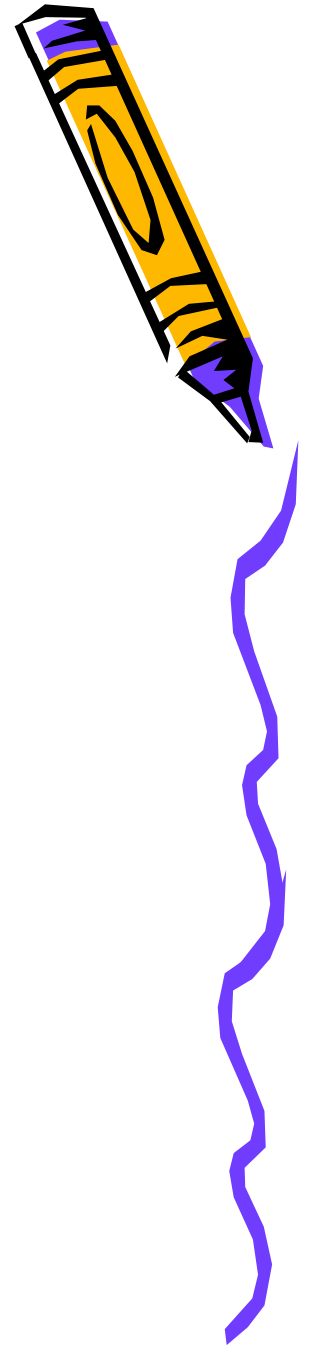
# The Problem

- Christian Smith's "Soul Searching"
- His Thesis: The religious and spiritual lives of American Teenagers can be summarized as "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism"
- He observes a consistent correlation between the spirituality of parents and the spirituality of children.
- His method: comprehensive and academic sociology.



# The Problem

Questions? Comments? Thoughts?



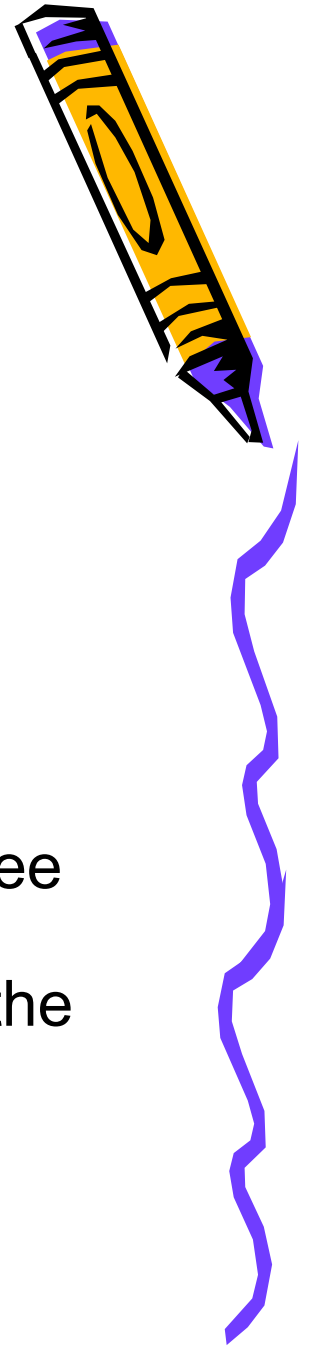
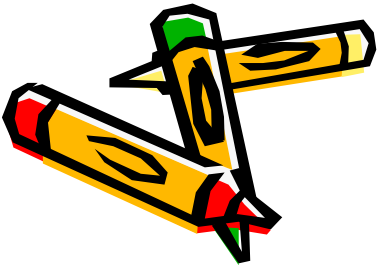
# Digging deeper

- The problem is deeper than just sociological analysis.
- The problem is theological. The problem is sin. Sin is fundamentally against God, but it has ripple effects in every aspect of life.
  - Sin - sitting in God's chair, as if it were ours.
  - Our vertical relationship with God has an impact on all our horizontal relationships.



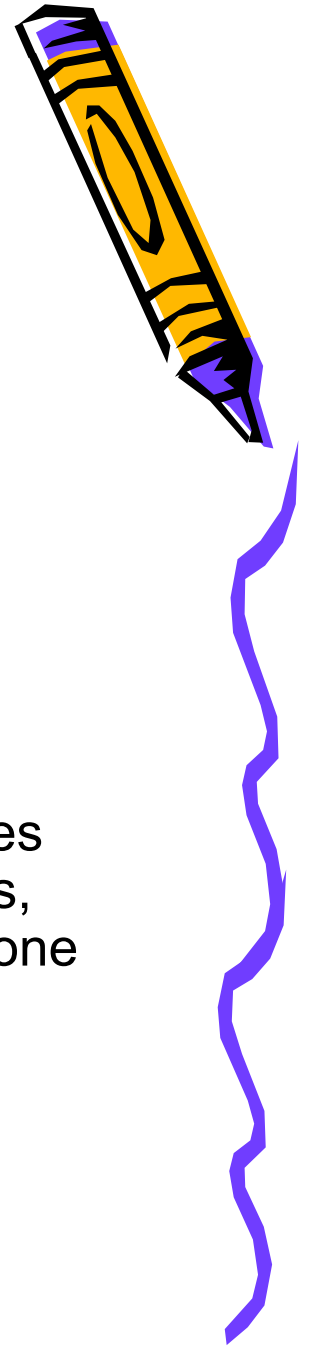
# Digging Deeper

- Sin introduced in Gen 3.
- In Genesis 4, there are problems in the family.
  - Cain fights with Abel.
  - No mention of parents. Are they passive?
  - From a literary standpoint, the first thing we see after the Fall (vertical relationship with God is broken) is that the horizontal relationships in the family are broken.



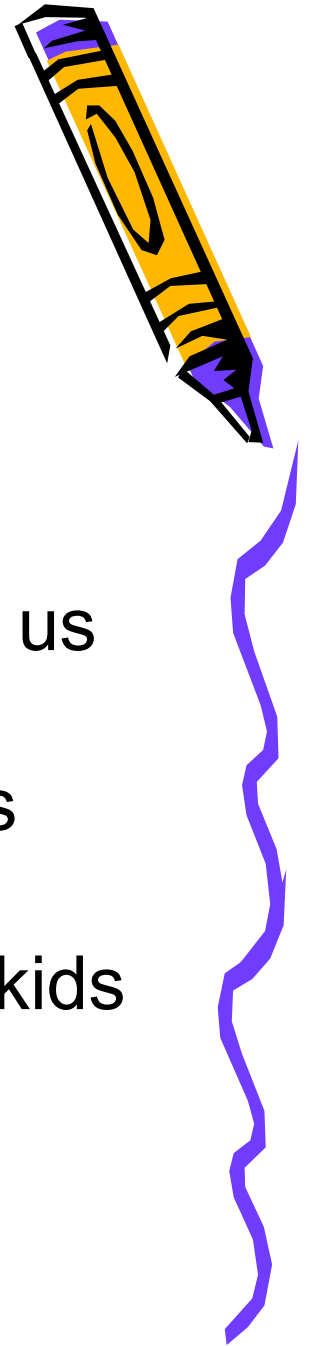
# Digging Deeper

- Application:
  - I'm the problem. I have a sinful heart.
  - My child is the problem. My child has a sinful heart.
  - Not just a matter of technique.
    - Aside- there are many real, non-sinful circumstances that bring to the fore the sin in our hearts (busyness, sickness, tiredness, hunger, stress, poor health - none of these are "sinful").
  - Do we see ourselves as part of the problem?



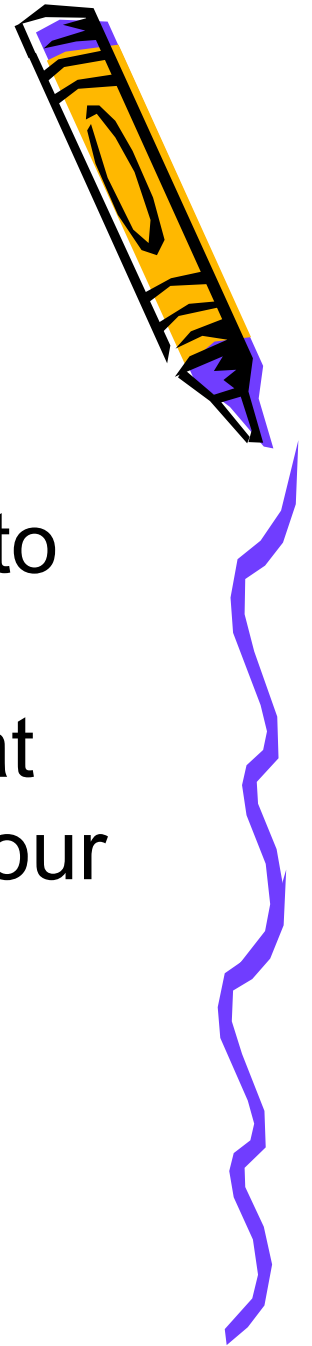
# Digging Deeper

- Application:
- In what ways do we “use” our kids?
- When they get “bad” grades, what makes us so upset?
- When they disobey in public, what causes our anger?
- How often are we ashamed because our kids make us “look bad?”



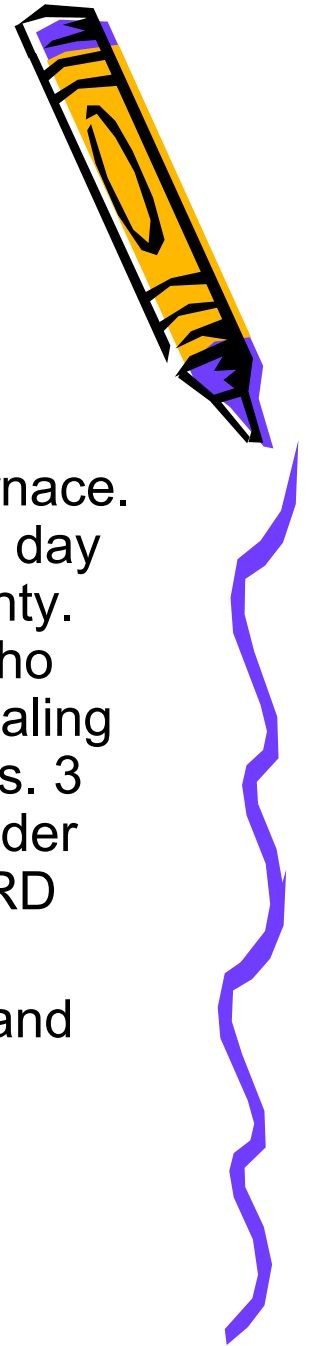
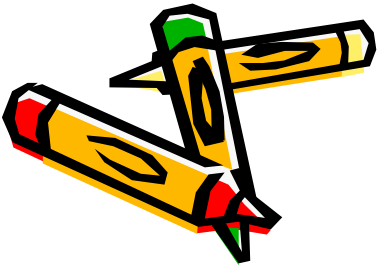
# Digging Deeper

- Do we truly see our children as the unique people God has made them to be, and do we parent in a way that protects, encourages, and draws that out, or are we too preoccupied with our own life?
- Questions? Comments? Thoughts?



# The Path Forward

- A coming day of judgment and salvation.
- Malachi 4:1 “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the LORD Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2 But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. 3 Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty.
- 4 “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.



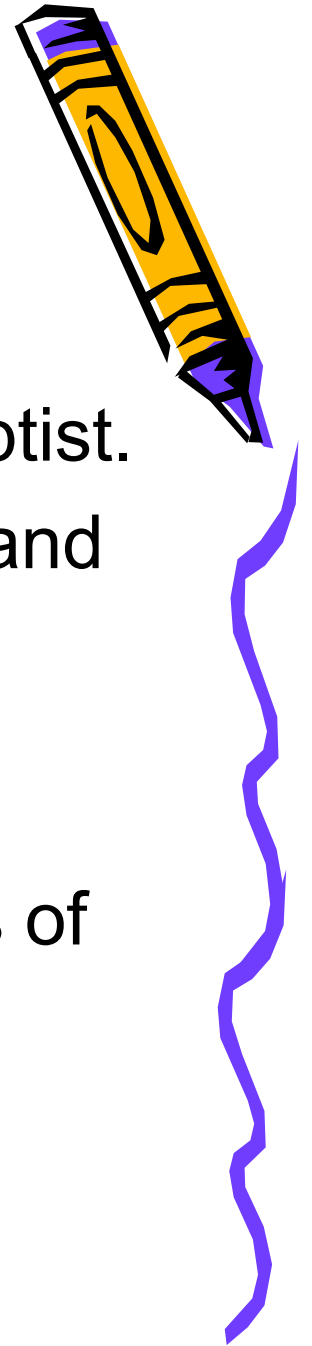
# The Path Forward

- How do we prepare for that day? How are we in the category of those who “revere” God’s name?
- Malachi 4:5 “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”



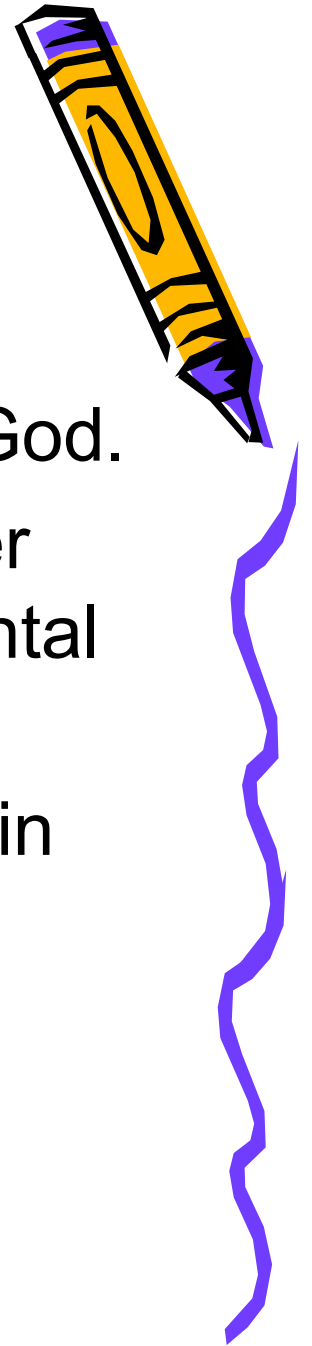
# The Path Forward

- Malachi 4- Points forward to John the Baptist.
- Ministry of preparation. How? Preaching and baptising.
- Mark 1:4: 4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.



# The Path Forward

- What John called for was repentance to God.
- In Malachi, the **RESULT** of the messenger like Elijah will be the restoration of horizontal relationship.
- Malachi is showing the fruit of the gospel in our life.



# The Path Forward

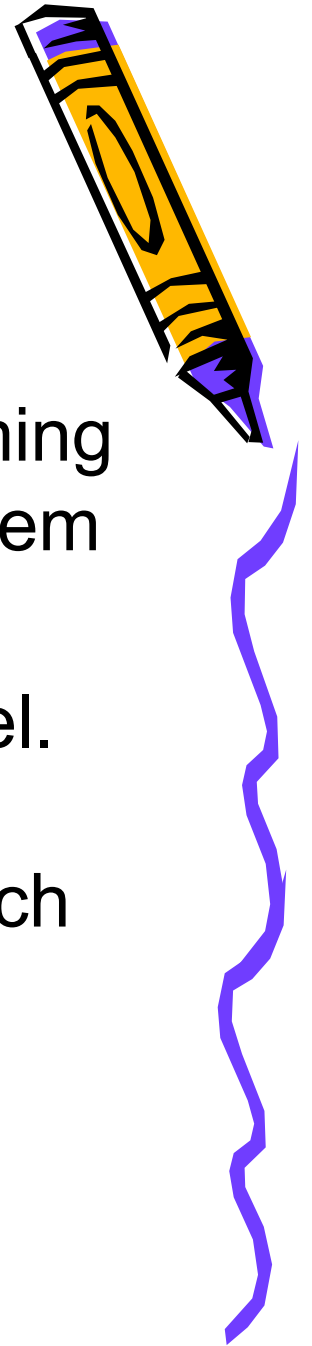
- The gospel is central.
- 2 Cor 5:21.
- When we have peace with God (Rom 5:1), we have peace with one another.
- I John 4:20 Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.

– Re-read, replacing “brother or sister” with “son or daughter”



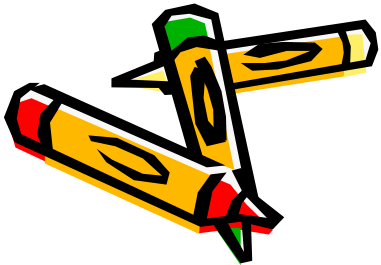
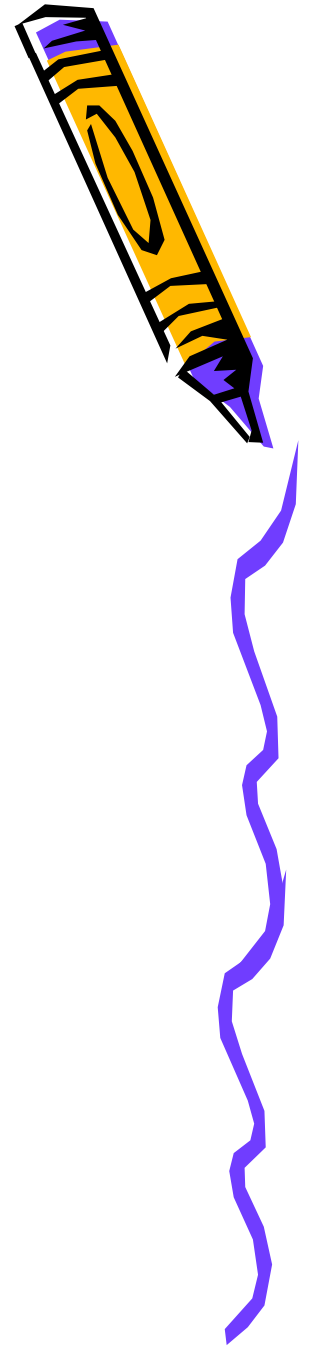
# The Path Forward

- Malachi 4 --> With the promise of the coming Elijah, we have the resolution of the problem that opens the OT (Sin and its effect).
- In sum, the only path forward is the gospel. We must be in right relationship with God before we are in right relationship with each other.



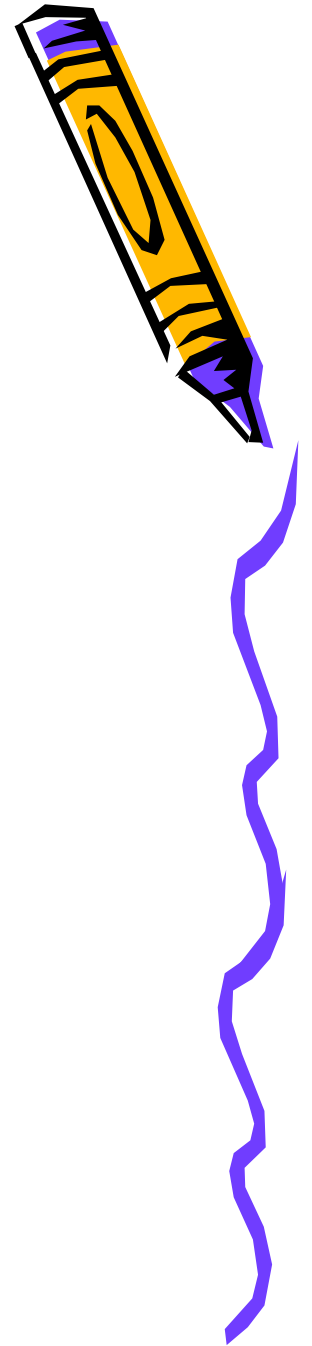
# The Path Forward

- Questions? Comments? Thoughts?



# Practical Suggestions

- Start with your relationship with God.
- Praying the first half of the Lord's prayer:
  - Hallowed be your name
  - Your kingdom come
  - Your will be done
- Do these things characterize your relationship with Him?
- You cannot have Jesus as Savior without having Jesus as Lord.



# Practical Suggestions

- Pray. Pray that God would help you to have the heart of parenting that He does.
- Pray that God would turn your heart towards your children.
- Pray that God would show you where you need to change (the heart is more deceitful than all else...)
- Pray that God would be at work in your child's heart.
- Pray for your child's friends.



# Practical Suggestions

- Constantly pay attention to how God is a parent in Scripture.
- God identifies himself as “Father.” God does not have a “gender.” Genesis tells us that when God created humanity in his image “male and female he created them.” Both men and women show different aspects of the character of God. Yet God identifies himself as “Father.”
  - Youth literature talks about the “father wound.”
  - Every person was “hurt” in some way by their father (and mother).
  - Don’t project your view of your father onto God the Father. This is hard to do, as God intended us to learn about him in relationships with family.
  - Allow God to shape your view of parenting.
  - Pay attention to how God treats his people.



# Practical Suggestions

- Pay attention to the relationships in your family of origin.
  - No need to live in guilt. When God says we are forgiven, we are forgiven for our failures. We all fail.
  - If there are unaddressed things, they will affect your parenting in ways you do not even see.



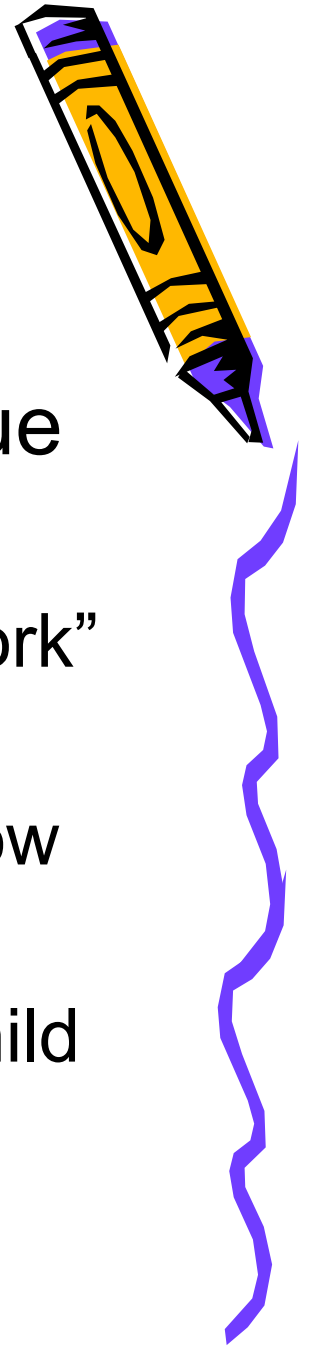
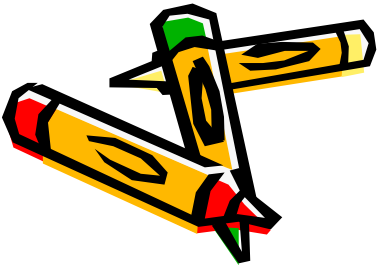
# Practical Suggestions

- What does it look like when your heart is turned towards your kids?
- Do you enjoy your kids? Why? Why not?
- Be careful about what you want for your kids- do you want the right things? What are the right things?
- Talk with them about the things of God as much as if not more than you talk about your favorite sport/hobby.



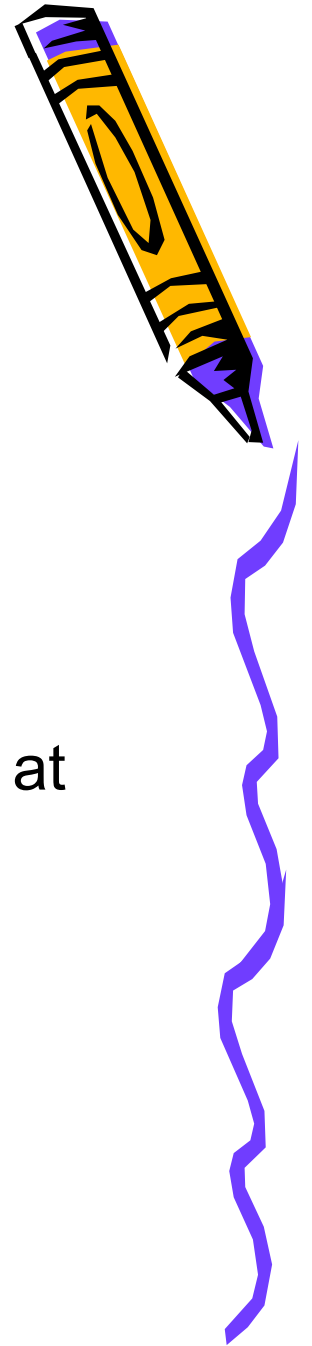
# Practical Suggestions

- Remember that each child is a unique person.
  - What “works” for one child may not “work” for the other.
  - Seek to help your child flourish and grow within who God has made them to be.
  - Do you talk with your child as if your child were a *person*, made in God’s image?



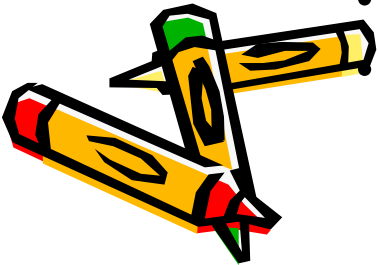
# Practical Suggestions

- How can you live in relationship with your children (being more than van service)?
  - Have family rituals.
  - Have individual rituals.
  - Make shared meals a priority. Work at talking at those meals. Guard this as they get older.
  - Don't over-schedule.



# Practical Suggestions

- Reflect on what your children are learning about God based on your relationship with God.
  - Children tend to reflect the religiosity of their parents.
  - What does your lifestyle communicate to your child in terms of:
    - Religious “practices” (Means of Grace/Worship)
    - Importance of Christian community.
    - Christian Worldview
    - Centrality of Christ
    - Glory of God
    - Dependence upon the Holy Spirit



# Practical Suggestions

- Demonstrate repentance before your child. No “I’m sorry, but...”
- Remember that you cannot be the Holy Spirit for your child.
- Do not change your life FOR your child, even if contemplating your relationship with your child has alerted you to places you need to grow. Change for Christ’s sake.
- Remember: its only a right relationship with God that will lead to right relationships with family. The effect of the gospel is the restoration of relationships.



# Practical Suggestions

Questions? Comments? Thoughts?

