Brandon: Good morning Grace Hills. Glad you guys are here for week two of Modern Family, a series we've been in about how to build a culture where the next generation matters, where we're asking God, what do we pour into our kids, our grandkids, our nieces, nephews, neighbor, kids, youth group kids, kids ministry kids, how do we invest in them and how do we create a culture where they're healthy and holy and understand how much Jesus loves them and where there's peace. And I don't know about you, but it just seems, just feels lately like we could use a little more peace. Amen.

Angie: Yeah.

Brandon: With that, I just want to remind you last week we kind of started out this series saying that it wasn't just going to be a series about family in the sense of what are the rules, and what are the roles, and what are the standards and that kind of thing. Those have a place of importance in a family. You've probably had family meetings where you go back over the rules like, don't commit murder and don't eat Doritos on the couch, and equally important, so you've walked through those things. But we wanted to talk about a primary issue over these few weeks and the primary issue is connection. Because you can get all the rules right, you can get all the roles right, you can get all the responsibilities, all the, you can even get the religious and the ritual side of things right, but if you don't connect with your kids, if there's not a heart to heart relationship, it's going to affect things negatively in the future.

Brandon: So today we're going to talk about this topic of communication. Title is simply Communicate or Disintegrate. Meaning that when you communicate well, when you learn how to communicate, you're brought together, right? And when you don't, when you don't communicate in a healthy way, you tend to fall apart, tend to separate and distance from one another. And I just wanted to kind of give you a vision at the beginning of this sermon, Angie and I are going to share a lot of things together. Things that she is way smarter than me about. But I wanted to cast a vision for you. Okay? And the vision is simply this, that you'll leave here believing that your home can become the safest place on earth to communicate. Because I think that right now, so many homes struggle with being a hostile environment and a difficult atmosphere. And when there's fear, when there's intimidation, when there's shame, when those are the things that rule, we shut down and we stop communicating, and when we stop communicating, everything starts to fall apart.

Brandon: So if there's any place on earth where we can learn how to communicate, and talk, and listen and get to the heart of things, it's the home. And I believe that if we do that well at home, everybody that leaves the home, everybody goes out into the world, is going to be better adjusted, healthier, more prepared, ready to understand what love is, and how to share it with others, and how to build their own relationships and families. So I just want you to have that vision, that your home can be the safest place on earth to communicate, it can be a place of peace. The Bible says in Ephesians chapter four verse 29, “Don't use foul or abusive language, let everything you say be good and helpful so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.” So this is not a matter of, well, sometimes I can be harsh, right?
Brandon: Well, we're going to talk about that today, but what the scriptures are saying is everything you say can be encouraging. It can be encourage, it can be building up someone, even when you're correcting something, even when you're getting really honest about something, it can still be encouraging. Colossians 4:6 says, “Be gracious in your speech.” The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not to put them down, not to cut them out, not to just prove that you're right and smarter and better, but to build them up. Okay? Build them up. I want to give you a big truth today and then we'll start to kind of unpack it. Big Truth is this. How we communicate will either lead us toward closeness or towards separation. How we communicate. And when you talk about what are the biggest issues in marriage, and in parenting, and in families, we'll talk about finances, we'll talk about sexuality, we'll talk about all these different areas that create conflict.

Brandon: But at the root of all of them is, we're not communicating well about money, we're not communicating well about in-law relations, we're not communicating well about future plans, it boils down to how we talk, how we listen, how we communicate. So that's the, the big truth. Okay? In the book of James, we get kind of a plan for this, and that's later.

Angie: Man, so glad that he messed up first.

Brandon: Yeah.

Angie: So we ... Sometimes it's hard to know what to, what healthy communication looks like. But we, most of us certainly know what communication that doesn't work looks like, because and we're real familiar with it, right? We feel like, I struggle with this and I know what it looks like to not communicate in a healthy way or that gets my point across. And so we're just going to real quick tackle two things that we know most of us tend to fall into these categories when we communicate, and we know this because we do this. And I want you to know that, are you trying to tell me something?

Brandon: Not now.

Angie: Oh, he's trying to tell me something. We do this because, we were just talking about this, and it's so interesting you guys, when you decide to teach a message together on communication, like the enemy comes after you, comes after you, like he doesn't really want you to feel confident in being able to talk about communication. And so I want you to know that we talk about this today because we're learning a lot about it presently, today. In fact yesterday we were, I was, you know, I don't know, I was doing the cleaning, making the bed, and I was talking to him and he was sitting in the chair, and I was telling him, hey, we were going to an engagement party that night and I said, “Afterward, I would really love for us to go to the church and kind of do a run through of our message at the church.”

Angie: And he said, “Like a dress rehearsal?” And I was like, no, no, no, we don't have to like dress wear the clothes we're going to wear. I mean, just kind of like do a run through, and he's been doing this a long time and he doesn't even come in and like practice it on the stage, but it was going to make me feel more comfortable. And he said, “Okay, yeah,
we can do that." So we go to the engagement party and we're leaving the engagement party and said so, he said, "Where do you want to go?" And I said, "Oh, well, I want to go to the church." And he said, "Oh, why?" I said, "You know, for our dress rehearsal." He was like our what? I said, and I think I said, "Are you kidding me?"

Brandon: I wasn't kidding.

Angie: He wasn't kidding. No, he, I mean, no idea. I said, "Remember I said, let's go the church and you said like a dress rehearsal and I said, no, not like a dress rehearsal." Nothing, he remembered nothing. So we are learning this. And so one of the first ways that we communicate in a way that can be harsh is harsh communication. Proverbs 3:3 says, "Do not let kindness and truth leave you. Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart." I love this word picture that we have, 'bind them around your neck.' You know what's, like when you put something around your neck and it, you know it's right there. It's your vocal cords, the things that are going to come out of your mouth, the words that are going to come, if you have balanced kindness and truth.

Angie: And so harsh communication, the Bible has a lot to say about kind words. It talks about how a soft answer turns away wrath. And it goes on to say that kind words are like honey, who doesn't love honey? Honey is good. It says it's good for the soul and good for the body. It also declares that one who speaks with kindness is a friend of the king. And then we have this very clear mandate in Ephesians, this very clear directive to be kind and tenderhearted to one another. We talk often, you've probably heard if you've ever been to any kind of marriage seminar or read any books about marriage, that men have this primary need and women have this primary need. And we often think about this in terms of husbands and wives, but guess what? The little boys in your home, they're men.

Angie: They're going to grow up and be men one day. And the little girls in your home, they're women. Your moms, your girlfriends, your boyfriends, all of these people are male or female. And so it's not just this is true for husbands, it's also true for our sons, it's true for our brothers, it's true for our husbands. And so men, they have this primary need to be respected, to know that they are respected. And so men, what they need to hear is I believe in you, I like you, I'm on your side. And women, we have this, women, the daughters in our home, our sisters, our moms, they need to hear this message of you're loved. They want to know that I'll do anything for you. I will fight for you. I'll love you.

Angie: Harsh words, you guys, they don't really speak any of that. When we speak harshly, what our husbands hear, what our sons hear is, I don't believe in you, I don't like you and I'm not on your side. And we speak harsh words to our wives and our daughters, what they hear is, you are not loved, and you are not enough, and you're not worthy of my kindness.

Brandon: Yeah. And so these two different major communication problems. One is just harshness and if there's one that goes along with that is dishonesty, dishonest communication. And what I mean by that is, is kind of twofold. What most of us think about is when we talk about honesty, that means don't deceive people. But when you get to talking about
this in a home situation, either marriage or with kids, we sort of get defensive and we
say, ‘Would you just be honest with me?’ And we start thinking, I'm not trying to deceive
you here. I'm not a liar. But what dishonest communication can be is not purposely
trying to deceive somebody, it's just holding back. It's just not, I'm not going to be really
open. I'm not going to tell you how I really think or how I really feel because that's too
raw and it's too much risk. And if I really tell you how you feel, that's going to create
conflict.

Brandon: And how many of you in your room just, you just love conflict? One guy, yes. So
statistically, one out of 300. So we don't necessarily gravitate to it, we don't invite it, we
don't want to say things that open up conflict. We don't want to deal with the
repercussions of that, the consequence of that, so we just shut down, we get quiet and
we don't say how we really feel. So dishonest communication, harsh communication,
those are two of the most common ways that we kind of communicate poorly. And the
Bible gives us really a prescription about how to deal with communication. One of the
greatest verses about communication, one of the greatest pieces of wisdom ever given
about communication was uttered by James in the first chapter of his book in the New
Testament. In chapter one, verse 19, James writes this, he says, ‘Understand my dear
brothers and sisters, you must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get
angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.’

Brandon: Okay? I just want to, if we could just do all that, like we could say, okay, let's conclude
the message. Let's just all go home and from now on, I'll be quicker to listen and slower
to speak, slower to get angry. I got this. We're good, right? But we're going to unpack
why it is that we don't do that very well sometimes. So the message translation says
this, it translates it differently. It says, “Lead with your ears, follow up with your tongue
and let anger struggle along in the rear.”

Angie: Yes.

Brandon: I just love that.

Angie: Yes. So the first step that we believe to really healthy communication, communication
that promotes connection and not disconnection, is changing your patterns. When
James talks about being quick to listen, it's interesting because we often think listening
doing nothing. Like we're not getting to talk, we're not getting to share a point of view,
we're not getting to speak the truth that we know that we have and, but he words it in
such a way that you're actually doing something, when you close your mouth and you
open your heart and your ears, you're doing something, you're listening. And when you
actually do this, when I actually take the time to go, I think I'm going to lean in and listen
here, I slow things down. Because often, I don't know if you've ever had, been in like an
unhealthy communication pattern and it kind of goes pretty quickly, right? Or it maybe
starts out kind of slow and then before you know what you're talking a lot more quickly
and it's you know, they say something, you say something, they, I mean it's, nobody's
really slowing anything down and we're not really listening at all.
Angie: This is a really, we say change your patterns. Really, one of the things I really want you to leave here knowing, because I think we underestimate this, is that patterns are powerful. We didn't just start communicating like this today. We, the way that you communicate, the way that I communicate is something I have been developing my entire life. It's something I learned early on in my life. How to share my thoughts, how to share my feelings, what defenses I need to put up, what walls I need to protect me. This is, this pattern is something I’ve been doing for a long time.

Angie: Sometimes we think, you know Brandon and I have been married 22 years and maybe you think, well, we've been in a relationship really, really long time, we should have this communication thing figured out. And we think those people who just got married, they really going to struggle with communication. But if you've been married for any length of time, you may attest to the fact that no, communication is hard and sometimes it just gets harder. And I will tell you it's because this pattern that maybe all you knew, it's the only way you knew how to communicate your needs, your feelings when you went into marriage, you have continued this pattern. And the more that you have continued this pattern, the more powerful it has become. And so then we start having children. And the same way that we've communicated in marriage, was the same way we communicated in a home we grew up in, is now the way we communicate with our children.

Angie: And so recognizing that there is a pattern to how you communicate and it is powerful. It's powerful. We sometimes just want to change our behavior. You know, I'm just going to stop doing that. I just talked about harsh communication and that's me man. I tell the truth, and not so much in love, I'm going to stop doing that. And we realized that you can't just stop a behavior. If you have a pattern, it's this negative pattern, you have to replace it with a positive pattern. Listening allows us to really hear and then validate, give permission for others to feel what they're feeling. Sometimes we think validation is just, okay, I heard you. Yes, you're feeling sad. That doesn't, that's not really validation. Validation is saying, that is frustrating, of course, you're upset. I understand why you're angry. I would be angry too. Oh you're sad, I get it.

Angie: You know when your kids are struggling and they are maybe playing a video game and they become very frustrated because they've died for the eighth time trying to rescue, who is it? Zelda? Is that who they're trying to rescue? I think, I don't know. I don't know who's, I think Zelda is the guy, but Zelda is not the guy, blink, anyway. They get really frustrated and you can, you think you're validating by going, oh, that's frustrating, huh? And they're like, you get to go, “That's so frustrating. That stinks. I would be upset too.” And when you meet them in that place, when you validate what they're experiencing, it does something. They understand that you're with them, that you get it and that you're frustrated on their behalf as well. But you don't throw them, you don't have to throw the thing at the wall that you can be frustrated. You get to demonstrate to them, I'm frustrated too and this is what we do with that. Nobody in my house throws the video games against the wall, by the way.

Angie: But we get to join people when we listen, when we slow down and we really listen to what they're saying. Sometimes we get so caught up in hearing the words that we don't
listen for what people are not saying. When we listen for what people are not saying, for what's not being said, for what's really going on in their heart, we interrupt a pattern. When we close our mouths and not just think about the next thing we're going to say, we interrupt a pattern. We are often afraid to do this because if we're honest, if I'm honest, I don't like to feel yucky feelings. I don't want my children to be sad because it's painful.

Angie: And so when they're sad, I just want to say, “Well, we have too much to be happy about. Your super blessed. You shouldn't be sad.” And is it true that we have a whole lot to be happy about? For sure. Ella and I, we, a few months ago we got to go junior, senior banquet, dress shopping, super fun, exciting. It was exciting like the first two or three times we went right? And then it stopped being exciting and fun, and it was just kind of like, ugh, we just need a dress. And you know, you had to get a dress that nobody else was wearing and she had to have a certain, the dress had to be a certain dress code and all the things. So it was kind of like this was a struggle.

Angie: And we finally, we found a dress, but then somebody else had that dress, we had to take it back and we found another dress and it wasn't going to work. And so I think we maybe did buy four or five dresses and took them back. And somewhere in the middle of that, we'd come home and Ella had just plopped down on the kitchen floor. We were cooking dinner and she plops down the kitchen floor and she is just defeated. Like, this is so hard. I don't, this doesn't feel good. I'm super frustrated and sad. And I looked at her and I said, "Sister, you're going to have to get over that. I mean, you are beautiful. There are lots of dresses, you're going to find the perfect dress. You just need to stop this." I mean, that's really what I said, because it was true.

Angie: And she just looked up at me, and she's kind of hung her head, and she just sat there, and she began to cry. And I started to go, really? But what she said to me, she said, “Sometimes I just need to know that you remember what it was like to be a 16 year old girl.” She just needed me to join her and remember what it was like to be a 16 year old girl shopping for a dress, ouch. But when I was able to join her, sit down on the floor with her, get down there with her pain and understand that, once I was able to comfort her in that place because I could feel that too, I could remember that that was hard. Then I was able to speak some truth to her heart in a way that she would hear it. I was able to tell her how fearfully and wonderfully made she is.

Angie: This other thing that we get to do is we get to create a new language. James says that we are to be quick to listen and slow to speak. So this part of changing this pattern also comes with creating a new language. We can't just keep relying on the things that we've always done before. I'm real quickly, hopefully going to run through this five levels of communication. And it's super important because, as we talk about these levels of communication, we start somewhere where you, this is a communication that you would have with just anybody. And once we get to the fifth level, this is a communication that you're connected. If you're communicating on this fifth level, there's connection and that's what we want, right? With our families. We want connection.
Angie: You know, we, Brandon and I were talking like you, you communicate, you communicate all day long, everything you do communicates something. But it doesn’t always communicate connection, right? And even in our families, even our homes, we’re communicating and we’re not connecting. Sometimes, a lot of times, what we’re communicating is actually causing disconnection. And so the first level of communication is common conversation, small talk. This is what you’d have with a stranger in the grocery store. Often, you know, how’s the weather? Weather’s great. How are you? I’m good. We have this kind of small talk in our homes with our families. We just, you know, it’s not very significant, just small talk.

Angie: The second level is we call nightly news or it’s the facts. You know, if you’re raising children in your home right now, you probably hang out here in this level a lot. You’re sharing facts constantly. Okay, so and so has to go to baseball today. I need to pick him up at 3:30, take him to the dentist. What’s for dinner? Don’t forget this meeting. I mean, we’re sharing facts all the time. And it would be easy to kind of hang out there, to like have that partner, you know, game is real strong. We’re sharing this stuff and we’re doing really good at that.

Angie: Both of those levels of communication, they’re not very satisfying. If that’s all you ever did in your life, there’s not a whole lot of connection there. The next three levels are where it gets risky and the potential satisfaction starts. The third level is cautious disclosure, sharing opinions and concerns. So a lot of us in marriage, this is where we get stuck because we like our opinion. There’s a reason it’s our opinion. We think we’re right and so if we get to that place where we feel safe enough, that I can share my opinion, I can share my concern, but it’s not really met with, okay, that’s your ... Brandon’s real good at this.

Angie: You can have a different opinion than him and he’ll say, “All right, well, we’ll just agree to disagree.” I hate that sentence. I don’t want to agree to disagree, I want you to agree with me. And so learning along the way that he gets, he’s his own person. He gets to have his own opinion. He gets to be concerned about things. My children, this is like, we can kind of go, yeah, yeah. Husbands and wives they could have their own opinion, but our kids, mm-mm (negative), they need to agree with us. They need to share our values and our thoughts and opinions, but our kids get to have their own opinions. It’s healthy for them as they grow to develop their own opinions. They get to decide that broccoli’s gross, they get to have that opinion. Now, you still may make them eat it, but they can still think it’s gross. They get to be, they can decide that they don’t like what the consequence you’ve given them. They don’t like it. They’re upset with you. They get to have that opinion. There is freedom there.

Angie: You create secure children when you allow them to have their opinions, when you allow them to voice concerns, right? So that’s hard for some of us. We think, no, you’re the child. You don’t get to voice concerns. They’re little human beings, they have concerns. Now you need to teach them how to do that in appropriate ways that are respectful and kind but to allow them the freedom to have concerns. This fourth level is high risk, high reward talks. And this is basically where we share our feelings. Now I know I realized
there are probably a few in you in here that say, “You know, I'm just not a, I'm not an emotional person. I'm not into all these eewy gooey feelings. I'm just really practical, and that's just not really an important part of who I am.” And I'm just going to lovingly call baloney on that. That is not true.

Angie: God created you with emotions. They serve a purpose. Emotions, their primary purpose is to tell us what we need. And there's not a person in this room who doesn't have needs. God created you with needs. And so, and we get to look to Jesus as this example of one who we, you know, the Bible declares that we are made in the image of God, right? We are image bearers. And we see Jesus as someone who experienced emotion. We saw Him experience great sorrow when his friend Lazarus died and, and his sisters, Mary and Martha were so grieved. And the Bible talks about how Jesus wept. He experienced sorrow. We see that Jesus experienced anger, when He talks about anyone that's going to harm children, that it's better than a millstone be hung around their neck and they're thrown into the river. Like that was anger, righteous anger.

Angie: We saw Jesus experience loneliness many times throughout scripture. And when He's moments before He knows that He's going to the cross and He's there with his disciples who keep falling asleep. You have something in common with the disciples babe.

Brandon: I'm a disciple.

Angie: He's a disciple, a good one. He's alone in those moments. I mean, He's with God, but HE experienced emotions. And so you get to sit here today and maybe you're not really in touch with those emotions, maybe you don't like them, maybe you wish you rather didn't have feelings, maybe you feel like they haven't done any good in my life, they serve no purpose because of what you've experienced. But you do have them. We in this area, we get to share our feelings when we feel safe to do so. I want to just kind of point out something real quick to you.

Angie: That often, Brandon and I might get to a place where I'll share my feelings about something and he'll listen, he's being quick to listen and then he'll come back with, well that's not true because dah, dah, dah, dah. He shares a fact with me. It's great. I just met him and I just came to him in this vulnerable place of sharing my feelings and he kind of jumps back up here and shares some facts with me. I need him to join me in this place where I'm sharing my feelings. I don't need him to talk me out of my feelings, to tell me why, this is why you shouldn't feel that. I need him to just join me there.

Angie: Similar to what I was sharing about Ella and the prom dress. We just need people to validate and join us there. I have a friend who, she was sharing this story with me a few weeks ago, how she had been at work that day and then we had a women's thing that night, and so she really didn't get to see her little six year old daughter just for a few minutes that day. It was just a really long, busy day and by the time they got home that night, she was putting her to bed and it was late and they just both needed to go to bed. And her little daughter really, really wanted to cuddle with her. She wanted some cuddle time, she wanted mommy to climb in her bed with her and my friend said, “You know, it was just so late and we just both needed to get to bed, and I was still in my
work clothes and I just needed her to go to sleep, and so I told her, no, we're not doing that tonight. You just need to go to sleep.”

Angie: And her daughter protested and then her daughter began to cry and she said, “Mommy, you work too hard. You work too much.” And my friend who would tell you that this, you know, she stood there and she has all the feelings. I mean, all the mommas across the room, collectively, we say, ouch. Right? that's hard. That's hard. And her response could have been something like, yes, I work hard. I work hard for this house, and for your clothes, and for the food for you to eat, that might've been my response. But she told me that she responded in a way that was unusual for her and as her daughter's crying, she said, “I began to cry too because I was really sad about the fact that I do work a lot, that I hadn't seen her much that day.” And she said, “I had just climbed in the bed with her and we both cried.” And her little six year old got to talk about what she's feeling, what's going on inside of her, and her mom got to share that, I'm really sad about this too.

Angie: We often think that we need to protect our children from hard feelings, from painful feelings, that's not protecting them, but demonstrating to them that this is, mommy feels this too, daddy feels this too, and this is what I do with this. When you’re able to show them that I experience sadness and then I talk to the Father, and then I pray, and then I get a hug from you guys and I feel better. It teaches them how to deal with their own feelings, it teaches them how to regulate their feelings. But we have to join them in it first.

Angie: Just real quickly, we'll tell you we don't do this, there's big consequences. The consequences are that we teach our kids that we're not going to talk about feelings with them, we're not going to help them develop a language for this. And so what they will do is they will turn inward, they will realize that this is not something they can talk about. They will withdraw, they will self-soothe and they will hear the message, no one is coming for me. And sometimes when we don't do this, the opposite happens. They continue to demonstrate that they're experience, they're feeling something and they pursue your response. And so some of you have had children who do this, they're upset and we don't respond to them in a way that says, I understand you're upset. So they get more upset and then they just start to lose their minds, right? They start exhibiting, they start acting out this need to be met there where they are. And so it's so vital to communication in a family that we're able to understand each other's feelings.

Angie: The last piece is truth and love talks. This is where, because we're able to safely share our feelings, we're then able to express, this is what I need. This is real, where real vulnerability happens. Where I know that I'm, well, vulnerably, I'm going to share, this is what I need from you. And the risk is that maybe you aren't prepared to meet my needs, but maybe you will because you've demonstrated that you understand my feelings. That's the sort of what we'd say the pinnacle of healthy communication is being able to articulate what you need and have those needs met.

Brandon: I got to say something that's not really in our notes, but it's hitting me hard in this moment, especially to the men in the room. Because I know that a lot of us kind of walk
around and think, if I can't fix it with a pocket knife and some WD40, it's not in my realm, that's her area. And I felt that, I think in the past, there'd been times when I believed that. Picked up a book not long ago by a guy named Lewis Howes. He was an Olympic athlete, a rather strong individual, and when he left athletics, he went on to build a seven figure company doing public speaking and all kinds of things. And he wrote a book about masculinity. And in that book on masculinity, he said, “One of the things we've done to young men is that when they're growing up,” and he's talking about athletes in particular, is that at some point those boys, those young men are feeling something and they share it in the locker room, or they share it in a training scenario.

Brandon: And inevitably someone in the room lets them know there's no place for that here. You know, there's no place for that here. And so men just tend to learn, be taught, be told this is not your area, leave that to women. And all of that, like Angie said, it's just baloney, it's just baloney. So as men, I want to raise a healthy young boy, two of them actually, hopefully not just, I won't just pick one. I'm hoping they both grow up to be healthy, to be strong. And listen, the fact is, if you've gotten a place in your life where you're, I'm just not sharing feelings, I'm not getting vulnerable, I'm not going to be honest, because she always bites my head off, or I'm not going to do that in my kids. I shouldn't feel that and I'm just going to shut them down.

Brandon: Whatever it is, at the end of the day, it takes tremendous courage to open up, courage. Courage is not staying silent, acting tough, courage is saying, I'm going to be honest and there's probably going to be repercussions. This is going to be a tough conversation, but I'm going to do that. I'm going to be who I am and stop giving my identity away because I'm too afraid to just be who I am. So just a word about that. The last thing James says or challenges us with is to challenge our hearts. Okay? He says, be quick to listen, be slow to speak. And we've talked about developing a better language where we slow things down. And this last part is, be slow to get angry, be slow to get angry. That is, challenge your heart.

Brandon: He even goes on to the very next verse and says, “Human anger doesn't produce the righteousness of God,” meaning good things usually don't come out of our anger. Okay. And I think there's more here than just flash in the pan kind of anger, he puts it on the end for a reason. It is because if we don't get those first two steps right, if we don't learn to listen and to speak, what sets in is distance, coldness, bitterness. And we just learn to hide behind that. And as the years go on, by the time we know it, we've raised 18 year old kids and we're sending them out in the world and we're not connected anymore.

Brandon: So challenge your heart, that is, longterm develop these new patterns, longterm just decide you're going to mess up. You're probably going to mess up this afternoon. If you guys go home and you talk about this on the drive home, you may have disagreements, intention, and it just, and you go, no, we'll never get this right. Well, that's not true. Jesus lives in you, He's alive and well and so you just longterm got to commit to forgiveness and letting go and developing these things because they matter.

Angie: I want you to leave here as we close, with this word on your mind and on your heart. And this word's called repair. Because I realized that you can, I've sat where you are, as
we prepared this message, as I looked at these things that are healthy and good and that builds connection with my people, and that help them to be safe, secure people that can go on in their lives and build connection with their people, it's easy to begin to feel the sense of, I have messed this up. It's too late. One's about to go off to college soon, or my kids are already out of the house and I didn't do any of that Angie. I messed it up and it's too late. And I want you to know there's power in repair.

Angie: When I was 21, 22 years old, I was just really struggling in life with just some hard feelings and I didn't really know even what it was about. I had just moved back home to where my family was, Brandon and I had been married a couple of years and we just moved back home, and I was just struggling with just some really hard feelings. And my kind of stuff, some resentments begin to creep out, because that's what they do. They come out y'all, that stuff that you try to like push down there and go, I'm really upset about this, this really hurts, I'm really angry about this, but I can't talk about it, so I'm just going to push it down. It comes out.

Angie: And I remember one day my dad, he drove to my work and he said, “Hey, let me take you to lunch.” And I said, “Okay.” So I got in the truck and he began to drive around, and my dad began to go through everything that he could remember, that he had done that had hurt me. And to tell me he was sorry and that he loved me. I'm 21 years old, I'm out of the house, I'm married and my dad chose to repair a lot of things that I'm sure at the time he said he was sorry for, but in a meaningful way that says, I want to repair this. It changed everything for me. If you know me very well, you've probably heard me tell that because it taught me so much about the power of repair. And so maybe that's you today. Maybe you know, I need to repair some things.

Angie: You guys, we will mess this up over and over and over. And when I said patterns are powerful, you guys will hear that in your head every time you go back to the same way you're communicating, you're like, oh yeah, they're powerful. They are powerful. And so I know that as you with the power of the Holy Spirit inside you attempt to make some changes in this way, that you're going to get it wrong, and you're going to want to feel that condemnation. But I want you to know that the power, the real healthy communication is in repair. I mean, Jesus is the ultimate example of that, right? Things are, we messed it up with God, right? We sent, we broke our connection off with him and Jesus steps in and He is this ultimate repair for us. So while patterns are powerful, repairs are more powerful, and we get to do that, we get to do that.

Angie: And the small things with our littles, when we say, “You know what? Mommy is so sorry. She should not have yelled at you like that. That was not okay.” That's repair. When I look at my girl and I say, ugh, I sit down on the floor with her and I say, “I'm sorry. I do remember what it was like to be 16 year old girl,” that's repair. When we look at our spouse and we say, “I know that you needed to hear that you are respected and liked and that I'm for you. And I just communicated that exact opposite of that because of my own stuff. I'm so sorry,” That's repair. Maybe you are here today and you're sitting here, you're going, this sounds great, but this won't happen in my home. Maybe I could try, but nobody else will. I'm still going to be met with harsh communication. My spouse's still is going to be honest with me, my teenager's still not going to talk to me.
Angie: Maybe you feel that sense of defeat. I want you to know that I have lived a lot of my life seeking for the people around me to meet that ultimate need, that need that I as a woman have of being loved. And so when he doesn't communicate that to me, a world falls apart. But when I have realized that that need is satisfied fully in Jesus, and that He loves me where I was, when I sit in that place of knowing how loved I am by Him, then I don't need Him to meet that need. It's bonus. It's like icing on the cake when I know that I'm loved by my husband or my children, but when they don't communicate love to me, my world does not fall apart because I am safe and secure and loved by the king. When I do not respect him, when I don't demonstrate that I'm for him, his world does not fall apart because he knows that the God of the universe is for him, that's fighting on his behalf, sees him and likes him.

Angie: Guys, it has to start there. We have to start foundationally with who am in Jesus? If our identity is wrapped up in what our family communicates to us, who we are, then we're going to be really broken.

Brandon: I want to just take us somewhere for a moment. I'd like to ask you to just bow your heads with me. I can tell you from personal history, I remember listening once to a hero of mine, Chuck Swindoll talking about marriage. And he said in the middle of the message, he said, “And my wife and I have the same fights you do.” And I remember that being so empowering. And I just want you to understand, we've never stood on this stage and thought we got this all together, you guys come follow everything we do. And so we know what it is to hurt through this, that you might be thinking about the argument you had with your teenager this week. You might be thinking about the relationship you had with your parents growing up, and how you just wish they'd heard, you just wish they knew.

Brandon: I believe strongly in the need for some fresh starts, to be able to say, “I've blown it in the past, or someone else blew it and I can't get out of them what I really want from them, but I'm willing to start today and seek forgiveness and to offer forgiveness so that bitterness does not rule my life.” I've heard that unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting it to hurt the person you're angry at.

Brandon: So I just want us to pray together. Father, I ask you right now, just to highlight for us in this room, to bring to our minds and our hearts, is there a relationship right now that's on my mind that is broken, that needs repair, that I need to approach to apologize to? Jesus you told us, leave your gift at the altar, go fix it and then come back and worship, and Father, I pray we practice that, that we repair things. Father, we love you. We're thankful for how good you are. I ask you in this moment to just bring to light the situation we've had with you.

Brandon: If you're listening to me pray, you need to understand that the scripture is clear that we have all offended God with our sin. We've broken His rules, we haven't listened to Him, we've disobeyed and God invites us to come on the basis of what Jesus did and to receive Him as Lord, as savior, as forgiver, as Redeemer, as fixer. And you might need to make that decision today. So if that's you, if you need Christ, you need Jesus, just cry out. Lord Jesus, I believe in you. I need you. I trust you. I want to turn from my sins and
receive you as my savior, because you have done all of this perfectly for me and I've blown it. But God, you offer forgiveness. You offer redemption.

Brandon: Lord I ask you Lord, to just take that person's hand and just walk Him right into your family, right in your kingdom. Lord, for those of us who really just need a fresh start, we need another chance, we want to start building something, we want to put this into practice, God help us to hear your word and to go do it. Not just to be hearers, but to be doers of all that you've said. Jesus, we love you. We praise you, and we thank you, in Christ Jesus name. Amen.