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“DISCIPLING YOUR CHILDREN”

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Next Sunday, September 14th, we are hosting a marriage conference. Steve and Debbie Wilson are leading this effort to strengthen your marriage. Here’s the schedule. . .

- **9:15—Session #1**
- **10:45—Worship (Sermon on the family)**
- **3:00—Session #2**
- **4:15—Session #3**

Here are some topics that will be covered. . .

- **The 6 progressive levels of communication**
- **How to identify and heal wounds from the past**
- **How to deal with marital conflict in a healthy way**

So, whether your marriage is on life support or it just needs to be strengthened, this is a golden

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opportunity to draw near to God and allow Him to breathe life into your relationship.

Leading up to this special emphasis, I’ve been preaching a series of sermons entitled, “*FAMILY TALK*.” Last week the sermon focus was “*Harmony in the Home*” and the title of the previous week’s sermon was “*Marriage and the Family*.” Today I want you to turn in your Bible to Deuteronomy 6 as we turn our attention to “*Discipling Your Children*.”

In his book, *Revolutionary Parenting*, George Barna says there are three dominant approaches to parenting. . .

Parenting by default is what Barna terms the path of least resistance. This approach is influenced by cultural norms and traditions. The objective is to keep everyone as happy as possible so the parents can still enjoy the other prioritized aspects of their lives.

Trial-and-error parenting is based on the notion that every parent is an amateur at raising

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children. There are no absolute guidelines to follow. So, the best that parents can do is experiment, observe outcomes, and improve upon their successes and failures. In this incremental approach, the goals of parenting are to continually perform better than most other parents.

Barna found that a more **revolutionary approach to parenting** was the least common approach. Revolutionary parenting takes God's words on life and family at face value and seeks to apply them faithfully and consistently. Barna explained. . .

"Those who engage in revolutionary parenting define success as intentionally facilitating faith-based transformation in the lives of their children, rather than simply accepting the aging and survival of the child as a satisfactory result."

Barna Update, www.barna.org (4-9-07)

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God called Jewish parents to be revolutionary in their approach to parenting. Flip over to the New Testament and you will find that our Lord’s expectations have not changed. Think about it. The Jewish people were making their way through the wilderness toward the land that God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Soon they would be living in a land whose culture and lifestyle were decidedly pagan and idolatrous. The question that every parent must have wrestled with was this—*how can we raise godly kids in such an ungodly culture?* Hear the Word of the Lord. . .

Deuteronomy 6:1–3... “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, **2** so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. **3** “O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and

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that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in a land flowing with milk and honey.*

How many of you parents and grandparents would love for the Lord to bless your family and to transform the hearts of your children? Here’s a truth I want you to grasp. . .

**DISCIPLING YOUR CHILDREN IS YOUR
MOST IMPORTANT JOB AS A PARENT.**

Let’s start with the basics. God revealed to Moses three strategies for revolutionary parenting. . .

1. LOVE YOUR LORD FERVENTLY

Deuteronomy 6:4–5... “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

The text we are studying today is known as “*The Shema.*” It is the central text of Judaism because it reveals the essence of God’s person and His ultimate purpose. The first word is “Hear.” In the

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Hebrew mindset, this verb is a command *to hear, hearken, listen, obey, publish.*”¹

“The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!” The primary assertion is that there is only one God! Since there is only one God, we should know this amazing God and our values should be consistent with His character.

To really obey God means that we are to love Him with every aspect of our being. Jesus was asked, *“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”* Here’s what Jesus said...

Matthew 22:37–40... And He said to him,
“ ‘YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH
ALL YOUR MIND.’ **38** “This is the great and
foremost commandment. **39** “The second
is like it, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS
YOURSELF.’ **40** “On these two

¹ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., [*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*](#) (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 107.

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commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

John 14:23... Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

So, Jesus magnified the Shema and related it to New Testament believers also. Parents, the Lord demands that *you and your children put your whole heart into your relationship with Him.* The command here is not to go to church, to tithe, to read your Bible, or to pray before you eat. It is a command to love Him fervently. Rabbi’s taught that *this love means you would rather die than betray God!*

Deuteronomy 6:6... **“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.**

The reference to “*being on your heart*” means to be in one’s constant and conscious reflection. A. W. Tozer said, **“We are called to an everlasting preoccupation with God.”**

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Parents, if your love for God is not strongly anchored in your heart, you cannot pass the love of God down to your kids. **You are the greatest spiritual and moral influence in your children’s lives!** That’s why I’m hammering home this point over and over . . .

DISCIPLING YOUR CHILDREN IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB AS A PARENT.

God revealed to Moses three strategies for revolutionary parenting. First, love your Lord fervently. Secondly. . .

2. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN DILIGENTLY

Deuteronomy 6:7... “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

The spiritual instruction of children is first and foremost the responsibility of the parents. The

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church is here to come alongside and to help in the spiritual nurturing process.

***In fact, our children’s ministry has rolled out a new resource to equip you for this important discipling role.**

The word “diligently” comes from a verb meaning “to sharpen”. Eugene H. Merrill, in the New American Commentary, gave us some insight into the richness of this word...

“The image is that of the engraver of a monument who takes hammer and chisel in hand and with painstaking care etches a text into the face of a solid slab of granite. The sheer labor of such a task is daunting indeed, but once done the message is there to stay.” (p. 167)

Repetition is the key to impressing God’s truth into the hearts of your children. Notice where the teaching is to take place—not only at the temple and the great feasts—but also during the normal flow of life! Instruct your kids when you are at the

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restaurant, at home eating a family meal, at the ballgame, during your vacation, etc. God’s truth is so important that it must be a priority in the life of the Christian family. Gary and Ann Marie Ezzo wrote...

“Most parents tend to teach a moral lesson in periods of conflict when they tell their children what not to do, rather than in moments of non-conflict when they can direct their children in what to do.”

(Let the Children Come Along the Virtuous Way: Growing Kids God’s Way, p. 36)

Think about it. It is easier to teach a child to be kind than it is to teach him not to be unkind!

DISCIPLING YOUR CHILDREN IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB AS A PARENT.

God revealed to Moses three strategies for getting the job done. First, love your Lord fervently. Secondly, teach your children diligently. Finally. . .

3. DISPLAY YOUR FAITH PROMINENTLY

Deuteronomy 6:8–9... “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

God knew the faith of His chosen people would be severely tested in the Promise Land. Therefore, He challenged them to openly and boldly demonstrate their commitment to the one true God and to His Word. **“Phylacteries”** were to be placed around their heads and their forearm. Each of these little boxes contained verses from the Torah, including the Shema.

The covenant words were also to be placed on the doorframes of the Jewish homes. Even today observant Jews place the Shema and some other verses from the Torah in a metal receptacle called a **“mezuzah”**.

This attention to detail points to the importance of Christian parents keeping the Word of God

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perpetually in the forefront of your home and family.

CONCLUSION

During a visit to the children's Bible class, a preacher looked into their faces and asked, "*Why do you love God?*" After a moment a small voice came from the back: "*I guess it just runs in the family.*" David L. Roper, Judsonia, Arkansas. Christian Reader, "Kids of the Kingdom."

How do you build that kind of conviction and character into the lives of your children? You must...

- LOVE YOUR LORD FERVENTLY
- TEACH YOUR CHILDREN DILIGENTLY
- DISPLAY YOUR FAITH PROMINENTLY

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