

Family God's Way #2 - Family Life

by Bob Hoekstra

Developing family life God's way is essential for fulfilling our calling as followers of Jesus Christ and bringing glory to God.

Duration: 1:02:05

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:8-9, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:11

Topics: "Gods Love", "Family Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the love of God and how it was demonstrated through the sending of His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for humanity. The speaker emphasizes the depth of God's love and the significance of this sacrifice. The sermon also highlights the importance of having the word of the Lord control every aspect of our lives, including our actions, thoughts, and relationships. The speaker encourages parents to set an example for their children by following Christ and discusses the importance of incorporating God into everyday activities such as watching television or taking walks. The sermon concludes by addressing the need to respond to God's love by loving Him wholeheartedly and referencing the book of 1 John for further insight on this topic.

Transcript

Well, praise the Lord. It's good to be together again. Good to be seeking the Lord and in the word of the Lord together.

Let's pray together. Lord, we delight to come seeking you, Lord. We're hungry.

We're eager to hear from you. We're so thankful that you've spoken to us in your word and now by your Holy Spirit we ask you to make it alive and fresh and quick and sharp and working in and through our lives, Lord. We need to hear from you, Lord.

We can only live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. So by your Holy Spirit, speak to us in a fresh way. Give us enlightened hearts and minds and renew our minds and transform our lives in accordance with your will by the work of your word.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen. We're in our second study on family God's way.

The Lord has a word on this subject for each of us, whether we are married or single, whether we have children or do not, whether we're looking forward to marriage or looking back on it or wondering if we're

going to get married. Whatever the Lord finds us in now, he has a word for us on this subject. Some of us need to be preparing for marriage.

And that involves during singleness, securing an undistracted devotion to the Lord. And some are in marriage and new in marriage and are hungry to hear from the Lord and what it's all about from his perspective. Others need a fresh touch of the Lord for their marriage.

Some are hurting at home and need the Lord to work. Some are looking back on marriage, perhaps from being widowed or widow. And others are looking back from a broken marriage.

And some of us need to hear for our own lives what the Lord has. Some need to share with others what the Lord has. And strong marriages need to get stronger.

And those that are hurting need the healing touch of the Lord God Almighty. So in all those arenas, we know the Lord is faithful and able to speak to us. Now last week, in our last study, we saw the Lord establish the original family as he brought Adam an appropriate, that is, a corresponding partner for the great task of being God's stewards here on earth.

Now in this study, we're going to look at family life. Our last study was the divine partnership where two become one and serve as stewards. And now as you see in our outline, we're going to look at family life tonight and the reason it must be developed God's way.

And then second, the foundational issues that develop family life God's way. And then third, the process that passes family life God's way on to the next generation, on to our children. Now first of all, the reason that family life must be developed God's way.

A word about that here in Deuteronomy 6, verses 1 through 3. Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you, a land flowing with milk and honey. Now the context, we can see that these words are directed to adults and to parents.

Verse 2, words that I command you, and then it relates it to you and your son and your grandson, speaking to the adults, the parents of the family of Israel. And these words soon in this very section of the word of God, will be given a direct family life application by the Lord right here in the text of the word of God. At this point, Israel is just about to enter the promised land.

They've been delivered from Egypt and across the wilderness in some disobedience and doubt and learning, and now they're ready to go into the promised land. They've had the law of God given to them once on Mount Sinai, as the law was given to Moses and passed on to the people. Now here, the law is given a second time, just before they go into the land of promise.

And there in the land, they will win victories in the name of the Lord. They will be established there in the land, the place God prepared for them, to be God's people. And there they will serve the Lord and are anticipated and expected to bear fruit unto Him.

Now also, as it is recorded in Isaiah 51 verse 4, concerning the will and plan of God for Israel in the land and for us, his people today, Isaiah 51 verse 4, The Lord says to His people, Listen to Me, My people, and give ear to Me, O My nation, for law will proceed from Me, from God to His people, and I will make My justice rest as a light of the peoples. As God's people would be receiving the word of the Lord from the Lord God Almighty, they would be receiving His law, His proclamation, and as they would let Him work His word, His will, His ways, His justice out among them, the light of the Lord would be shining forth from the work of God among His people, out into the world to those who do not know the Lord. Here referred to as the peoples, that is the nations or the Gentiles.

So Israel was called here to be a testimony of the light of God. Now the point is this, in Isaiah 51 verse 4 for Israel, and also Deuteronomy 6, 1 through 3, Israel had a task in the land, in their place, where God was going to put them, they had a purpose to fulfill before the Lord, therefore it was imperative that all of their lives and all of their ways be developed according to the ways of the Lord, all of it being done after the ways of the Lord, that they might become indeed the people of the Lord. Now we, as God's people today, we have a similar God-given task in our lives.

Matthew chapter 5 gives us one clear and strong and concise statement of that. Matthew 5, 13 through 16. Our task of serving God now as we live by His promises, our task which corresponds to the task Israel had as they went forth into the land of promise to serve the Lord.

Matthew 5, 13. Jesus said of those who follow Him, You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world.

A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Here the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are called to be salt and light.

Salt and light. Let's add to that Matthew 28, 18 through 20, then reflect on it just a moment. And Jesus came and spoke to them, His disciples, His followers, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Here the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ are called to be making disciples, to be making followers of others.

So the people of the Lord, those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, you, me, the family of God today, the church of Jesus Christ, we are called to be salt, to be light, to be disciples, and to be making disciples. This is our God-given task as we live by the promises of God in the land that the Lord has us in for this day and age. Therefore, just as Israel had to develop a God-developed life for the task God gave them, so we too must develop our lives and our family life all after the ways of the Lord.

The reason we must develop our lives, our walk, our family life, just as the Lord describes it, defines it, commands it, is because that's the only possible way that we can fulfill our calling here on earth in this day and age. And don't forget, God ordained the family for His purposes, plan, and His glory. It's too easy to take on the worldly notion that the family is there just for the benefit of the participants or for what we might

get out of it.

If we can kind of trim the trouble and get the blessing, we think, well, what more can you want from family life? Listen, there's challenge in family life, yes, and there can be blessing too if we'll do it God's way. But it's bigger than that. God ordained and created families for His glory and honor and to fulfill His purposes upon earth.

And in our household units, the God of Israel wants to use us as He is now our God and Father and God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to use us in His church to be salt and light and to make disciples. And our household units can only be used that way, which is His way, if we let Him develop our family life His way. That's the reason why family life must be developed God's way, not man's way or not just ad hoc any way that seems to work a little bit.

Now, second, let's look a while at the foundational issues that develop it, that is, that develop family life God's way. Let's return to our primary passage of the evening, Deuteronomy 6. In verses 4 and 5, we see the foundational issues that develop family life God's way. If we have a desire to please God in our homes, or we want our homes to be taken under the care, provision, direction and purposes of God, we are now going to read the foundational issues that develop family life God's way.

Deuteronomy 6, 4 and 5. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. The Lord our God.

First, God said through Moses, Listen up, Israel, pay attention, people of God, this is important. Hear, O Israel, and here was the announcement. First, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

That statement, the Lord our God. The God of Israel, who now is the God of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, of course. The Lord our God, who is he? Well, by his very name, we know who he is.

And remember, in most English translations, when you find in the Old Testament, the word Lord in all uppercase letters, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, it's not really a translation of a Hebrew word that means Lord or Master, it's that special word that is the name of God. God is the Lord, L-O-R-D. But this word translated Lord with uppercase letters here is to let us be reminded this is the name of God.

It could be translated Yahweh our God or Jehovah our God. It's the word that one derivative of means I am. And remember when Moses said, who am I going to say sent me with this kind of an instruction? And the Lord said, just tell them I am sent you.

That's my name. God has many titles. You know, he's almighty and he's all powerful.

He's all wise. He's omnipresent. And all of these wonderful attributes that we sometimes give to God as titles and pray to him as the almighty one.

But his name is Yahweh. His name is I am. He's the only self-existent, self-sufficient one in the universe.

He's the true and living God. Can you imagine if your name was I am? People would have a heyday with that, wouldn't they? They'd probably be suggesting nicknames, you know. Why don't you really call yourself I wish I were, you know, instead of I am? Or what's your middle name, you know? I am what? What a name.

Who can carry that name but God? He's the only one who says my name is I am. That is, I just exist. I always have.

I always will. And I always shall. It's just my name, I am.

No one caused me. No one sustains me. No one will have to pick me up and boost me a million years from now.

Because I am. I always am. Before Abraham was, I am.

Only God can use that kind of grammar. It doesn't make sense with anyone else. But that's the Lord.

That's who he is. He's I am. And of course, we want to know more about him than that he is everlastingly in existence, though that in itself is a mind blower.

Have you meditated on that lately? I mean, that just will raise your respect of God and remind you that God is high and lofty and we are lowly and weak. But it means more than just he is. And it makes you almost, it's an appetizing name, sort of, isn't it? You go, I am.

I am. Who? What? Lord, tell me more. Fill out that name.

And of course, he sends his only begotten son. And Jesus goes about saying, I am. In fact, they tried to stone him when he said I am.

But he didn't just say I am. He said, I am the good shepherd. I am the door.

I am the bread of heaven. I am the true vine. I am the resurrection and the life.

I am the way, the truth and the life. And God kept explaining himself through the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, this is the very one that we're reading about here.

This is the one who is addressing his people. The great I am. The Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, I am our God.

And then the Lord adds, the Lord is one. Using the same word, his name, the Lord, Yahweh, I am, is one. Interesting thing about this term.

Though it says the Lord is one, the term used is a term for compound unity. That is, oneness, but made up of more than one aspect, one element, and yet still one, though more realities than one in the one. And many have tried to build analogies to this because it's speaking, of course, of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Compound unity. Two or more elements are seen in this word. We know by other parts of the word of God, it's actually three.

Tri-unity, probably a better term than Trinity. Anyway, tri-unity. Three aspects, three persons, but one God.

One essence. One true and living God. Not three gods, one revealed in three persons.

The Lord is one. But it means more than that. The Lord is one in the sense that he's unique.

There's no one like him. He's the only one of his kind. Throughout the world there have been all kinds of systems of gods and hierarchies of gods and good gods and bad gods and mediocre gods, a pantheon of

gods.

Not so. The Lord is one. There's only one God, not many.

All others are false gods. They're idols. They're imaginations.

They are forces and principles and attributes that are against the true and living God. There is one God, and all of everything that exists is by his creation. It is accountable to him, and it needs to learn that and respond to that.

All of that is implied in those statements, and of course they're elaborated on elsewhere in the word of God. We're not guessing from that one verse that it could mean all of this. Elaborated throughout the word of God are all of the things just suggested about these brief statements.

The Lord is our God. The Lord is one. What we're talking about here as one of the two basic foundational issues that develop family life God's way, number one is this one, verse four.

It's knowing who God is. So critical. If we do not know who God is, we cannot see family life develop his way.

Foundational to family life develop God's way is knowing who the God of the family is. The God who ordains family life. Now second, the second foundational issue, verse five.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. The Lord is our God, the Lord is one, and here's how to respond to him. You shall love the Lord your God.

That's the second foundational issue that develops family life God's way. That is the proper response to who he is. We've seen a little glimpse of who he is, the great I am, the true and living eternal God.

How do we properly respond to him? We must know both of those and walk in both of those to see family life develop his way. Second issue is you shall love the Lord your God. Knowing who God is, eternal creator, and so much more revealed in Old and New Testament.

And then responding to him the only proper way. If we do not love God, we have not yet responded in the proper way to who he is. In fact, maybe there's some here tonight that don't really know who he is.

Be listening, the Lord is speaking tonight about who he is. Not just the verse we read, but we're going to read other verses in the Old and New Testament that reveal who he is. And God wants us to know who he is, but not just so we can list characteristics or attributes of God.

He wants us to know who he is so we'll fall in love with him. The only proper response to God is a heart love response to God. You shall love the Lord your God.

What is love? Well, it isn't never having to say I'm sorry. In fact, it's quite the opposite actually. What is love? Love includes being interested in someone.

If you love someone, you're very interested in them. Let me ask you, are you interested in God? Now, probably so because you're here tonight. Well, not necessarily so because you could have been drug here tonight.

I know, I was drug to church many times. Hated it till I learned to love it. Didn't learn to love it till I learned to love God.

Otherwise, this is just an interruption in one's program. But love includes being interested in someone. Are you interested in God? Oh, God wants you to be.

Out of his love for you, he wants you to be. And you should be. There's nothing more interesting in all of the universe.

There's nothing more critical to show interest in than to be interested in God. I can remember when my wife-to-be first came to the office where I was managing the office, part of the church office in Glendale, California. And as what I thought was love was being stirred in my heart, I think first it was lust, but just to be frank and honest.

But it eventually became love, praise the Lord. But I saw interest in her just begin to develop. And I'm even more interested in her today after 28 years of marriage.

You get very interested in someone you're loving. And we're to be interested in God. Also, we're concerned about those we love.

Are you concerned about God? Do we care about what he cares about? Are we concerned about his interests, his plans? Or are we so consumed in our own that we don't even have a concern about God? Love involves being devoted to someone. Love involves having respect for someone. Love involves being delighted with someone.

All of these things apply beautifully to the Lord God Almighty and the relationship we're to have with him. Love involves being faithful to someone. Not just always feeling on kind of a warm, fuzzy high all the time, but that's a blessing when that's occurring too.

But we're to be faithful to those that we are to love. And certainly faithfulness to God is a way to express our love. It also involves trusting, obeying, serving, living for, all of these appropriately describe loving God.

And this is how we are to relate to God. But you know we're to do it in a very special way. We're told here we're to do it with all our heart, all our soul, and all of our strength.

Loving God is not a casual thing. I remember as a teenager I seemed to think anyway that I was falling in and out of love with gals every other day or week. Of course, one problem was they didn't know I existed, but nonetheless it wasn't healthy if they had known, you know.

Love doesn't just turn on and off like that. It has a depth and length of commitment in it that comes from God. And our love toward God is to be with all of our heart, that is all of our inner being.

In other words, that secret place of our life that only God can see, that all of it is just directed toward God in interest, affection, concern, and delight. We're to love Him with all of our soul. Many ways to describe the soul.

One way is that it's often used synonymous with personality, that is the immaterial us that is inside and unseen, the spirit life that gets expressed in sort of the soulish life or humanity. In other words, we're to love our God with all of, every expression of who we really are. Well, that's a comprehensive love.

And we're to love God with all of our strength, with all of our energy. That would be an interesting study, wouldn't it? To see what it is that draws the most expending of energy out of our lives. It's interesting how some of us can go on and on and on and on and on in this, that, or the other thing or with this, that, or the other person.

And yet when it comes to God, we're kind of weary quickly. We don't have much energy left. I can remember times when the energy it took to go to church was about a month's energy.

You know? Now, walking with the Lord 28 and a half years, I found that energy level has raised amazingly. You know what? It comes from a love relationship with the Lord. And He wants us to love Him with all of our strength.

And He even builds that strength that we might pour out more love for Him. So the foundational issues that develop family life God's way are these two, basically. One, knowing who God is.

He's Yahweh, He's Jehovah, He's the Great I Am. He's the only true and living God. He's the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He's Creator and Redeemer, especially of those that believe. And number two, the second vital issue, is responding to Him properly. That is, loving Him totally.

This is put in a very fascinating, concise way in the fourth chapter of the little epistle of 1 John, way back in the back of the New Testament, very near the end, just a couple short books, three brief letters away from Revelation. 1 John 4 puts the same issue of who God is and how to respond to Him in a very powerful way. And you may have this habit, too.

When I find a truth in the Old Testament, I love to trace it into the New. See, the Old Testament is a word for all time, but it's but shadows of the things to come, primarily to Israel. But 1 Corinthians 10 says all these things written about Israel are for our instruction, but they're shadows, as it were, Hebrews says.

Hebrews 10 and elsewhere. But shadow is cast as light goes across a real object. There's something real there, and it's God and His ways and His kingdom.

But the substance we have in Christ. I love to trace the Old Testament themes into the New and just get more and more of the substance of it all. 1 John 4, verse 16.

Concerning who God is and how to respond to Him properly, because that's what family life is developed by. In your home, my home, those two things need to be real and working. Who's God? How should we respond to Him? 1 John 4, 16.

And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love. And he who abides in love abides in God and God in Him.

So this statement very clear from that verse, God is love. That's who He is. He is love.

It's not just that He has love. It's not just that He shows love. It's not just that He will give love.

It's deeper than that. It's that God is love. It's the very makeup of His being.

It's who He is. God is love. Then verse 9 elaborates on that love earlier, explains what it is.

In this the love of God was manifested toward us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. What is the love of God like? Well, here's how it was manifested or clearly demonstrated or revealed. God sent His only begotten, His uniquely begotten, His Son who was God Himself, became a man born of the Virgin Mary, was sent into the world.

Why? That we might live through Him. That's the kind of love God has. But would you give your son, your only son, to die for anyone to get them anything? Well, that's heavy duty love.

This is the end of side 8. To listen to the rest of the message, please turn the tape over now. What is the love of God like? Well, here's how it was manifested or clearly demonstrated or revealed. God sent His only begotten, His uniquely begotten, His Son who was God Himself, became a man born of the Virgin Mary, was sent into the world.

Why? That we might live through Him. That's the kind of love God has. But would you give your son, your only son, to die for anyone to get them anything? Well, that's heavy duty love.

I have two sons, one 24, one 22, and I love them dearly. I just get torn up inside when I see them with a stubbed toe. Or a minor disappointment.

Or a failure in some task. Can you imagine watching your only begotten Son die on a cruel cross for the wrongs of everyone else because He wronged no one and did no wrong? What a love that is. I mean that is a love so high beyond and above the love of man.

That's the love of God. And He did that that we might live through Him. That is that we might come out of the death and deadness and condemnation and guilt of sin and have new birth and new life.

But it's more than that. Though that is glorious in itself. He sent His Son that we might live through Him after we find new life.

Some Christians have asked, you know, is there life after new birth? Some have had a pretty tough time. Walked in much defeat. Yes, Jesus Christ came that we might live through Him.

This is one of the greatest revelations of the Word of God. I was a Christian a number of years. I've been pastoring three or four years.

This was back in the late 60s, early 70s. When my eyes were open to see that we live through Him. Most of the time I've been trying to live the Christian life on my own best effort.

Trying to pastor a church on my own best effort. Those are two pretty tough assignments. Well, let's face it.

They're both impossible on one's own resources. Needless to say, I was quite weary after those six or seven years. The Son of God was sent that we might live through Him.

Come out of death into life, but then go on into abundant life. Live through Him. Live depending on Him.

Live drawing on Him. He not only died to forgive us. He died to live in us.

That's the kind of love God has. He has a love that will get us out of death into life. And then take us on into abundant life.

All through the giving of His Son for us. That His Son might be given to us to live through us. Great love.

God is love. That's who He is. Well, how do you respond to such a one? In our homes we need to know.

We need to share. We need to stand on this truth. God is love.

Now, how do we respond to that? Verse 19. We love Him because He first loved us. Do you love God? Probably most of us here would answer in the affirmative.

Maybe some are still seeking out what this is all about. Well, praise the Lord, listen up. Maybe the Lord will share with you tonight the things your heart hungers to know.

But most of us probably love Him. And the wonderful thing is we know exactly why. If you love God, I know exactly why you love Him.

Because He loved you first. That's universally true in the family of God. I love God now.

I used to be disinterested in Him. I used to be running and hiding from Him. From age 15 to 25, after growing up in a pastor's home, I split for the world.

I went heavy duty into the world for 10 ugly, pitiful years. And boy, when He eventually broke my heart, as my life was broken, busted into shambles, and I finally saw the love He had for me, I just fell deeply in love with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how we get to love Him.

We love Him because He first loved us. He shows His love. He demonstrates His love.

And while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. And we see that love. We respond to that love.

We find new life through that love. And then we begin to love Him. Who is God? God is love.

What's the proper response to a God of love? Love Him back? On the basis of? Motivated by the fact that He loved us first. Now, these are the two foundational issues that develop family life God's way. And I'm sure the Lord would want to ask us and have us ask, Lord, are these two issues at work in my life and or my family? They're foundational.

These are the issues upon which family life has developed God's way. Now, let's look at the third issue, our third and last issue of our study. And that is, let's look at the process that passes on family life God's way to the children of the families of God.

And back in our main passage, Deuteronomy 6. In Deuteronomy 6, verse 6, here's the first aspect of three we're going to see here in these few verses. The first aspect of the process that passes on godly family life to our children. You know what the first one is? A heart commitment.

Verse 6. And these words which I command you today shall be on your heart. These words. What are these words that are being referred to here? The words about who God is and how to properly respond to him.

He's the great I am and he is to be loved. Those words. Those words are addressed to adults in the family of God.

These words shall be on your hearts. It's addressed to adults and to parents of the household of God. We know that's so because the very next verse says, and you shall teach them diligently to your children.

So this is addressed to the adults, to the parents of the household of God. These words are to be on our hearts. Mom, dad, single adult, any adult in the family of God.

These words are to be on our hearts. If we are parents, this is a very timely word to us. If we're not parents, it's still a strategic word to us because of the universality of this spiritual principle.

It's strategic. If we're any adult in the family of God, it's strategic not only for our present life and the future, but having these words on our heart is what develops our lives in the ways God wants to develop us that our lives might be impacting other lives God wants to touch. See, we're looking here at parents touching children for God.

But anyone who wants to be used of God to touch anyone else need to have this same exact reality at work in their lives. These words must be on your heart. These words are to be in our hearts, not just on our lips, not just on our bumpers, not just on our wall plaques, not just on our doctrinal statements.

These words are to be in our hearts. These words of who God is and how to respond to Him, they're to be taken in, they're to be committed to at the very deepest core of our innermost being. These words shall be in your hearts.

Now, God puts that same truth another way in Ephesians 3.17 to bring the brilliant light of the New Testament onto this issue of God working in our hearts by these words. Ephesians 3.17, As we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, He wants to make Himself at home in our hearts. The Lord desires to do what this word literally means, and that is to settle down and make Himself at home in the very center of our being, that Christ may dwell in your hearts.

To dwell in means to live there, make yourself at home there, have full access there, not able to go in the living room only or the den maybe, or meet us at the back door periodically. The Lord wants to dwell in our hearts, settle in, make Himself at home there, in the very center of our being. In other words, He wants to be our Lord and be our life from the very center of our being out.

This speaks of true discipleship commitment. This talks about wanting to have Jesus and His truth as the very centerpiece of our heart and home. What is the centerpiece of your life? What's the centerpiece of your home? Is it the kids, the job, the furniture, the special way it's decorated? What's the centerpiece? What does everything else kind of hinge on and refer to and flow from? This is what it's supposed to be.

These words shall be in your hearts. God is speaking to parents, speaking to adults, the grown-ups in the family of God. This is where it all happens.

God, who He is, and responding to Him, all taking place in our innermost being. So the process that passes on family life, God's way to the children, starts with a heart commitment in the lives of the parents. And again, that's the way a work of God starts as He uses any Christian to touch any other person.

But second in the process, first the heart commitment, then second, teaching this to our kids. Verse 7, You shall teach them diligently to your children. Teach what to them? These words.

Who God is, how to respond to Him. First we're to take that as our heart claim and then teach that to our children. You shall teach them diligently to your children.

Has the Lord shown you this? That the responsibility for instructing our children about who God is and how to respond to Him is the responsibility of the parents? That's what the word of the Lord reveals here and elsewhere. It isn't the responsibility of the church to do it, though they are to be a supplementary partner in it and thank God for churches that want to help doing this. If you've ever been a parent, you appreciate all the help you can get, right? Praise God for churches that want to help in the process.

But the number one primary responsibility of a life with God passed on to the children, it's the parents. You shall teach them. Not the church, not the Christian school, not the Sunday school, though God can use all of those as a tremendous gracious help and He's ordained it so.

But the first word is you, parents. We, parents, are to teach our children. All parents and all Christians actually, because we are to be helping to bring along the next generation whether they're our children or not.

And many are laboring right now with our children and some that aren't their children. So it works for all of us. But all parents are teaching children something all the time.

But sadly, it's often not how to know God and respond to Him, but it's more how to make it in this world man's way. Many, many Christian kids grow up with far more instruction from their parents about how to get through school, how to make friends, how to influence people, how to get success and acclaim on an earthly level, how to get a good job. All kinds of horizontal earthly things.

Many Christian children have heard of, but they've never heard really at home the foundational issues, who God is and how to respond to Him. We need to be teaching our children the things of God, passing it on to the next generation. We need to teach them godliness at home, not worldly success and acclaim.

And notice the word that's put here. If you are a parent and have been doing some of this, this word will say much. And if you're just beginning parenting or looking forward to it, note this word diligently.

You shall teach them diligently. Teaching the things of God to children who are born first of Adam's race requires diligence. It's not an easy task.

It's not like feeding ice cream and strawberry shortcake to kids, though it's better than all that. We need to teach these things diligently. These truths and realities deserve such and require such.

They require persistence and consistency, and if I might even add another word, at times they require a tenacity, right? Just an unwillingness to stop teaching these things to our children because the world, the flesh, and the devil is working overtime in opposition continually to everything we want to pass on to our children. So we are to have these things on our heart and then diligently teach them to our children. We're to talk of them, this verse says, and shall talk of them.

When you're at home with the family, what do you talk about? Would it be a blessing or a fright to stand up now and say, well, let me tell you what we talk about. What do you talk about at home? We're to let these matters of who the Lord is and how to respond to Him properly to be family talk. We're to comment about it here and there, make remarks about it now and then.

We can tell stories that include it. We can read about it. We can get into question and answer with our kids about it.

Hold conversations with them on these things. Talk of them. These things are to be family talk.

Family talk. So often family talk in America is how to make our family better than every other family or prove our heritage is better than the other one or how to get, as they say now, the edge you need over others. This should be family talk right here.

Who the Lord is and how to properly respond to Him. When might we do this as families? Well, this verse tells us, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house. If you're looking for a good time to talk about the Lord with the family, here's a suggestion.

When you sit down in the house, there's a chance to do it. Now, I know in this day and age, those opportunities are diminishing. Seems like families don't sit in the house anymore.

They just pass through it to get what they need to carry on all the important things outside the house, outside the home. But praise God, most of us still have times we sit in our house. That's a great time to talk of these things, like mealtimes.

Great time to talk of the things of the Lord. When our kids were little, we loved to talk about the Lord at mealtime. Just to have conversation with the kids about the Lord, who He is, what He's done, how we love Him and why we love Him and why it's right to love Him.

Mealtimes, we had often, in fact, we read a couple times through the Chronicles of Narnia together also. Good stories about who the Lord is. Every time I recall that, I see my sweet daughter Heidi, who's 25 now and a wonderful wife and mother and has an amazing five-year-old daughter, I must tell you about sometime.

I can just see little Heidi as we're reading about Aslan and Aslan is about to be sacrificed and die. I just see the tears rolling down her little face. Oh, what an opportunity that was to talk about Aslan as that type of Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

And He did the same thing and He did it for us. I tell you, kids can receive that kind of message. In fact, so often their hearts are so tender, they're just yearning for things like that.

I marvel at our five-year-old granddaughter. She'll just sit until you're worn out listening to you talk about God. Isn't it clear why we have to be as little children to come into the kingdom of God? We grow up.

I guess you really ought to say we grow down or something. We grow out of it. We need to stay right in that same mode.

Mealtime, sitting with the family, great time to talk about God. You know, a time many families sit, that's television time. But if you have a television and the family sits down to watch it, that's a great time.

In fact, I'd say it's an urgent time to talk about God. And there's a good opportunity there at times. It takes real discernment and real decisiveness and real wisdom and willingness to say no and lay it aside or go to other.

But if it's going to be watched, God needs to be brought in on it. If God can't be brought in on it, it shouldn't be watched. When you sit in your house.

When else? The verse says, when you walk by the way. If you ever take a walk with your kids, it's a great time to talk about God. Choice opportunity.

Walking with the kids. You know, trees and birds and creation or somebody in need. Great opportunities to talk about the Lord.

Taking trips with the family. When you walk by the way. We lived in Dallas 14 years and ministered then there before coming back out here about 12 years ago.

And we always took a summer trip out to California where we kind of grew up. My wife and I met the Lord, met each other and had a lot of relatives. So we always took family trips out here.

We found it was a great time as we were driving by the way, you know, 1,500 miles, to talk about the Lord. In fact, we learned that it was a matter of survival even. That you needed God in that car, you know.

One of my classic memories is pulling out of Dallas and getting into Fort Worth. Gasoline was rationed in those days and you had to get it on odd days or whatever with our license. And we were real low, couldn't buy it in town and had to get out on the road, you know.

So we stopped in Fort Worth an hour later to get some gas and pulled off the highway into a station and the kids in the back seat, there had already been warfare, there had already been bloodletting. I mean, this is 50 miles into 1,500. And our youngest, Matt, as we pulled into the station, he says, are we there? Oh Lord, that it could be so, you know.

Being on the road with kids is a great time to talk about the Lord. In fact, we got to learn how to do it. You know, we got books and tapes and stories and games and anything we could that would put our attention on the Lord.

And you know, our kids became those who loved it. You know, every tape we could buy, they listened and learned and every song about the Lord and they learned them. Great time.

When you walk by the way. Here's another one. When you lie down and rise up.

Say, when in our house are we going to talk about the Lord? How about when you lie down and when you rise up? According to God, these are good times to teach these things diligently and talk to the kids about them. When you lie down. When our kids were little, when they were young, lying down was a good time for them.

They were unwinding and I think sometimes their motives were a little mixed, but you know, it was always, oh, daddy, tell me one more story. And I was kind of bold in those days. I'd trade 20 minutes of sleep for another story about God for the kids.

So we had a lot of story times. And we tried to pray with the kids every time we possibly could individually going to bed. I'm not saying we kept that without blemish, but it was a desire and saw the power of God at work in it.

It's a wonderful time to talk of these things when you're lying down. In fact, if you're alone or if you're just kind of a little too grown up for your parents to be doing that to you, let the Lord do it direct. It's a great time when you lie down to think on the things of the Lord.

And when you rise up, the older our kids got, the less they wanted daddy to tuck them in. The days came when dad was going to go talk to him about the Lord and, oh, dad, come on, I've got homework. You know, I can read the Bible myself.

And then comes the day you realize well, I can't be treating this one like a little baby anymore, though I'd like to continue doing that, but they've got to grow up and it's good that they grow up. And we found out a great time to catch our teenagers breakfast. Our kids, as teens, had to eat, it seemed like every 45 minutes.

They hadn't eaten in hours. It was super. We'd whip up a breakfast, they'd come together.

And Dini would be dishing it out and I'd be opening the Bible and reading. We read more books of the Bible when our kids were teenagers and then just read it. And when I see they were drawing to a close, I drew to a close.

When I saw they were just ready to get going to school, I just wrapped it up with prayer just about what we had read in the Word then applied to our lives as a family. You know, God's counsel is so right on, so wise. Those are good times to talk about these things.

The Lord knows it. May He give us His wisdom. So the picture here is clear.

God is not to be relegated to a church building to be given token religious attention once or twice a week. He's to be right in the center of our lives and homes. Colossians 3.17 says, Whatever you do, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. All of life is to be lived in the service of the Lord for Him in His name and by His strength and according to His patterns. Whatever you do, this would certainly include family life.

And it fits perfectly the picture in Deuteronomy 6.7 of a daily communicated life about God with our families in our homes. May our kids grow up not having talk about God strange to them, but normal to them. That's the will of God, though it's quite different from the world.

Then last, the last part of this process, Deuteronomy 6.8 and 9, is a comprehensively exemplified walk with God around the home. A comprehensively exemplified walk with God around the home. You shall bind them, these words, who God is, how to respond.

Bind them as a sign on your hand. They shall be as a frontlet between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Little pieces of the word of God were taken by the Israelites, tied on their hands at times, tied around their heads at times, and often left permanently on their doorpost and their gate. This is a beautiful picture of a commitment to having the word of the Lord controlling all that we do, hands, all that we see and think about, our eyes, and our activities and relationships as we go out of the house and come back in, the doorposts and the gates. 1 Corinthians 11.1 puts it this way.

Paul said, Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. As you and I, as adults, as parents, follow the Lord Jesus Christ, our children have an example to follow in their lives. That's what's being spoken of here in Deuteronomy 6, verses 8 through 9. Now just one brief word in conclusion, just maybe take two minutes or so.

Again, we want to consider how to both walk by the grace of God increasingly on this high and heavenly plane that we're reading about, as well as how to deal with the failure in our lives concerning family life. How do we live more and more like this? I mean, let's face it, nobody's ever lived this perfectly. When our kids were teenagers, two of our teenagers went heavy into the world, not as bad as dad did, so I didn't have a lot to say, except a lot to say to God as I was exhorting them.

The Lord can work these things in kids and draw them back and to see them now fruitfully, faithfully, wholeheartedly to my amazement serving God. All three of them teaching the Word of God. Daughter teaching the children.

The two sons teaching home Bible studies. One on staff up at Calvary Chapel, Community Church, San Jose. All I can say is God is a God of love and loving Him brings an astounding fruit in the lives of families who will love Him.

He goes beyond our failures. He goes beyond our shortcomings. I'd hate to list the mistakes I made with our kids.

I'd hate to list them. I'd love to list the things God did and did right and did well. But how are we going to live like this? And what do we do with all the failures? You know, there's one great word that covers both.

Grace. Let's close our study with these words. 1 Peter 5, the grace of God.

If you hear these words and they crush your heart with the realization of failure, here's the word of the grace of God for you. If you want to serve God in your family this way and you wonder how can I ever live like that more and more and more? Only one way. By the grace of God.

1 Peter 5, in the middle of the verse, God resists the proud You think you can handle this? You're working against God. God resists the proud. You think you're too good to live like this? You're working against God.

God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Therefore, verse 6, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time or in due time. If we will humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, if we fail miserably, just humble yourself and say so.

Lord, I'm sorry. I've blown it miserably. Lord, forgive me for what I've done against your plans for family life.

He'll lift you up to forgiveness. He'll lift you up, exalt you, lift you up to strength and obedience and help you do it His way more and more. If you just want His strength, you're not facing enormous failure.

You just want to do better and more and progress. How are you going to do it? Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. He'll lift you up.

He'll exalt you. He'll take you to new measures of obedience, faithfulness, fruitfulness. It's the grace of God that makes all the difference in the kingdom of God.

Let's knit our hearts together in prayer, shall we? Realizing some need to hear this word of humbling for salvation itself. Some are singles need to humble themselves concerning their present and their future toward God and the body of Christ and the family to come. Some are single parents and need humble hearts for the grace of God.

What a task they have. Some are parents that need humility before God and a humbling for His grace to work with the kids. Whatever it is, let's seek Him right now for that grace.

Father, we come humbly before You. You know the grace that each of us need tonight. Thank You for the salvation we've found through faith in Jesus Christ by the grace of God.

Touch any heart now, Lord, that needs that and in humility to cry out for forgiveness in new life. Touch everyone who is sensing failure, Lord. Just encourage them that You forgive and You can cover and You can recover and You can change lives.

And for those eager to press on, let us see it's not by might or power but by Your Spirit. It's not by what we can do. It's by what You can do.

So we humble ourselves under Your mighty hand. Lift us up, Lord, to new realms of fellowship, love, service, and effective, godly, growing family life, family developing God's way. And through that, may salt and light and discipleship shine out in accordance with Your will by the work of Your Word, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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