

Family Life

by Bob Hoekstra

Developing family life God's way is essential for us to fulfill our calling and responsibility to be instruments of light and righteousness in the world.

Duration: 1:05:40

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6

Topics: "Family Discipleship", "Faith Formation"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of developing family life God's way by knowing who God is and responding to Him properly. It highlights the need for a heart commitment to God, diligent teaching of children about God, and demonstrating these truths in everyday life. The passage from Deuteronomy 6 is used to illustrate how parents and grandparents play a crucial role in passing on faith to the next generation.

Transcript

Well, let's pray together, shall we, as we begin our study today. Lord, another opportunity to get into your word, another opportunity to seek you, your truth. We want to meekly receive the implanted word, Lord, which is able to save our souls, rescue our lives.

We pray that you would work by your Holy Spirit as we approach this great subject again of marriage and family life, the way you've designed it, family God's way. We pray you would pour out your spirit, Lord, and give us not only insight, but reshape, renew our minds, touch our hearts, build our lives for your glory, by your grace, in Jesus' name, amen. Family God's way.

This is the second of six studies together that we're going to look at. We're going to look at family life in this study. In our last study, we saw in the word, Genesis 2, the Lord establishing the original marriage, the prototype family, starting with Adam and Eve.

And as he brought to Adam a help me, a helper, appropriately corresponding to his life, a partner in life and ministry for the great task, remember, of being God's stewards here on earth. Genesis 1, 26 and following, the Lord commissioning this new creation of humanity in how to serve him and multiply and fill the earth and then be accountable to the Lord in all things and really live in fellowship with the Lord. Now in this study, which is one of the next great biblical passages on marriage and family life after Genesis 2, we're going to look at family life, extending from that first marriage on out with the mention in scripture and

elaboration of the next generations and a passage that really talks about grandparents and parents and children as well as husband and wife.

Family life, we look at three issues concerning family life. First, the reason it must be developed God's way. The reason family life must be developed God's way for God's people.

And then second, the foundational issues that develop family life God's way. And then third, the process that passes all of this on to the children, to the next generations. Okay, family life.

Deuteronomy chapter six, verses one through three, beginning to give us the reason that family life must be developed God's way. Deuteronomy chapter six, verse one. 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. Deuteronomy, the very word means the second giving of the law. The first giving of the law as God's people were delivered from bondage in Egypt.

When they're at Mount Sinai, the law of the Lord, the holy godly ways of God among his people, they were pronounced. Now, as they're about to go into the promised land, finally, as they're about to go in, the Lord has Moses preach extended sermons on the law a second time elaborating. This is the way of God.

This is how you live there in the land. Verse two, that you may fear the Lord your God to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command you and your son and your grandson all the days of your life and that your days may be prolonged. A little notice before we read verse three.

Notice to whom the Lord is speaking through Moses. Notice these words are to you and your son and your grandson. Okay, this message is given to the older generations with the implication we're going to see that it's for their lives but that they also must be anticipating the responsibility and the ministry of getting this on to the next generations.

The commandments of the Lord which I command you. Who is this you? You and your son and your grandson. So he's really speaking to extensive generations there.

This word is for you grandparents. This is for you parents and you are to get this by implication. You're to get this message to your children and this is going to bless you all the days of your life and give you fullness of life and service and ministry.

Verse three, 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. They're about to go into the promised land and it's a land flowing with milk and honey.

What is this a picture of in the purest sense, in the biggest sense in the New Testament? This is fullness of life. This is abundance of life. Jesus said, I came that you might have life and you might have it abundantly.

This is the picture of the promised land. Living by the promises of God. Serving the God of promise.

Going into a land where he is going to rule and where he is going to bountifully provide and use them. So these words are directed to the adult, to the parents and grandparents and soon these very words that we're going to be reading are going to be given a family life application. That is grandparents, parents and

then the children added and we'll have a word about that along the way.

So Israel is about to enter the promised land. They will win victories in the name of the Lord. They will be established there as God's people.

They will serve him. They will be fruitful unto him and as it's put in Isaiah 51-4, they're going to be a light to the nations around them as the people of the Messiah and as the Messiah would be eventually. Isaiah 51-4, listen to me my people and give ear to me, oh my nation, for law will proceed from me.

The word of God would come forth from the God of the word and I will make my justice rest as a light of the peoples, as a light of the nations, as a light of the Gentiles. God's people in the land would receive his word, his law. They would let him work out his ways, his just and holy and upright ways among them.

The light of the Lord would be shining forth among them and as a witness to those nations that would be around them, the nations that did not yet know him, the Lord God Almighty. A light to the peoples, to the nations, to the Gentiles and of course ultimately the fulfillment of this Isaiah 51 prophecy is about the Messiah himself and the ultimate fulfillment of that, first the church and then the kingdom age. But the point for us, the point in this passage, Israel had a task and a purpose to fulfill before the Lord.

Therefore it was imperative that they develop their lives and that would include their family life, they develop their lives and their lives at home all after the ways of God. God promised them a land. In the land they had a purpose and a calling to fulfill.

They were to be his instruments of light and righteousness and the nations were to look on and see the ways of the living God, the character and heart of the living God among his people. That was their task, that was their calling. So it was inherent that they have their lives developing God's way.

If the light of God is going to be shown forth through a life, that life must be walking in the ways of the Lord. Now, applied to us in the New Testament church age, we also have a similar God-given task to fulfill, this matter of being light to the nations. Matthew chapter 5, remember these great verses about light.

Matthew chapter 5 verse 13 and following. 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. We also have a God-given task, and it's related to light, just like Israel was. No wonder God is the God of light.

Israel was his people of old. Now he's primarily working through the church, though in the tribulation period he'll be working again with Israel, and then the wonderful kingdom age to follow. But it's about light.

And we are the light of the world. We're not the light source, but we are the shining lamp. The Lord is the light, and as David said, the Lord lights my lamp.

And that's how it's to work in our lives as well. But we have a similar calling to Israel. Salt and light, to be spiritual salt, to hold back decay.

Salt to give people a thirst for living water. We're light to drive away the darkness. We are light in the Lord, to lighten the way to the Lord by the proclamation of the gospel.

We are to be light by the lives we live, enlightened by the light of the Lord. Ultimately, this is all about discipleship. You know, the end of Matthew, Matthew 28, verses 18 and following.

Jesus came and spoke to them saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and in earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. They are to follow the Lord Jesus as their light.

They are to become light in the Lord and then call others through the light of the gospel. That's our calling. In other words, what we're reading in Deuteronomy, concerning the Lord and his people in days of old, there's great insight there for what needs to be taking place in our lives and what can take place in our lives.

We have this similar God-given task to be instruments of the light of the Lord in the world all around us. We're to make disciples of the one who said, I am the light. And we too, therefore, must develop our lives, including our family life, after the ways of the Lord.

If the people of the Lord are going to serve the Lord fruitfully in the calling of the Lord, the very presence and activity and ways of the Lord have to be on display in their lives. And what is a more critical place for that than our family life? There's nothing more fundamental in life on earth, really, than that family life that God starts everyone out in the family. And most people thereafter will someday develop families themselves by the work of the Lord.

So family life, this is the reason it must be developed God's way. We, like Israel, have a calling, have a task. And family life is not just a place of blessing for the family members, though it is designed by God to be that.

But it's kind of the primary lighthouse. And if we're not walking in the ways of the Lord and the light of the Lord shining in our homes, it's not going to be shining any place else we go either. So the reason family life must be developed God's way, we have a calling.

We have a responsibility. The Lord wants to work that out in our homes. Now, second, the foundational issues here in Deuteronomy 6 that develop family life God's way.

The earlier verses give the implication of why our family life must be developed God's way. Now this passage goes on to explain the foundational issues that actually have an impact in homes. That actually do change families and make them a family of God, not just a family of humanity.

Deuteronomy 6, verses 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, with all your soul, and with all your strength. For many a Christian, these are very familiar words.

These are some of the great pronouncements among all the great pronouncements of the Word of God. But the interesting thing here is that these words of vision and instruction that we're reading and we'll continue to read on down in the passage. These are in this passage given a family life application.

These are wonderful words. Jesus quoted these words. These are great words.

And they're right on the subject that we're looking at family God's way and today family life. Foundational issues. Verse 4 speaks of the first of two foundational issues, and that is knowing who God is.

Here's a great proclamation about the Lord. One of the most fundamental proclamations about the Lord. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Two times here. This wonderful word translated in most English versions with four uppercase letters. Even though the L is extended a little higher, you can tell they're all uppercase or capital letters as we call them more often in the vernacular.

What a word that is that reveals the very character of God. This, of course, is not the word Lord that means master or ruler. Usually when that's applied in the scripture to a deity, you have capital L, then lowercase O-R-D, and that's a great title of God.

God is the Lord. Jesus is Lord. He's master.

He's ruler. That's not this word. This word is not a title of God.

This word is the very name of God. The Lord our God. If it were translated in English, we wouldn't have uppercase Lord.

We would have something like Yahweh or Jehovah. That would be the translation. Really, it's almost like a transliteration.

Y-H-W-H would be the English transliteration of these Hebrew letters. This is the name of God. The name of God.

And then the declaration that the Lord, our Lord, Yahweh, Jehovah, our God is one. He's unique. There's no one like him.

He's the only one of his kind. He's one. He's also a unity.

The picture here is a term for compound unity as well. The Lord is our God, Elohim, compound unity, which certainly fits the full revelation of the scriptures on the trinity of God. Now, the name of God, his memorial name, the name by which he wants to be remembered, Moses said to God after he had his commission to go tell Pharaoh and also the children of Israel that it's time God is going to deliver.

And when he went to Pharaoh to say, let my people go in the name of the Lord, you knew he was going to get a, who said so? Who sent you? On whose authority? For whom do you speak, you slave? This is the name. I am. God said, tell them I am sent you.

They want to know who's behind this. Just tell them I am sent you. That's the name of God.

I am. It speaks of the only self-existent, self-sufficient one anywhere. God himself.

I am. Not I was or I became, but I am. That's the name of God.

It's a name that perfectly fits deity. I am. And Jesus applied that to himself.

He said before Abraham was, I am. People can never have their family life begin to develop the way the Lord wants family life to develop unless they know I am as their God. Because I am, Yahweh, Jehovah, he

is the creator of family.

He is the sustainer of family life. He's the true and living God. And what a glorious name it is.

And this name needs to be known in our families. Members of a family need to know the great I am. And you can't begin to get to know him better than getting acquainted with the significance of his name.

The eternal, self-existent, self-sufficient, no one started him, no one helps him, no one sustains him. I am is his explanation. And see, that fits no one but God.

No one but God can carry that name. Everyone else was started by God directly or instrumentally through procreation. This is a name unique to the Lord God Almighty.

And of course, Jesus applied that name to himself. But it's a name, too, that just cries out for more insight and more explanation. I am.

You are what, Lord, who? And of course, the scriptures abundantly fill in the answer to that question. In fact, a lot of the compound names in the Old Testament of Yahweh or Jehovah are further explanation. I'm your provider.

I am your healer. I am almighty God and so on. And then Jesus came to this earth with the ultimate living and declared explanation of that name.

The I am's of Jesus. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am the good shepherd.

I am the true vine. I am the door. I am everlasting life.

I am everything you'll ever need for time and eternity. That's who I am, signed Yahweh, Jehovah. That's what families need.

And remember, these words are spoken to grandparents, parents, and then their children are mentioned. This is a word from the Lord about acquaintanceship with God that every person in every generation must come to know of or they don't know life and they don't have any hope of family life God's way. And Jesus, of course, says no one comes to the father but by me.

And this Lord, he is one. He's unique. He's the only one of a kind.

There are not many real gods. There's only one true and living God. All other claims are from false gods or idols.

And therefore, all of everything that exists is by his creation, is accountable to him or an instrument of his, and needs to learn such truths and to respond to such truths. The first of these two foundational issues that actually develop family life God's way is all about knowing who God is. You've got to know the God of creation, the God of redemption, the God of the family, the God who created marriage, the God who sustains and transforms lives unto what he wants in family life.

Here's a word for family. And it's this. Yahweh, the great I am, wants to be, needs to be your God, and there's no one like him.

That's fundamental to marriage and family life. And where does it so often start in marriage and family life? People start off on the horizontal human relationship issues. Now, there are a tremendous array of matters

to be dealt with horizontally, person to person in family life, marriage, and the scriptures give an abundant fullness of that.

But that's not where it all hinges. That's not where it all hangs. That's not where it all sources from.

The first word, the most critical word, the irreplaceable word for marriage and family life is knowing who God is. Listen up, God says to his people. I have a word about fullness of life, and it's for each generation, and it must get on to your sons, to your children, to your daughters.

And here's where it starts. The Lord, our God, the Lord is one. Now, here's the second foundational issue that develops family life God's way.

Not only knowing who God is, but responding to him appropriately. How should a person respond to one such as is the great I am? Well, that's the next verse. You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

This is the appropriate response. Anything other than this, anything that desires or settles for less than this, it's not an appropriate response. The more we're in the word and see through the word and the revealing work of the word, who the Lord is and how glorious and majestic he is, the more clear it is to us that here's the only response to God that makes sense.

Anything else is a gigantic spiritual disconnect, and that is loving the Lord, our God, with all of our heart, all of our soul, and all of our strength. Loving the Lord. What's love about? What does love involve? It involves all kinds of things described in the scripture, but think of some.

Just if you love someone, you're very interested in them. Love just draws you toward learning more and more about them. Being concerned about them, you know, the fear of the Lord, not wanting to displease the Lord, not wanting to grieve the Spirit of God.

Love, it's about being devoted to another, having respect for them, being delighted with them, and then when you bring that down to the Lord himself alone, being faithful to him, trusting him, obeying him, honoring him, serving him, living for him. This is how we are to relate to God. And look how we're to do it.

With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. This is not a half-hearted issue, a double-minded issue. We're to love the Lord with all of our heart, with everything that makes up our inner being, the very fountainhood of the person we are and are becoming.

We're to love the Lord with all of our soul, our mind, emotions, will, personality, character, every expression of who we are, reflecting that we know who the Lord is and we're loving him for who he is. And we're to do it with all of our strength, with all of the energy that the Lord gives, we're to pour it out in a love relationship with him. Could anything be more straightforward and simple in concept? This is not complicated.

Just like the gospel isn't complicated, a child can understand it and enter into the reality of it, but the greatest developed mind on earth will for a lifetime be stretched by the implications and the aspects of it. Again, what are the foundational issues that develop family life God's way? Well, verse 4, knowing who God is, he's Yahweh, he's Jehovah, he's the great and everlasting I am. And then second, verse 5, responding to him properly.

And what is the proper response? Love him totally, love him completely, love him comprehensively. And you can find many places in the word of God that treat these two fundamental foundational truths. In fact, just throughout the word of God, these two issues are dealt with.

Who is God and how should one relate to him appropriately? I mean, that's what the word of God is all about. And brethren, that's what family life is about. That's how God explains it here in this tremendous passage to families about their lives.

Look how such truth is dealt with at the other end of revealed scripture. First John, chapter 4, first John, chapter 4, verse 16, and we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love.

And he who abides in love abides in God and God in him. Oh, here's a great statement of who God is. God is love.

The great I am is a loving God with compassion and mercy and grace and great kindness in his heart toward people. Oh, and how unique this is again in the realm of so-called religion. From mythic religions to sort of more historic religions, though not the true faith of the Lord, it's amazing how the God or gods are angry gods or impersonal gods.

The true and living God, he is love. He is love. And this is very key in us responding to him properly.

He is love. God is love. Chapter 4, verse 9, 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.

The God of love is not a restrictive God. Oh, he restrains from evil and that which is harmful and hurtful, but he wants people to live. To live that we might live, you know, really know life and what it's about and live it to the full.

God is a bountiful God, a fullness God, and he wants us to live. But that can only be done through him. You've got to have that relationship with the Lord, and that demonstrated the love of God.

God sending his only begotten son into the world. His dearly beloved son, his uniquely begotten son, born of a virgin, he sent his precious son into this world to die upon a cross for our sins. That we might live through him, find fullness of life in and through him.

And then chapter 4, verse 19 of 1 John, we love him because he first loved us. Oh, what a correlation this is with Deuteronomy 6. Deuteronomy 6, who God is, the great I am, the eternal one, there's no one like him. And along the way in the scripture, it's revealed that he is love, he is a loving God.

And how are you to respond to the great I am, who is love? You have to love him back, reciprocate in love. In fact, we love him because he first loved us. It is the love of God toward us that has won our hearts in love toward him.

Oh, what a gracious arrangement this is. God is revealed as who he is, and he's not harsh and angry and wanting to destroy and alienate. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

He didn't come to condemn and judge. Man was already condemned in sin. He came in love to rescue and help us to really learn what life is all about and be enabled by him to live.

And to help us enter into that relationship of loving him, he just time and again and again and again in his word reveals his great love for us. And then for those who bow down to that God of love and receive that loving forgiveness in Christ, and they find their hearts loving this one who loved them so much. I mean, what a phenomenal arrangement.

And these are the foundational issues that develop family life God's way. If we are married or a part of a family, are these realities at work in our lives and in our homes? If not, we're missing what God has. And we can't establish it apart from these realities.

But the phenomenal thing is this all hinges on God, not on human performance. First, God revealing who he is. The great I am, a God of love who would even sacrifice his dear son for sinners.

Oh, what a great God. The heart is stirred to want to respond to that God, to fall down at his feet, to accept his son as Lord and savior. And that's the first little baby step in this love relationship.

Lord Jesus, forgive me a sinner. Thank you for that great redeeming love. And then as we dwell on that in the word and see it worked out in our lives, we just love him the more.

And he is infinite in his person and his work and his character. His love has no boundaries. No, none at all.

So our love for a lifetime can just be growing in him. And see, these are the issues. These are the issues for marriage and family God's way.

Knowing who God is, responding to him properly, learning through the word that he's the eternal God of love, willing to redeem us from sin through his son, Jesus Christ. And we say yes to that. We respond to that truth.

We bow down to that truth and we start growing in a love relationship with him. Obviously, this is what transforms lives. This is the gospel really in another form of stating it all.

This is what transforms lives and gets people walking with God and God's way. No wonder God would want to anchor all of this in these truths for family life. And of course, that's what we're seeing here in Deuteronomy chapter six.

Many times folks have asked me in a weekend seminar or a series through weeks on family God's way, you know, as I've mentioned before, what is the key to marriage and family God's way? What is the essential reality? You know, what should we be watching out for, attending to, taking care of in our marriages and our families if we're going to see them develop God's way? And again, so often, you know, is it communication? Is it finances? And on and on the list goes. Well, all those things need the light of God and the work of God, but the scriptures go far more profound than that. Here's the irreplaceable.

This is the number one issue. This is the issue without which no other approach will have any effect at all. Well, what could be that key? Here's the key to family God's way.

God. Oh, what a revolution that brings in a life, in a mind, in a husband-wife relationship, in a parent-child relationship, in a household of a family. What a revolutionary thing that is.

It's not about putting it together and presenting it to God. It's about wherever it is, taking it to God with our hearts and lives and asking Him to work in us. And then He is the cause to produce the effect of love and trust and faith and then godliness in our lives.

You have a husband and wife focused on the Lord. Oh, my, their household is going to develop God's way. You have mom, dad, grandparents, grandchildren, children focusing on the Lord, learning who He is, falling in love with Him, trusting in Him, putting their faith in Him.

Their lives will be changed. That family will be changed. The foundational issues that develop family life God's way.

Knowing who God is and then responding to Him appropriately. Now, the process that passes all of this on to the children back in Deuteronomy chapter six, all of this is to go from generation to generation. Deuteronomy chapter six, verse six.

Notice this. It all starts out with a heart commitment. That's how you pass these truths on to the next generation.

It starts out with a personal heart commitment. Verse six. And these words, which I command you today, these words about knowing who God is and how to respond to Him properly.

These words shall be in your heart. These words. Who God is, how to respond to Him shall be in your hearts.

To whom are these words directed? Well, the context was given in verse two. His commandments, which I command you, you and your son and your grandson all the days of your life. These words are given to the parents and the grandparents.

And linked in there, your son and your grandson. You got to get these to the coming generations. These words, who the Lord is, what the proper response to Him is, shall be in your hearts.

Dad, mom, husband, wife, grandfather, grandmother. These words shall be in your hearts. If we're parents, this is a timely word to us.

For grandparents, a timely word. If we're neither, this is still a timely word. It's strategic.

Not only for the future, the Lord carries in His return. Most people will end up in marriage and family that they are developing in and with and through the presence of the Lord. But also it's strategic to see what must develop in our lives to have impact on other lives and the next generation.

And also this is a strategic word because whatever our marital or family status, so many of the people we're ministering to, they are in families right now. Or they are headed toward that in the future. The Lord wants these words in people's hearts.

He wants them in our hearts. He wants these words of who He is and how to respond to Him. He's a God of love and He wants us to learn to love Him in response to His love for us.

These words are to be taken in and committed to embrace at the deepest core of our innermost being. These words shall be in your heart. In Ephesians 3, 17, the Lord puts it this way, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

Same sort of thing spoken of here in Deuteronomy 6, 6, just a more profound measure of light such as the New Testament epistles give, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. The Lord desires to dwell in people's hearts, to dwell, not just visit there, not just be a guest there, but to live there. You might say in

a paraphrase, in the vernacular again, the Lord wants to settle down and make Himself at home in the very center of our being.

He wants to be our Lord. He wants to be our life. Another way you could say it, this is true New Testament discipleship commitment.

Eventually this kind of truth in Deuteronomy 6, 6, when you take it all the way through the scriptures into the New Testament, this is a direction of people wanting Jesus and His truth as the very centerpiece of their heart and their home. All of this reality is to settle in our hearts. In a moment, verse 7, you shall teach them diligently to your children.

Children are brought right into the picture. But the bridge from the truths declared to passing it on to the children, it first starts with a heart commitment. God wants kids and grandkids to have God-loving parents and grandparents.

Oh, His hands are not tied when it isn't that way. He has other ways to reach those little lives sometimes. And you find a child growing up in an unbelieving home, generally speaking, that does happen.

But this is God's pattern. This is what God wants to do. These words shall be in your heart.

Oh, when the knowledge of the Lord and the loving of the Lord is present in the heart of mom, dad, grandpa, grandma, what a blessed privilege. What a glorious opportunity those children and grandchildren have. Some say sometimes, well, you're talking about this and it's history and it's behind me.

Oh, no, it isn't. Great opportunity may have been missed. Years or decades may have been wasted.

But the Lord is the I am. He's right there present on the task. He's available today to see a revolution take place in marriages, to see a revolution take place in families, and even ministering to broken families, to see a revolution take place between God and sinners.

These words shall be in your heart. Christ wants to dwell in our hearts through faith. As we trust in him, he wants to change us from the inside out and have that impact those we're related to and who is closer than marriage partner, children, or grandchildren.

Now, not only a heart commitment, but then teaching this to the children. Verse seven, you shall teach them these words diligently to your children. Teach these diligently.

The responsibility for instructing children about who the Lord is and how to respond to him properly is the parents and the grandparents responsibility. It's not the responsibility primarily of the church, primarily of the Christian school, primarily of Sunday school, though those are wonderful avenues for the same process to be carried out. And any parent who knows and loves the Lord and wants their children and grandchildren to know and love the Lord, they're going to appreciate all the help they can get.

My wife and I, three grown children, 38, 39, 40, decades of ministering to those children. Oh, how we have appreciated those who've helped us along the way. Oh, thank God for the church.

Thank God for the Christian school. Thank God for Sunday schools. Thank God for Christian neighbors and relatives.

Thank God for anyone who will show a godly interest in our children and grandchildren. And may we do the same with the homes of others. But at the core, at the top priority, who is responsible? You, parent, grandparent, you shall teach them diligently to your children.

This is the highest calling parents and grandparents have, is to minister the truth of God right there with their loved ones. And the Lord is always ready to enable us in that. You shall teach them diligently to your children.

All adult Christian parents and grandparents are teaching their children and grandchildren something all the time. By neglect or silence, we're teaching them something. By a diligent love affair with the Lord and then talk to the kids about it, we are teaching them a great thing.

You know, it's sad, though, how often Christian parents and grandparents teach their children and grandchildren about life man's way. Many a Christian parent and grandparent are teaching their children how to get a job and get an academic degree and get income and become trained and become successful in all of that. And kids grow up, grandchildren grow up, knowing how to maybe make it in the world, as it were.

But they do not know what it's like to have a life centered in the great I am and the Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, and then a corresponding love relationship with him. What a shame. Listen, it's tragic when the world does that.

But what do they know? They don't know better. How double tragic if we would do that. Because through the word of God, we do know better and we have better available.

Through the gracious help of the Lord. We need to be teaching the things of God to the next generation. We need to teach children and grandchildren of godliness, not worldly riches, success and acclaim.

If they learn to trust in the Lord and his word and follow the Lord, God will be sure that they prosper in all that they put their hands to. They may not become rich in earthly resources, but they'll be rich forever in the spiritual reality of the kingdom of heaven. You shall teach them diligently to your children, diligently.

This deserves and requires a persistence, a constancy, a consistency, and sometimes even a tenacity. Because the world, the flesh, and the devil are working in opposition to all of this continually. Including our own flesh and the flesh of our children and the grandchildren.

But how do you do this? How can this be done? This is such a high and holy calling. The Lord brings it right down again to the simplest steps and procedures and setting. Verse 7, you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them.

These matters of who the Lord is and how to respond to him properly, they are to become conversational reality in the homes where God resides. The homes of his people. Just talking, family talk, marital talk about the Lord.

This morning, just before I came over to study and teach, my dear wife was blessed by an answer prayer from the Lord. It was on a current health matter and he graciously undertaken. Undertaken and she was just bubbling over.

I could tell she'd been praying much about that. She was just bubbling over with how good God is and how kind he is and how faithful he is. It really touched my heart.

It blessed me. It edified me. And what was going on? She was just loving the God who is love and talking about it.

It couldn't be more simple. But couldn't be more profound either. Yeah, teach these words diligently to your children and talk of them.

Just let God who he is and how much we love him become family interaction and conversation. Comments, remarks, stories, readings, question and answer times, spontaneous conversations, and on and on it goes. It's so simply fundamental.

But when are we going to do this? When are there going to be such opportunities? Well, that's what's addressed next. When you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. God mentions these as built-in times when we can talk about the greatness of God and how much we love him.

When you sit in your house, of course, mealtime comes to mind. Good time for families to be together. Good not to be too busy to have meals together.

How many times around the table at meals? We talk with our kids from the littlest days in their lives to when we get together with them now as adults who all three have their own children, 11 grandchildren in all. Just talk with the, you know, just chat about these things at mealtime. Some families, they have some kind of TV time or video time.

Boy, definitely bring God into the picture then. Don't venture into that activity without bringing God right into the middle of it. Sorting out what you do or don't watch, first of all, you know.

And even praying about, you know, Lord, lead us to some godly things. We had meals with our kids when they're little. We read through the Chronicles of Narnia multiple times with them.

And, oh, I can remember today even times talking about Aslan, the great lion who was laying down his life on the great stone. And, oh, I just see our kids, their eyes watering and, you know, and they're just hanging on every word. And then when you're through reading it, you stop and elaborate on it.

You know, we're not really reading an animal story here. This is kind of a parable, an analogy. And the kids, remember who Aslan is? Jesus.

See what, remember what he did for us? Oh, yeah, he died on the cross. I mean, it couldn't be simpler. God's even used others to help put the things together, you know.

And, oh, how that can touch the hearts of kids. Just talk about these things when you sit in your house. And when you walk by the way, if you go on walks together and point out the trees and the birds and the skies and the creation and God is great and God is loving and God wants to be our savior.

You go on bike rides or vacation trips in the car across the country. We used to go from Texas to California on family vacation every year, you know. And you imagine kids three, four, and five in the back seat getting ready to go on 1500 mile trip.

We sometimes had bloodletting before we hit Fort Worth, which was only one hour away, you know. We packed that car with every Jesus thing we could think of, you know. Cassette tapes and praise songs and I remember driving through Yosemite, our windows open, praise songs blaring in the car and our hands out the windows.

I mean, how simple. God made this. God is great.

Oh, let's praise him with this song and look back in the rear view mirror and see your kids singing a praise song to God in front of God's majesty. I mean, what can you say but Lord, I love you. You are loving.

You're so kind. You're doing a work in their hearts. I couldn't plot or plan or make happen if I had everything that humankind has at their disposal.

When you walk by the way, when you lie down and rise up, when our kids were young, going down to bed, we did devotions with them. Sometimes both of us, sometimes consecutively, sometimes one of us, my wife and I. Stories in prayer time and little Bible stories for little eyes, little devotional books. When they got older, they didn't want us necessarily tucking them in when they were 14, especially if they had a friend over.

But we found breakfast was a phenomenal new frontier. You know, these growing kids hadn't eaten, you know, since dinner and late snack maybe. And for years there, my wife and I took turns.

One would make breakfast, one would read the Bible, and then we'd trade off the next day, you know. And then when we saw the kids finishing, getting restless to run out to school, we'd just quick pray over the verses we had just read. So uncomplicated, so uncomplicated.

But the Lord was planting seeds in their young hearts. When do we do these things? Just talk about these things. When you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.

Then one last thing here, and that is, well, let's add Colossians 3.17. I just noticed in our outline. Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. That's what it's talking about.

Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. That certainly would include family life in these Deuteronomy 6 injunctions. Now last, not only a heart commitment, not only teaching by talking about these things, but then last, demonstrating these truths before our children and grandchildren.

Verses 8 and 9, you shall bind them, these words, as a sign on your hand. Orthodox Jews still do that. They shall be as frontlets, a box between the eyes and the forehead.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. What? These words about who God is and how to respond to him properly. What is this? Well, it's a comprehensively exemplified walk with God around our household.

These words ruling our hands, our eyes, our doorposts, our gates. It's a commitment, a picture of commitment, to having the word of the Lord controlling what we do, our hands. What we see and what we think about, that is controlling our eyes.

And also controlling our activities and our relationships as we go out of the house and later come back. An exemplified walk with God before the children, God ruling our lives. It's kind of like 1 Corinthians 11, 1. Imitate me just as I also imitate Christ.

Parents walking like this give their children a visible understanding of the path of the Lord. You know, when you look at such high, holy, heavenly things, it's again easy to fall into the condemnation of the enemy or just your own memory of failure or inadequacy. So again, a word on grace, 1 Peter 5, 5 and 6. God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

So be clothed with humility, be clothed with humility. Lord, I'm not adequate for this, but you've called us to this and you're sufficient to develop this in our lives. Let's put our hope in the Lord, not in ourselves.

And let's not put our hope in our mates. Boy, to put our hope in our mates when it should be in our God is putting a crushing weight on our marriage partners. Let's put our hope in the Lord.

He can do this in our lives and he wants to do it residing in our hearts. Let's pray together. Lord, may it be so in our lives as we have read in your word today.

May you by your spirit remind us and work it in and through us, Lord, and help us to pass on this vision to others and especially to those in our own household. For your glory and for the building of your church, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.

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