

To Love the Word of God (Part 1)

by Paul Washer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the word of God, its authority, and the command to obey it, highlighting the need for spiritual growth, intimacy with God, and living a righteous life.

Duration: 37:01

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:2, Deuteronomy 6:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:20, Mark 4:24-25, 2 Timothy 2:2, James 1:22

Topics: "Biblical Authority", "Family Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of basing our lives and actions on the unchanging word of God rather than the ever-changing trends of society. He highlights the moral lacks in American churches and challenges listeners to examine if their homes, TV choices, and manner of living are governed by God's precepts and wisdom. The preacher uses examples from the Bible, such as Jeremiah and Paul, to illustrate the compulsion and love that should drive us to teach the word of God to our families. The sermon concludes with a reminder that these teachings are not vain, but rather essential for our own lives and the lives of future generations.

Transcript

Please open up your Bibles to the book of Deuteronomy chapter 6. Deuteronomy chapter 6. Let's stand as we read God's Word beginning with verse 1. Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God to keep all his statutes and his commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you in a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear O Israel, the Lord is 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 might. These words which I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Let's pray.

Father, I pray that you would open up our hearts, open up our minds to hear, to believe and to obey. In Jesus name. Amen.

You may be seated. If there ever was a time when I would hope that you would hear, it would be this morning. It would be this morning.

If there was ever a time that I hoped that I would hear, understand and obey, it would be this morning for the things that I'm going to talk about this morning. They are not vain things, as Moses said. They are your life and not only yours, but the life of your children and your children's children.

We look at this text, verse one. Now, this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments, which the Lord, your God has commanded me to teach you that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it. Now, notice the first phrase.

Now, this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments. If you notice here, there is something very, very important. Commandments is singular.

Statutes and judgments are plural. What is he trying to tell us here? It's very important that you understand this in order to grasp the entire text. The word commandment is singular because it's referring to the entire legislation of God, all the commandments of God, the revealed will of God.

And it would go something like this. Now, this is the revealed will of God or this is his law or this is the entire legislation of God revealed to you. How? In statutes and in judgments.

The first point I want to make is this. You do not have to go up into heaven or down into hell to find the will of God. You do not need to get a vision or for some prophet to come to you.

You do not need to hear the songs of angels to know the will of God, because God has revealed his will to you in his word, in his word. All that we need to know about the Christian life is found in the word of God. And that is why our neglect of such a word is such an indictment against us.

I remember years and years ago being in a meeting that I was invited to go to outside of my particular denomination. And I sat there for an hour and a half as people stood up and people were on the front. They stood up and talked about visions and dreams and prophets.

Some of the most astounding things I had ever heard in my life came forth in that meeting. People had seen so many extra biblical things and they were proud of it and they were proud to tell it. And then it was my turn to preach and I stood up and I said, I will be preaching from Second Timothy chapter two, verse two.

I noticed on the front row that some of the leaders were looking in the index to find out what page Second Timothy was found on. And I looked at them and I said, I'm going to prophesy. And they all leaned their ear forward to hear a word from the Lord, and I said, this is my prophecy.

All of you who have spoken tonight are false. You are immature children who see faces in clouds, but God has done nothing among you. Now, why did I say that? Listen to the same verse I read to them.

Just listen. Jesus is speaking in Mark four and he says, and he was saying to them, take care what you listen to by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you and more will be given you. Besides, for whoever has to him more shall be given and whoever does not have even what he has shall be taken

away from him.

What is Jesus saying to the degree that you measure the word of God, the written word of God to be important, he will give you more. And to the degree that you despise the word of God or neglect the word of God, he will take even what you have away from you. And so we should not be expecting some supernatural extra biblical revelation from some angel or God to come down in fire to tell us what to do when, in fact, he has told you what to do and he has told me what to do.

We are to be a people who appreciate the word of God and not just and it doesn't matter if a man stands in the pulpit and he appreciates it, it has to be appreciated by the entire congregation. The word of God has to be the basis for everything we are, everything we believe and everything we do. Now, he says, now this is the commandment, this is God's revealed will, but how is it revealed to us? He says in statutes and judgments, both of these are plural, because in fact, my dear friend, there are many.

There are many, many commands in scripture, many things to know and many things to obey, and not just with regard to our religious activity, but with regard to every aspect of our life, there are commands, there are statutes, there's precepts, there's wisdom. It is not enough just to say, I believe that Jesus died and rose again. Yea, for salvation, that may be enough, but to go on and enter into the promises of God, you must be involved in knowing the word of God, hearing the word of God, believing the word of God and obeying the word of God in every aspect of your life.

Now, statutes, what are they? I could sit here and give you a very lengthy Hebrew debate on the word. Let me just say this. Statutes refer to the things God tells you to do and not to do.

There are both positive commands and negative commands in scripture. There are so many things that God commands you and me to do. And there's so many things that God tells us not to do.

Are you serious about knowing these things? There are certain things you are to say and not to say. There are certain things you are to think and not to think. There are certain things you are to hear and not to hear.

There are certain things, man, that you are to look at and not to look at. There are certain things, places where you are to go and not to go. There are things you are to wear and not to wear.

There are places and people to be with and not to be with. Statutes. God's commands and God's prohibitions, and we are to take them seriously.

Yea, it would even tremble. But not to treat them, though, as something that was against us, for God's commands and statutes are for us. When will we believe that he truly does want to give us a wonderful life? And when will we believe that that wonderful life comes through hearing the word of the Lord and that destruction comes from not hearing the word of the Lord? Statutes.

But he also says here judgments, judgments, legal decisions with regard to what is proper, fitting and right and legal decisions with regard to what is not proper, what is not right and what is not legal before the throne of God. Now, had a young man come to me years ago in Peru and he said, oh, the Christian life is just so difficult. And I said, why? He said, there's just so many decisions to make.

I said, no, there's not. He said, yes, there is. I said, no, there is not.

He says, what do you mean? I said, God has already made all the decisions. You're just to obey them. I see so many people wrangling about this decision and that decision.

What should I do and what should I not do when God has told you, oh, man, what is good, what the Lord requires of thee? Oh, my dear friend, the decisions have been made. They're never to be questioned. The question is, will you and I obey? Will we obey? Will we seek his word? Will we seek out his wisdom? Will we obey? He said, oh, brother Paul, but I haven't the strength to obey.

You've spoken my words. I haven't the strength to obey. I'm appalled at my weakness.

Which should cause me to cry out more to him for his strength, his power to obey that which is to be obeyed for my good and the good of the world. For the good of my children. Now we go on and he says.

Now, this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord, your God has commanded me to teach you. Now, I want you, first of all, to look at three very important words here. Lord, God commanded.

Do you see the authority there? These are not divine suggestions, are hopeful paths that you and I might choose for ourselves. This is the authoritative word of God. It comes from God, the one who created us and the one who sustains us.

It comes from not a Lord, but the Lord over all things in heaven, earth and hell. And they are commands and because they are commands, they are to be obeyed. But because they are commands, we can also have great confidence in them that they are written in the very character of God.

They will not change modern psychology. It's just an amazing thing as you study the history of psychology. Every two years, it seems to contradict itself.

Every two years, there's a new fad, a new way of doing things. And many times those new ways of doing things that are so right contradict everything that was said by the same people four years earlier. You don't have a strong word there.

You have nothing to stand upon. But God's word is immutable. How much of your life is based, how much of your activity is based on the unchanging, immutable word of God, and how much of it is based upon the whims of a materialistic, silly, ignorant culture? Those are hard questions, but they're important questions to base our life, to base the church, to base everything we do, not on what is popular, not on the new fad, even in Christianity.

But to do it based upon what God has said, to bring everything in our lives, everything in our homes, everything in our church into subjection to the Lordship of Jesus Christ revealed to us through his commands. And that's a hard thing to do. And it's a lengthy process.

And once you think you arrived, you've got to keep working because you'll deviate from it so fast it'll make your head swim constantly, constantly, constantly. We see the authority of the word of God. Now, also, I want you to look at something, not just the authority, but the command.

Notice that Moses is going to teach only what he was commanded to teach. I'm amazed today, everybody, I believe in the priesthood of the believer, I believe that every believer is anointed, every true believer has gifts. But I'm amazed at how everybody in the world today thinks they're a counselor.

Everybody's got wisdom, but ninety nine percent of all the words I hear would be stopped if someone just said, and where is that in the Bible? Well, it's what my grandmother said. Your grandmother could be wrong if all she listened to was her grandmother. She probably was.

You see, we're so quick to say so many things, but how much of what we say is biblical? You say, well, I just don't like that. OK, fine. Where's the command? Well, I feel like I can do it this way.

Fine, but where is the command? Where is the command? Where is the word of God? We are to teach only what the Bible commands us to teach. We are to believe only what the Bible commands us to believe. Again, look back at this passage.

He says, which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you not opinions. Commands, not feeble words of men that change like the wind, no, the commands of God, we have authority in those commands, but they are the only thing we are to be teaching. Now, I want you to just listen for a moment.

Deuteronomy chapter four, verse two, it says, You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I commanded you. We're not to add to the word, but also we're not to take away from it. That means that we got to preach on all this stuff.

The stuff we like, the stuff that chafes us, that hurts us, that wounds us more than anything. Those are the things we need. Jesus said in Matthew 28, 20, teaching them to observe all I commanded you.

You see, this is not an Old Testament thing, is it? It's a New Testament thing. Also, Jesus has commanded us. He has commanded us.

And how does he command us? He is the Lord of glory. He's not some secondary or second Moses. He's the one who gave the law to Moses.

He is the great law giver. And I want you to know that the Christian standard, the new covenant standard is much higher than the old covenant. But there are many things that God has commanded us to be, to do and not to do.

And we are to take them with a great deal of concern. Now, I want to step back here for a moment and talk about something that is so very important. Whenever we talk about either keeping, continuing, walking in the commandments of God, or turning our lives around and becoming serious about following the commandments of God, there is always a tremendous problem.

What is that problem? Well, the difference between falsehood and truth. That's the problem. Let me explain it to you this way.

You can go 10,000 miles that way and be in falsehood. You can go 10,000 miles in that direction and be in falsehood. You can go just about anywhere and be in falsehood.

But being in the truth is like walking on the edge of a razor blade. It's not broad, it is very narrow, very, very defined. There's only one truth and it's the one we're commanded to walk in.

And it is not a broad path and there are not many options. There's just one way, one Lord who gave it. Now, you say, well, I believe that.

Well, here's the problem, though. It is so easy to fall to one side or the other. Immaturity will swing like a pendulum in falsehood and just briefly touch over the truth.

Truth will be right in the middle and be aware and humble that you can always go from one side to the next and be in error. With regard to the commandments of God, what do we have on one side? We have moral lacks in our lives and in our homes because this passage is about our homes. Moral lacks is your TV governed by the precepts and wisdom of God, is your home life governed by the precepts, commandments and wisdom of God, is your manner of living.

You see, there is so much moral lacks in American churches today that it's unbelievable. I had a young guy came up to me one time in church, very been in the faith for several years, but very immature. He said, oh, I just love to go to Romania with you or Africa or Peru.

I'd love to be a member of a church like that in one of those countries. I said, no, you wouldn't. He said, yes, I would.

I said, no, you wouldn't. He said, why not? I said, because they'd excommunicate you. They would.

Here in America, we have come to this idea that we pass through the narrow gate and then walk in the broad way. No, my friend, we pass through a narrow gate to get on a narrow path. And that narrow path is defined by the word of the Lord, not feelings, not emotions and not some new contemporary Christian song.

It is based upon the word of the Lord, that path. So there's moral lacks on one side. Then on the other side, what do we find? Legalism.

As deadly as deadly can be, but be very, very careful. In a culture that has thrown out all law, any form of obedience and discipline is looked at as legalism today. But we have to realize that we are not to be lax morally, nor are we to heap upon people commands that God never gave us.

And commands that we ourselves cannot even lift. My dear friend, we are to walk in the commandments of God. Now, there's another thing that I want you to see here that is so very, very important.

Moses said that he was to teach these commands, but never think that Moses thought he was somehow separated from these commands or that those commands applied only to him or only to the congregation and not to himself. You and I, all of us are to be teachers, were to teach the word of God whenever we have the opportunity. We might not have the gift of teaching, but we're still to be able to communicate truth and especially in the context of the family.

The teachers here in this church are not to be the teachers of your family, you are to be the teacher of your family, sir. But the one thing that we need to realize in the context of teaching our family and teaching others and teaching our children is this. We are not just to teach, we are to obey ourselves and we are to set an example for our children through our own obedience.

I want you to listen from the book of Ezra, chapter seven, verse 10, for Ezra had set in his heart to study the law of the Lord, praise God, to practice it and to teach his statutes and ordinances in Israel. It is not enough just to know the word. It's not enough just to teach the word.

It is to practice the word and our lack of practicing the word takes away the validation of our teaching. And I'm saying that again, primarily in the context of our families and the context of our lives. We are to know the word of the Lord, we are to practice it and we are to communicate it to others.

Now, another thing, the last thing I want to say on this commandment is something in First Timothy, chapter one, verse five, that I always hold to heart. And it is this. But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The goal of this word is to bring us. Into absolute submission to God. And one of the greatest manifestations that you and I are submitted to God is love.

Love for God and love for God's people. Apart from that, you can take all your knowledge and put it in a suitcase and go live someplace else because you're not going to do much good. I am not telling you that we need to be moved to obedience simply for obedience sake.

We need to be moved to understanding the word of God and hearing the word of God and obeying the word of God, that we might be conformed to the image of Christ in the greatest revelation or manifestation of that conformity is love for God. And love for his people. Now, one other thing that I would like to say.

That I skipped over, and that is this, he said, the Lord God has commanded me to teach you, this is not just for the preaching elder. This is for everyone you've heard preachers, and rightly so, they wouldn't be worth their salt if they didn't say this, that they're that they're compelled to preach. Jeremiah said this, but if I say I will not remember him or speak anymore in his name, then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary of holding it in and I cannot endure it.

That should be the heart of any man who ever comes into this pulpit. He must burn, but how much more should everyone burn when it's in the context of teaching your children and your family? If Jeremiah was under compulsion to preach the word of God. To a nation that had totally turned its back on God and that hated Jeremiah, how much more should we be willing to teach the word of God to our own families? And then Paul in the New Testament, in 2nd Corinthians 5:14, he said this, the love of Christ compels us in 1st Corinthians 9:16.

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion. For woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. My dear friend, there have been so many times.

Now, listen to me, parents, because this is where we're going to switch over to where the parents come in. So many times I have felt compelled to go into countries and preach the gospel. So many times I have ridden donkeys and mules and boats and everything else down through the jungle in the Andes Mountains, feeling compelled to preach the gospel.

But how much more am I to be compelled to preach the gospel to my wife and to my children? If the love of Christ can compel me to preach it anywhere, it should be there. And if it's not, then it could be that most of my preaching has not been propelled by the love of God, but a desire to glorify self. Do you feel a compulsion in your heart to teach your children the commands of God? Now, I want us to look at something that's very, very important again on this word commanded.

Parents, preachers, teachers, we have been told by media, by the world, by those who say they know better. That we are not to try to impress our morality on other people. That's what they tell the preachers.

You're not supposed to impress your morality on other people. And they'll tell parents, honestly, this is the big thing nowadays. You're not to impress your morality upon your children.

You're not to command them to do things. You're not to give them an ethic to follow. You're not to impress what you think upon others.

My dear friend, you need to understand something. If we're teaching the Bible, this is not what we think. This is just the opposite of what we think.

This is God's word. And as a preacher, what I'm impressing upon others, God is impressing upon me. And as a parent, if you do not teach your children what God has commanded all of us to do, you can pretty much guarantee the world's going to teach them just the opposite.

The world is going to teach them just the opposite. Somebody's going to teach them. And if it's not you, it will be someone else.

And that someone else will not be sent from God more than likely. Another thing you need to understand, it is not the job of a Sunday school teacher or a Juana's people or anything else to teach your children. It is not the responsibility of the youth minister to disciple your teenagers.

Let me say that again, because I'm not sure anyone's hearing me. Not enough people are throwing stones yet. It is not the job of a Juana's to teach the Bible to your children.

You didn't hire them, they're all volunteer. It is not the job of the youth minister to disciple your youth. And that's why, and I agree totally with Ryan.

He's been around, seen almost every kind of big, important youth group all around the country, and he realizes that all of it is unbiblical and worthless. It's just entertaining kids and babysitting teenagers for parents who don't want to get involved with their own teenagers. I'm saying this because I love you.

I'm saying it because it's true. For anything we have for these children in this church, you know what it ought to be? Children coming together simply celebrating everything they've learned from their parents. You know what the youth group ought to be? Children coming together with their parents.

Celebrating all the wonderful things they've learned throughout the week from their parents. Some of you who, when I first came here, said, Oh, we would love you to be our pastor. Now you're glad I'm only staying here three months, aren't you? Because I do not believe in church as it's going on in America today at all.

It starts with home. We have given our children to public schools. Now, I'm not promoting homeschooling at all.

But what I'm saying is we've given our children to public school to teach. Which in some cases, okay. But the point that I'm making is everybody's teaching our children but us.

And then we wonder why are our children having so many battles? Because their peers are not their parents. It's other children who know nothing. And that's why I'm teaching on this.

We have literally got to rock the foundations of the things that we believe. And we have got to purify ourselves in thought. And think correctly according to the commandments of God.

How are we to live, Francis Schaeffer said? Well, I'll tell you something, it's completely different from the way most Christians are living today. Now, I want us to look at something very, very important. Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 1. He says that God has commanded me to teach you that you might do them.

I use the New American Standard version. But let me just put something from the NIV out to you here from James chapter 1, verse 22. Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves.

Do what it says. Do what it says. But are we even hearing what it says? You know, one of the greatest cries, I think, in this church ought to be, one of the greatest things we ought to do is cry out to God that He would simply give us ears to hear.

And you'll know, I can diagnose you quickly if you walk through those doors today and forget what's been said here today. You have not ears to hear. We are in a battle.

And God has given us commands. How do we go into the promised land? According to His Word. And it is not just to hear the Word of the Lord.

It is to do what it says. And I'm going to finish up. He says here, He says that God has commanded me to teach you that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it.

Now for Israel, this was a material promise. Israel was going over as a nation into the land of Canaan. It was given to them by God.

God had given them the land. They were to go in there and possess it. But in order for them to possess that land, it was essential that they hear, believe and obey the Word of the Lord.

Now for us, we're not going into some material land. A physical place. But we have been brought into the kingdom of Christ.

Under His rule. We are His nation. And we are living in a godless world.

And if we are ever to inherit all the promises of God. If we're to experience the fullness of God's blessing in this life. Then it is essential that we hear the Word of the Lord.

That we believe the Word of the Lord. And that we obey the Word of the Lord. You say, oh yes, Brother Paul, I want to inherit all those blessings.

Well, let me define them for you. Godliness and Christlikeness. I'm not going down that other road.

When I talk about blessing, my dear friend, I'm not talking about a big house and a fine car and everything else. Even though the Lord might give you that. I don't know.

But I'm talking about things much more sublime. Much higher. The land I want to possess is conformity to Jesus Christ.

The land I want to possess is godliness. But another thing you need to know. Something very, very important.

They needed the Word of God not just to take possession of the land. But also to avoid the snares that would be in that land. My dear friend, we are in the Kingdom of Christ.

But we are also in a fallen land behind enemy lines. And there are many snares and many obstacles to the Christian life. And unless your heart is filled with the Word of the Lord, you will fall.

I'm going to finish with Psalms 119, 105. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. In order to avoid the obstacles, you must have this light.

Also in verse 110 of Psalms 119, it says, The wicked have laid a snare for me, yet I have not gone astray from your precepts. The wicked one is laying a snare all around you all the time if you're truly a child of God. And the only way you're going to be able to avoid those snares is through the Word of the Lord.

That's why we listen to this Word and hear it. Trembling. Why? Because our life depends upon it.

Yes, our life depends upon it. I know especially you men at Christmastime when you buy your child a gift or a table or something that you have to put together, you throw the directions away. I don't need those things and just start in building.

But if it was, this is how you plug your family up to a life support system, I would hope that there would be much more concern. Much more concern. My dear friend, there ought to be.

Now, no invitation needs to be given. I don't want you to come up to this altar, pray a little prayer, and then be set free from the responsibility of what's been preached. You're to walk in these things.

And I would beg you to come back tonight, because I was to touch at least two verses this morning and I barely touched one. It is going to be about walking in the Word, but especially in the context of our children and our families. And I would plead with you, plead with you to come back tonight.

Now, if you have concerns about your soul after this service, I pray that you'll come here, talk to me, talk to one of the elders, talk to one of the people on staff who would be glad to help you. We're going to bring this to a close, because what God wants is not so much your tears, or the rending of clothing, but the rending of your heart and obedience.

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