

Week of May 13, 2012

Building a Legacy

Passage Outline:

1. Build on the Right Foundation (Deut. 6:1-5)
2. Share Your Life Message (Deut. 6:6-9)
3. Keep Your Focus (Deut. 6:10-15a)

What's This About?

It's about the importance of building our lives on a foundation of obedience to God and, in turn, leading future generations to build on that same foundation.

How Can This Impact Your Life?

This will help you develop the practice of intentionally living out your faith in words and actions in the presence of those under your influence.

1. Building on the Right Foundation - Deuteronomy 6:1-5

Deuteronomy 6:1-5

¹ These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

- A. Moses' purpose was to encourage the people to build a good foundation for their children and their children after them. Like in a relay race, one generation is responsible for passing along its faith to the next generation. The first and greatest missionary field is one's family.
- B. Moses uses two words to describe this building: to fear and to hear. They all refer to obedience.
- C. To fear the LORD is certainly not being afraid of God, but we should obey, respect, and bow in reverence of Him.
- D. To hear is more than just listening but includes following the commands, statutes, and ordinances of God. But faithful obedience to God is not an insurance policy against all trouble. Some of His finest saints are poor and suffer diseases—and all of us eventually die.
 - i. Faithful obedience means we will live consistent lives.
 - ii. Faithful obedience also means, and more importantly, that we value less and less the treasures of this world. None of them last. Only the treasures we send ahead to heaven are eternal.
- E. Moses summed up obedience with an affirmation, “the LORD is One,” and a commitment to “love the LORD your God” with your entire being. The one, true God invites us into a loving relationship with Him.

If you have not already done so, please read the articles “*The Shema: Its Meaning and Importance in Judaism*” and the article “*The Shema*” contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you

missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

- F. Jesus highlighted the clear connection between love and obedience when He taught, “The one who has My commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me” (John 14:21). Love is not gauzy sentiment, but an energetic and profound commitment to follow God’s ways by being faithful to Him and being an instrument of His love to other people.

“Grade” yourself on these Commands of God

SUBJECT

GRADE

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. Obey (continuing to build your life around God’s Commands) | _____ |
| 2. Fear (treating God with awe and respect for His majesty and power) | _____ |
| 3. Listen (hearing what God says with the intention of acting in obedience) | _____ |
| 4. Where is improvement needed to “get your grades up?” | |

2. Share Your Life Message - Deuteronomy 6:6-9

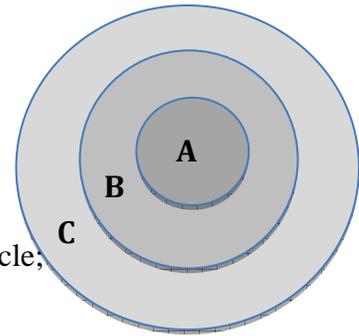
Deuteronomy 6:6-9

⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

- A. Moses’ primary goal was for people to keep their deep love for God in their hearts. Why in the heart? Because the heart was considered the center of life for body, mind, and soul. Moses is saying that love for God must spring from the very center of our beings, if it is to be genuine.
- i. True faith is not simply a matter of external form and ritual. Throughout the Bible, empty performances of faith were denounced. Jesus quoted Isaiah’s condemnation, “These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (Matt. 15:8).
 - ii. True faith begins with a transformation of the heart. Only from the heart can we truly love God, and then honor and serve Him.
- B. Developing this heart for God is a life-long process that consistently forces us to explore our motives for serving Him. We must always ask, “why do we serve God?” At our core, at the heart-level, we must be able to see our service as an expression of love for God.
- C. The next most important responsibility, as believers, is the spiritual education and upbringing of our children. Moses used an image here of inscribing the words indelibly in the lives of children, like an engraver with a hammer and chisel.
- D. Moses suggests several physical reminders of how to teach the next generation:
- i. Talk about the love for God when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road.
 - ii. Devotion to God should bracket the day, when you lie down and when you get up.

iii. Other physically reminders like writing the commands of God:

- On your hand and on your forehead (“A” Circle in diagram);
- On the doorposts of your house (“B” Circle in diagram);
- On the gates of your yard (“C” Circle in diagram);
- Notice how the movement is out to include an ever bigger circle;



Check out the articles “*Memory and History in Israel’s Faith*” and “*Educating Children in Ancient Israel*” contained in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. If you missed it, additional copies are on the back table.

Physical Expressions of Our Faith

Physical expressions of our faith need to be *lasting visual images* for our children of *heart-felt expression* of our love for God. That endearing combination honors God and impresses that truth on our families. Answer the following questions.

1. Do you use physical expressions of your faith in God? If so, in what form?
2. How do these physical expressions impact your family members?
3. What additional physical expressions could you be using as a quiet testimony of your inner faith?

3. Keep Your Focus - Deuteronomy 6:10-15a

Deuteronomy 6:10-15a

¹⁰When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you--a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant--then when you eat and are satisfied, ¹²be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ¹³Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. ¹⁴Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; ¹⁵for the LORD your God is among you...

- A. Moses reminded the people to keep their focus.
- B. Don’t let the blessings the promised land ...beautiful cities ... houses ... wells ... vineyards and olive groves... cause you to forget the LORD your God.
- C. Physical blessings can be an obstruction to spiritual vision. We live in a wealthy country, and we all benefit in varying degrees from this abundance. It may not be vineyards and olive groves that are our focus, but estate planning and 401k’s can be just as risky to forgetting the God who made it all possible.
- D. This is why Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:23).

- E. While making plans about financial legacies can be an expression of stewardship, it must never become a substitute for the greater legacy of a walk with Christ.
- F. The main distraction the Israelites would face would be from other gods. After entering the Promised Land, this was a constant challenge.
- G. To say *other gods* conjures up images of sacrificing to Zeus or Aphrodite, and we can confidently claim to have no such impulse. True! However, we all wrestle with other gods like self-sufficiency.
- H. We also live in a society of multiple cultures, religions, and ideas. We are continually tempted to diminish our focus on the ONE and ONLY true God.

With what False “god” do You Wrestle?

Circle the false “gods” you struggle with in your life. Then take a moment in prayer to surrender these idols to the ONE and ONLY true God.

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|-------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Materialism | Secularism | Greed | Self-reliance |
| Pettiness | Envy | Resentment | Selfishness |

Biblical Truths in Focus

1. You can build on the right foundation by fearing the Lord, obeying His commands, and loving Him with your whole being.
2. Your devotion to God should be heart-felt and heart-deep so that your obedience and desire to share your faith is a natural overflow.
3. You must recognize the temptation of abundant physical blessings and to keep your focus on God alone.