

**Discipleship Starts at Home**  
**Deuteronomy 6**

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**Text Introduction:** I know that I said last week that we had concluded our series on discipleship. As I worked this week on the text that I had been led previously to preach from this Sunday, the idea emerged as “Discipleship Starts at Home.” So, that’s what we will be talking about today from one of my favorite passages of Scripture—Deuteronomy 6.

**Text:** “This is the command—the statutes and ordinances—the LORD your God has instructed me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the land you are about to enter and possess. <sup>2</sup> Do this so that you may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life by keeping all His statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life. <sup>3</sup> Listen, Israel, and be careful to follow them, so that you may prosper and multiply greatly, because Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey.

<sup>4</sup> “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. <sup>7</sup> Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

**(I will only need these verses for the screen and will read these verses. I put the rest of the chapter for purposes of reference throughout the sermon in case Queenie would like to translate the whole chapter.)**

<sup>10</sup> “When the LORD your God brings you into the land He swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would give you—a land with large and beautiful cities that you did not build, <sup>11</sup> houses full of every good thing that you did not fill them with, wells dug that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant—and when you eat and are satisfied, <sup>12</sup> be careful not to forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. <sup>13</sup> Fear Yahweh your God, worship Him, and take your oaths in His name. <sup>14</sup> Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you, <sup>15</sup> for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God. Otherwise, the LORD your God will become angry with you and wipe you off the face of the earth. <sup>16</sup> Do not test the LORD your God as you tested Him at Massah. <sup>17</sup> Carefully observe the commands of the LORD your God, the decrees and statutes He has commanded you. <sup>18</sup> Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so that you may prosper and so that you may enter and possess the good land the LORD your God swore to give your fathers, <sup>19</sup> by driving out all your enemies before you, as the LORD has said.

<sup>20</sup> “When your son asks you in the future, ‘What is the meaning of the decrees, statutes, and ordinances, which the LORD our God has commanded you?’ <sup>21</sup> tell him, ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand. <sup>22</sup> Before our eyes the LORD inflicted great and devastating signs and wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on all his household, <sup>23</sup> but He brought us from there in order to lead us in and give us the land that He swore to our fathers. <sup>24</sup> The LORD commanded us to follow all these statutes and to fear the LORD our God for our

prosperity always and for our preservation, as it is today. <sup>25</sup> Righteousness will be ours if we are careful to follow every one of these commands before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

**Introduction:** Deuteronomy means "second law." The main purpose of Deuteronomy is to give the law to the generation that is now ready to enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy can be organized around Moses' three farewell sermons: 1-4; 5-26; and 29-30. The emphasis of these sermons is to "follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything that you do." (Deuteronomy 29:9) This is not a covenant just for them, but for all who follow after them. (Deuteronomy 29:15)

Deuteronomy 6 is one of those texts that speak with such power in literally every verse. The background is this. Israel has been wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years. The time of wandering is coming to a close and God is preparing to lead them into the Promised Land. So, the background is one of covenant renewal. The renewal is for the entire nation. However, in the midst of this national context, the text reads in a most specific way to the family.

So, some of you are here today and are single and you want to say, "Oh boy, here we go. This has nothing to say to me." It does. If you are concerned about the nation, your city, your culture, or your church, you will want to make sure that we get this right.

Imagine the scene. This is a national sermon. These are instructions to the success and survival of the nation. At the same time, Moses turned the attention on the family. Now, of course, I certainly understand that there is much that is different about society then and now, but in considering the Bible, we are always looking to make application based on those principles that span all of time. I think the point is clear in this text.

### **The home is home base for discipleship.**

The first place of discipleship is not the church, but the home.

Sometimes I hear this parenting philosophy that goes like this: I don't want to force God, church, (religion) on my children. That might lead them away from God. I want them to make their own decision.

Could I lovingly tell you something? You don't do that with your children in anything else in life? You don't say, "I am not going to make my child take a bath. He might grow up and not want to take a bath." Or, "I don't make my child brush her teeth. She might grow up and not want to brush her teeth." God gave you children to protect and to lead.

We have a word from the Lord on this matter. Mom and Dad, here are the spiritual things that your children must be taught if they are going to survive in the world that awaits them.

Teach them . . .

- The Truth about God Continually!
- To Love God Completely!

The key phrase is “with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.” We probably want to understand heart, soul, and strength. I’m not sure if the more important part of this phrase is “all.”

- To Remember the Blessings of God Constantly!
- To Fear God Cautiously!

This may be the most difficult lesson to teach. The text gives us a good idea of what “fearing God” means though. Verse 15 gives us a perfect illustration of why it is important to fear God. We want to make sure that we are submitted to God.

- To Worship God Centrally!
- To Obey God Carefully!

To know Him, say that you love Him, fear Him, or worship without obeying Him is pointless.

- To Trust God Confidently!

Every family is going to have to learn to trust God. We don’t begin to talk about trust when there is a crisis. We talk about trust when things are good. Then, our families, by faith, will know to trust God when things go wrong.

### **The heart determines the health of family discipleship.**

I have studied this passage many times. This particular time, the phrase that grabs me is found in verse 6, “These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart.”

This is the word to the parents. If these words are not in your heart, you will never get them into the hearts of your children and grandchildren. In verse 7 begins a great list of the practical things we can do as parents to teach our children the ways of God. Notice that we are to be repetitive. Some teaching is done in an organized way, but other teaching is done in a spontaneous way. But, the most important issue is our own heart.

“If you ask most parents what is the most important thing they can do to raise (sic) children who follow Christ, some will mention adequate discipline, others enrollment in a Christian school, still others the importance of homeschooling or Bible reading. They rarely mention example. Yet example is the 1st principle of parenting. This should not surprise us. Parenting is about leadership, and example is the 1st principle of biblical leadership. When parents practice what they preach, God gives them moral authority in their children’s eyes. All teaching in the Bible starts with example.... Parents preach a message that either attracts or repels their children from the Gospel.” (William Farley, Gospel Powered Parenting, 107)

The truth of the matter is this: Some of us are more concerned with how our children succeed athletically, academically, artistically than we do how they grow spiritually. That is why we must underscore that our own heart determines the health of family discipleship.

**The health of family discipleship is the hope of our nation.**

It is easy to be less than optimistic about our nation. But here in this text I find optimism. God was bringing Israel into a land that not only was far away from God, those in the land did not even know of the one true God.

**So What?**

Where do we start?

- For parents—Establish priorities. Your greatest priority is that your children know the Lord. Do your family priorities reflect this?
- For All—Pray for our families—our nation's future depends upon the strength of our families.