

Family Survival 101
The Test of Every Family
Deuteronomy 6:10-19

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Text Introduction: We have been learning from Deuteronomy 6 that God gave the primary task of discipleship to the home. We have learned that **“High purpose calls for high priority because the price of failure is too high.”** This thesis is the implication of a text of Scripture that outlines for us the survival of not the family, but the nation. So, we have been saying, “So goes the family; so goes the nation.” This is what makes this such an incredibly important issue even if we are single or an empty nester. We also learn in Deuteronomy 6 the foundational principles that must be learned in the family. We isolated these principles: **Know God, love God, worship God, fear God, obey God, and trust God.** These are the principles of survival. This text even gives us some practical consideration of how to teach these specific survival skills. We learned that we teach these lessons (according to verses 6-9) **experientially, repetitively, intentionally, spontaneously, regularly, and consistently.**

But even when we endeavor to do follow these principles in our families, our families are under tremendous attack. That is obvious. So, today, in this same text, we isolate some specific tests that every family will face sooner or later.

Text: ¹⁰ "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, ¹¹ 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, ¹² be careful not to forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. ¹³ Fear the LORD your God, worship Him, and take [your] oaths in His name. ¹⁴ Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you, ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ Do not test the LORD your God as you tested [Him] at Massah. ¹⁷ Carefully observe the commands of the LORD your God, the decrees and statutes He has commanded you. ¹⁸ 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, ¹⁹ by driving out all your enemies before you, as the LORD has said.

Introduction: Every family faces tests of one kind or the other. Some families will face testing through marital problems. For other families, the test will be with the children. Others will face great tragedy in sickness, or death, or loss of all belongings. Not every family faces the same kind of tests, but I sense that there are at least three tests that every family will have to face. These tests are the tests mentioned in Deuteronomy 6. What are they?

3 Tests Every Family Will Face:

The Test of Forgetting God

We have looked ahead in the story and we know that what is warned in verses 10-12 did indeed happen. We have a detail in Judges 2 that tells us that a whole generation rose up that did not know the LORD or the works of the LORD. How does this happen? How do we prevent forgetting?

- **Remembering**—Does it sound so simple to suggest that the key to not forgetting is to remember? We are commanded by this text to be careful not to forget. The truth is “It is easy to forget,” so we must be diligent in remembering. Some examples of remembering what we have in Christ and who we are in Christ are Sunday worship (on the day of His resurrection) and the LORD’s Supper. We remember by giving thanks.
- **Real Dependence**—The key word in this passage just might be “satisfied.” Israel failed at a point of our greatest temptation. We begin to say “Look at what I did.” In fact, people pride themselves in being able to work their way up from nothing to something. That’s the American dream, some say. Whereas God does want us to work hard and be independent from others perhaps, He never intended that we would be prideful to the point of not recognizing that all that we have ultimately comes from Him.
- **Re-tell** the Stories—We have the stories of the Bible and our own personal stories to tell.

²⁰ "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?' ²¹ tell him, 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand. ²² Before our eyes the LORD inflicted great and devastating signs and wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh and all his household, ²³ but He brought us from there in order to lead us in and give us the land that He swore to our fathers.

I read about a family (in Italy travelling on vacation) who stopped to get gas. His wife and sleeping four year old were in the back seat. While he filled up the car with gas, his wife unannounced, but assuming that her husband saw, got out of the car to go to the restroom. He finished filling up the car and left with his wife still at the gas station. **Six hours later**, he discovered that his wife was not in the car. The story gets a little worse. When questioned about how he get could six hours down the road before noticing, he simply said, “I didn’t notice since she was riding in the back seat.”

In other words, the man was revealing that he didn’t miss his wife’s absence because she usually rode in the back seat. I wonder how many of us, having moved God to the back seat of our life, so to speak, now do not even realize we have forgotten Him.

The Test of Following other Gods

The second test that every family will face is the test of “following other Gods.”

When I consider this temptation to follow other gods, two thoughts flood my mind and are revealed by this text.

The first thought is why we cannot follow other gods. The foundation of all that this text is about and as a result the whole scope of what is to be taught in the family is that there is only God. This one God, because He is the only true God is jealous about the fact that we should be totally focused on Him. We should know Him, love Him, worship Him, fear Him, obey Him and trust Him. How could we do any less than only follow Him?

The second thought is “Why should we want to follow any other god?” Look what He has done for Israel. Look what He did for us. The reference in this text is “at Massah.” This refers to God miraculously providing water to the Israelites out in the wilderness. Why would they even consider following another god? Why would we?

The Test of Fooling around with Other Gods

The third test that every family will face is the test of “fooling around with other Gods.” You try to do both. You try to serve God, but at the same while you serve the gods of this world.

God gives us a simple remedy. Get rid of all temptation. Deuteronomy 6:19 and 7:2 gives us the principle. What might sound harsh to our 21st century ears was and still is the only way of dealing with certain forms of illustration. Fooling around with other gods is the first step to following after another god.

Proverbs 6:27 gives us a good word on this: “Can a man embrace fire and his clothes not be burned.”

Some anonymous person put it like this:

1. Every person is serving god(s) in his life.
2. Every person is transformed into an image of his god.
3. Mankind creates and forms a structure of society in its own image.

Source unknown (Another source indicated this comes from J. McMath)

So What? Do you remember the text from Revelation from a few months ago? To the church at Ephesus—a church that had apparently lost its first love, Jesus said, “Remember then how far you have fallen, repent, and do the works you did at first.” Revelation 2:5

- Remember
- Repent
- Return