

Parenthood: Remembering the Part We Always Forget



Deuteronomy 6:1-25

I can always tell when I meet a parent of a new baby. You can always tell a first time parent. The way you can tell is when I approach the new couple, the baby is always in the car seat, and it always stays in the car seat. The car seats become more and more where you can't get to the baby. There is always something over the baby. If I want to peek with the baby, it is like you can look but do not touch. Secondly, I can always tell if it is a couple with a new baby is the word, nap, comes up in the first ten seconds. If you're a new parent, naptime is everything! You're whole schedule, you're entire world revolves around the word, nap. It is the most urgent and important thing. The third thing that always happens if I see a couple with their first child is within a few minutes they begin to tell me all the things I need to know about raising a baby, even though I have four of my own. That's usually how you can tell when you're dealing with a couple with their first child. I remember a few years ago, Luvs has some commercials on TV and I thought they were the best commercials ever

invented; it was called the second child commercial. You would see this couple with their first baby, and for instance, they were at a party and somebody wants to hold the baby. The mom immediately says hold on, you need to hand sanitize. She gets the hand sanitizer out and the person puts it on their hands, and the mom says oh no, you need to do your elbows, the back of your neck, your entire face; it's this moment of you're not getting my baby unless you're fully sanitized. Then, it goes to a few years later and it says second child. It's got the mom at the mechanic shop, she has to sign for the bill, she hands the baby to the mechanic, and the greasy handed mechanic takes the baby. That's so true with the second child. In the other commercial I absolutely love, with the first child the pacifier hits the floor. It's like alarm bells go off, the mom scoops up the paci and dumps it in boiling hot water because you have to make sure all the germs are off the paci. Then it rolls to a few years later with the second child and the paci falls on the ground at a dog park. The mom picks up the paci, sticks it in her mouth and sucks on it, and gives it back to the baby. The commercial is second child, and the cute slogan is by the second child, all parents are experts. I remember being a parent of a first child. I remember when we first had Crider and all the things that we did for Crider. We had a Diaper Genie and diaper wipes warmers, because there's no way we could wipe Crider's little behind with cold wipes. They had to be warm wipes. I can promise you, none of the three that surpassed Crider has ever had warm wipes. It was just whatever we could find. With Crider, everything was about his naptime. Our whole world was about his naptime. With Evie Kate, we're like "Did she sleep in the car?" "I don't know." Maybe she got a nap, who knows! With Crider, he could only go with certain people, certain places, with Evie Kate, it is like just take her and bring her back at some point.

When you have the one child, you focus so much on every single detail, and every one of them is so important. Then, you have another child and maybe another and that first one grows a little bit, and you realize that all the details you really stressed at weren't necessarily the most important. That's why in parenting we can sometimes fall into a trap where every single thing becomes the most important, so that we sometimes forget what is actually really, really important. We're going to talk about

parenthood this morning. Whether you're a first time parent, or whether you have multiple kids, or have already raised kids or are a grandparent. Even if you're single and have no kids, we're going to look at how to raise spiritual kids and how to disciple kids that aren't even your own. We're going to try to remember the things we always forget because we get so focused all of the details that we forget what the absolute most important thing. It is that you teach your kids to know and love the Lord. That's the most important thing. Of all the details of all the things, the Ferber method, the bottles that are not plastic, the most important thing is that you teach your kids to know God and to love God, and you do that primarily by knowing God and loving God. So we will see from Deuteronomy chapter 6 this command to the Israelites to love the Lord and to pass that on to their children and their children's children. We will see the most important thing we can do as parents is teach our kids to know and love the Lord. We do that primarily by ourselves knowing and loving the Lord.

We are going to read verses 4-9 of Deuteronomy chapter 6. That will be our main text, and then we will back up and give a little bit of context of what is happening.

Scripture

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord 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. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

We're talking about the thing we always seem to forget. In parenting, there are a lot of things that happen. It's fast paced. You have one, maybe you have another, but even if you have one, they grow up. There are all these things that come at you, and they become the most important, the thing that is absolutely front and central. School becomes the most important thing. Sports become the most important thing. Finding your kid a job becomes the most important thing. Friends, temptations, and obedience become the most important thing so we spend all of our time on school, obedience, friends, and those types of things. Yes, all of those things are very, very important, but sometimes we can look at all of those things and focus only on those things. We can actually miss what is really important. That is what we find in Deuteronomy 6, this command for us to love God, for us to know God and to pass that love and knowledge of God on to our kids. That's the most important thing that we seem to always forget, teaching our kids to know and love God the way we know and love God.

Let's back up and give a little context to what Moses has just said. Let's read the first verse of chapter 6. They have just been freed from slavery, and now they've been given the Law from God. They're about to come into a new land and Moses is preparing them for what's about to happen. ""Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God..." If you look in chapter 5, Moses has just repeated the Ten Commandments. He is saying here are those ten major things that God wants you to remember to do. As you go into the land, He wants you to follow His Word. He wants you to fear Him because you're going into a place where God wants you to live under His blessing. His blessing is lived out under His Word. The people are now free; how are free people supposed to live? They're supposed to live under God's good Word. So, He's saying when you get into the land, remember the commands, remember to fear God, and remember to obey, but notice verse 2; it is not just them, "...you and your son and your sons' son..." He is saying this is not just about you; this is about generational faith, generational faithfulness. It's not just that you would know God, know His

commandments, and obey Him, but that you would teach your son to do this, and by implications, your daughters as well. Not only them, but teach your sons and daughters so they will teach their sons and daughters. It would go to your grandkids that they will know and love God. Moses is reminding them of God's Word, but he doesn't just want it to be theirs; he wants it to be their kids and their kids' kids. That's what we want to parent for. We want to parent beyond our kids. We want to parent so it affects our grandkids and our great-grandkids and upcoming generations. We want that kind of parenting, not just focused on obedience, but on the love of God. Moses is telling them to do your sons and their sons "...by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey." Moses is setting them up. You've been in bondage, you've been slaves, now God has rescued you, given you His Word, putting you in a land, if you want to find God's blessing, obey the Lord and teach your kids to love and obey the Lord. Fear Him. Know who He is. Reverence Him and teach your sons and your sons' sons to do the same. Moses is reminding them of the goodness of keeping the Law, the blessings that come from doing that, and then to tell their kids to do the same.

But we know how the story goes. The problem is the people don't obey the Lord. Their kids and their kids' kids, and their kids' kids' kids don't obey the Lord. In fact, no one who is given a command to obey the Lord actually obeys the Lord. They all end up disobeying the Lord and none of them gets a blessing. They all get a curse. Right off the bat, we're back in the older testament when we remind ourselves of the glory of the New Testament, because the glory of the New Testament, what we find is the Law always points us to the gospel. What is the gospel? There was one Son in Israel who did obey, and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who obeyed. Jesus is the one who got the blessing for us so that in Christ, all the blessings that God promises to His people are found in the person of Jesus Christ. We, as New Testament people, not teaching our kids and grandkids if you obey the Lord you will be blessed; we teach them you can't obey the

Lord fully. No one ever did it except for Jesus, so what you need to do is repent and turn to Jesus, and in Him, you can find the very blessings of God. Moses is telling parents to teach their kids the Law, and that reminds us what the New Testament said; the Law points us to the gospel. So as parents on this side of the cross, we teach our kids the gospel. We teach our kids the goodness found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How do we do that? We will see in verse 4 how, as parents, to make sure we don't forget the most important thing. We are going to remember what we are to do. You might be thinking I don't have kids. I'm single. My kids are already grown. This whole message doesn't really apply to me. I just want to speak to that for a moment so that you will always track with me. We see this text was written to Israel, to individuals, and to families. It's about Israel, it's about you, and it's about your house. Some of you are saying I don't really have a house, but you are part of a church. You're not part of the nation of Israel, but you're part of a church and in the church, you're an individual. In the church, you are commanded to have spiritual kids. That's what discipleship is really all about. I'll give you a couple of places where Paul is going to teach this. 1 Timothy 5:1 says, "Do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters in all purity." 1 Timothy 1:2 says, "To Timothy, my true child in the faith." Paul didn't have any kids, but he had spiritual kids. He's looking at Timothy and saying you are my true son in the faith. All that we see in Deuteronomy 6, yes, we're going to talk about parents to their kids, but if you don't have kids or your kids are already grown, you can apply all these principles to those spiritual kids that you are helping raise, those true sons and daughters in the faith because in the New Testament we are all family. As Dr. Moore says, "There is no such thing as a single Christian." You're part of a family. You're part of the family of God. You're part of the Church. You are connected to us so that we consider ourselves mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters. Even if you're single and do not have kids, this is going to apply directly to you. Think about that son as your disciple, that daughter as the person you are helping walk with the Lord.

Know

The first thing we're going to see if we're going to be parents who parent for the most important thing is first we have to know. What do we know? We have to know the Lord. Here is what it says in verse 4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the Lord is one." Verse 6 says, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart." So, hear, O Israel. This means obey this. Here's a command coming to them. This is called the Shema. This passage is what Jews will recite twice every single day. This is one of those most important text. What are they supposed to hear and obey? "The LORD our God, the LORD is one." It's a declaration of who God is. God is unique, unified, and the only God among all the other so called gods. The people of Israel are living in Canaan. They're living in Canaanite culture. That's polytheistic. There are all sorts of gods for every single other thing. They just came out of Egypt where Egypt had a god for everything, now they are to remember and know there is only one true God. See, we're a people who live in a culture that often doesn't believe how we believe about the Lord our God, so we ourselves have to know the Lord. We have to know who He is. We have to remember what He has done. So, parenting starts with knowing God. If you want to parent well, you need to know God well. The more you get to know God, the better parent you are going to be.

How are you doing with knowing God? Have you spent time with Him lately? See, knowing God is about having a relationship with God. It's not just knowing facts about God; it's knowing Him as your Father, knowing Him as your God, knowing Him, and getting to know Him more and being known more by Him. That's what that relationship looks like. If you want to parent well, start with knowing God well. Start with spending time in His Word, time in prayer, fellowshiping with your heavenly Father as you try to be a father or a mother to your kids or to your spiritual kids. Know God.

Love

Secondly, you have to love God. You know God first, and then you love God. Notice what it says in verse 5, "You shall love the Lord your God with

all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." It is almost out of repetition that we say this is the first and greatest commandment because that's what Jesus said about this text. Jesus said this is the very most important thing when asked. Jesus said this is the most important, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might. That is the absolute most important thing for you to do as an individual, but also for you to do as a parent. If you're going to raise godly kids, you have to be a godly parent. Often, we want our kids to do what we're not doing. We want our kids to know God, we want our kids to love God, so we drop them off at the Farm, take them to the park for youth ministry because that's where the spiritual people are, and they're going to teach my kid to do what I don't do at home. I don't really pursue God. I don't really love God. I don't really know God, but I want to bring them to church so that they will do what I'm not doing. As parents, if we're going to raise kids to know the most important thing, to know and love God, we ourselves have to know and love God. For us, truly loving God, setting Him as the priority of our lives, making Him the treasure of our universe, living under His rule and reign, enjoying Him, finding pleasure in Him is contagious to our kids. Not doing that can be devastating to our kids. If we don't really know and love God, but we're bringing our kids to church, we are teaching them that things like prayer, worship, Bible, and gospel are church things that happen in the church walls. They're not real life things. They're not things that happen when we leave. Kids begin to see the church as where we pray, but we don't do it outside of here. This is where we love and sing to God, but we sure don't do it outside of here. This is where we do this, but when we leave, we do something else.

If we're not careful, what we can do to our kids is give them a gospel vaccine. What is a vaccine? We're all really hopeful that a vaccine will come very soon for Covid. We are anticipating that. A vaccine is a form of the actual virus. We take a live virus and put just enough of it into our body where we don't get sick but we get immunity. That's what's happening to some of our kids. We bring them to church to do church things, and what they hear is there is a gospel that will change your life and they see their parents walk into a church with a gospel that will change their lives, and they walk out with parents who are unchanged by that gospel. They hear

about this life change, but they don't see mom or dad living out a life change. They hear but they don't see. They hear but they don't feel. It can become a gospel vaccine to our kids. They get just enough of it to get immune from it because they don't see the real thing at home. They need to see, touch, and feel.

I love those Velcro books for small kids. Evie just got back into those. Do you know what the Velcro books do? You read the story, but there scratchy stuff on it. You get to scratch the Velcro. There's a skunk you get to scratch and smell. It's like this interactive fully embodied book experience, and I don't just read the words and hear the words, I see them and I feel them. That's what our kids need. They need us to be those Velcro books for the gospel so they don't just hear a message in church; they see it, they feel it, they touch it, and they smell it. All throughout the week, they see mommy and daddy loving and knowing God. They see that it's real. And you don't have to be perfect. It's going pursuing God. So we have to know God if we're going to raise kids who know God, and we're going to have to love God if we're going to raise kids love God.

Teach

Thirdly, we have to teach our kids to know and love God. Notice what Moses says in verse 7, "You shall teach them diligently to your children..." Hear that word diligently. It's not teach them casually, not teach them every once in a while, teach them diligently. Have you ever seen anybody do something diligently? I have a neighbor (he's also my uncle) who diligently mows his yard. He doesn't casually mow his yard; he does it diligently. I know because I'm a neighbor and my yard always looks bad and his always looks perfect. He has these perfect rows, always at a forty-five degree angle, always at the perfect time. You will never go by his house where it is not perfectly manicured. He's always in it, always working on it. He is diligent, he and Aunt Gina are always diligently working their yard, and it shows. When you diligently do something, you do it with everything you have. Moses is saying you should diligently teach your kids, not casually, not passively, but diligently have a plan to teach your kids the

goodness and glory of God. He gives us some real practical ways to do this. He says this, "You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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." Do you hear those opposites? When you sit and when you stand. When you lie down and when you rise up. It's all the time you should be finding ways to impart to your kids the goodness and glory of God, to know God and love God.

I think from this we can have a few different categories. I think as a parent you should have some formal teaching times. This is when you sit in your house there are some moments where you might gather around the table and read Scripture together. Maybe before bedtime, there is a certain time where you prayer, have Bible reading, and you take some questions. There are some real formal time that happens where you're trying to sit down and teach your kids the goodness and glory of God.

Then there is informal time. It says as you go, as you're walking By the way, as you're driving the car, going to soccer, as you're making this road trip. In those informal times, you try to maximize moments. You're just looking around and as you see something that's beautiful, you teach your kids that God made that. That's about God's glory. When you come to a circumstance where maybe your son or daughter is going through something, you can take that moment as you walk by the way with them and help them to develop a biblical worldview, to see that correctly.

There is formal teaching, informal teaching, and then there's the lying and the rising. I think that is just consistency. It's a rhythm. You always and continually try to teach and show your kids the goodness and glory of God, what He is like, what it's like to walk with Him, and what it is like to follow Him.

Then, Moses says you bind them, put them on yourself. Some Jews would actually do this. They would put little scrolls on their heads and forearms. I don't think Moses is saying to literally do this. I think he's saying bind them in a way where you know God's Word so much that it goes with you everywhere you go. You're trying to set your kids up to where they take the Word of God with them, even when they don't have their bibles

because they've been imparted the knowledge from you. Here is who God is. Here is what it's like to love God. We see that we have to teach our kids. How to we impart the faith to our kids? We have to know God, love God, and we have to teach our kids about God.

I want to give you just a few big rocks that I think are really important when it comes to teaching kids. This came from fifteen or so years of youth ministry and other ministry, walking with parents, and having kids of my own. What are those big things in our culture that I think kids really need to know and see? We're going to list five things that are really important as you try to teach your kids diligently, practically, informally, and formally.

1. Worth

Teach them their worth. Think about Genesis 1:26. It tells us they're made in the image of God. Your kids need to know they have value, dignity, and worth because God made them. And every other person on the planet has value, dignity, and worth, no matter who they are or what they look like, they are made in the image of God. That should determine how they treat themselves and how they treat others. They don't have worth based on what they do or how many goals they score; they have worth based on God. They find their identity first in their image bearing of God, and in their uniqueness in the Lord Jesus Christ. Their identity in Christ is going to be huge for you to impart to them and remind them they are valuable because they are a child of God, not because of what you do with your friends, their performance, or school, or whatever else happens. They need to know they have worth beyond what they do. They have worth in who they are because they're made by God.

2. Worship

Your kids need to know they are a worshipper, period. That's what they are. God has made them that way. In fact, at the very end in 1 John 5:21, he says, "Little children, beware of idols." Keep yourself from idols. Why would John say that? It is because he knows that every person on the planet is going to struggle with idols because we're made for God. We are made to worship God. You kids need to know they were built for worship,

and they will worship something. It's your responsibility as parents to make sure they worship, first and foremost, the one true God, not a sport, a grade, a relationship, a cause, or x, y, or z, but that they give ultimate pursuit of God. Anything less will let them down. They have to know they are a worshipper and, as a parent, you have to look for what they're worshipping. You have to constantly bring their eyes back to the one and only who is worthy of their ultimate value, their ultimate allegiance, their ultimate worship.

3. Wisdom

We have to teach our kids wisdom. The proverbs tell us not to lean on our own understanding, but to trust in the Lord. There are two versions of wisdom, the world's wisdom, and the wisdom found in the Word. You need to teach your child to be able to navigate between the world's wisdom, what culture is saying and believes, and what the Word of God teaches and promotes. They need to see what true wisdom is, that lady wisdom is calling, but also lady folly is calling. Both have a really loud voice, and they need to choose the wisdom that is from God. It's about trusting God more than trusting their own heart, own feelings, or own desires. You need to teach your kids that your heart, your feelings, and your desires will all lie to you because they're all corrupt and they all need to be brought under the cross of Christ. It's in Christ that you will find the true wisdom of God.

4. Walk

You need to teach your kids how to walk. You do this very early on, right, you get this little baby, and you try to teach them to walk. But spiritually, when your kids come to know the Lord, you're going to teach them how to walk. Galatians chapter 5 has this whole passage about if you walk in the Spirit, you won't gratify the desires of the flesh and Paul tells us here is the fleshly walk, and here is the Spirit walk. As parents, you need to help your kid know how to walk in the Spirit, how to know and have that dynamic relationship with God where they're not just trying to obey God to please God, but they know they are already pleasing to God because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ when they become a believer. Then the outflow of that is to walk by the Spirit, to bring yourself under submission of God's

Word, to walk with Him, to know Him so that you can live a life that glorifies Him. You need to teach them that their flesh is going to war against that. The decision is do you do what you want to do, or do you do what Jesus wants you to do and wants with your life.

5. Witness

Matthew 5 says Jesus tells His disciples to let their light shine before men so that everyone would see it and people would give glory to their heavenly Father. We need to teach our kids, not just to walk with God, but to be a witness for God so that others would see and know who God is so that others would behold the glory of God. See, they're going to go into all their friend relationships, and what do you want them to see? Do you know that when you have a friend you have influence? What Jesus is calling you to do if you're a believer is to influence that friend towards Him because they need to know Jesus. We don't start this when they're twenty-five; you start this when they're young. How can we pray for your friends? Tell me about what your friend is going through. How can you speak a good word into your friend's life? How can you try to let them see the Lord and how He works in all that is going on in their lives?

As parents, we love God, we know God, but we have to teach our kids the glory of God. There are more than these things, but I think these are just some big rocks that when you're trying to show your kids who God is and what the gospel is, you're also trying to make sure they know these things so they can navigate. The point Moses is giving to Israel is he doesn't just want them to love and follow God, he wants their sons and their sons' sons, your daughters and your daughters' daughters to also love and follow the Lord. How do you do this? You do this by making sure you don't miss the most important. The absolute most important is teaching your kids to know God and to love God, and to understand how to walk with God. How do you do that? How do you practically do that? First and foremost, it's by you knowing God, you loving God, and you walking with God. You can't give your kids something that you don't first possess. It's about you remembering Deuteronomy chapter 6. Oh yeah, this is not just a parenting verse; this is a verse that I need to heed for my life. I need to know God. I need to love God. In doing so, I need to influence my kids, whether they

are physical kids, or spiritual kids because my kids need to know who God is. Why? Because they need to teach their kids, and their kids, and their kids who God is.

I can still remember being a first time parent. Everything was so important, all the details. We read *Babywise*, we became baby wise, and we made sure we tried organic baby food. We tried the glass bottles. We tried to do everything close to the details. Soon, that little baby begins to grow and you start to think, I don't know if those things are the most important. I've walked with parents at graduation. I've walked with parents at weddings. I promise you, at those moments, the details aren't what are important; it's the big thing that is most important. At those moments as a parent, you're not going to look back and ask did I do naptime correctly? Did we go to sports enough? No, you're going to get to that moment and you're going to ask this question. Did I teach my kid to know God, to love God, and to know how to teach their kids how to know and love God? Those are the most important, but it's the most important that we often forget and neglect.

So parents, whether you have physical kids or spiritual kids, don't neglect the most important thing. Yes, the details are important, but don't let the details keep you from the big thing. The big thing is this. Teach your kids to know God and love God. How do you do that? By first, you as a parent, know God and love God. As a kid in your Father's lap, knowing Him and loving Him, you can look at your kids and know how to show them how to love and know your heavenly Father.