

**“Leaving a Legacy”
(Deuteronomy 6:1-9)
Pastor Peter Yi
May 20, 2007**

Introduction:

A while back I was thinking about how I was raised by my parents and I realized something interesting about the passive way in which I was raised. In terms of morals, right and wrong, there really wasn't much active or proactive teaching given to me by my parents. Most of the teaching related to morals was done very passively. I realized that my parents didn't often encourage me or reward me with praise or in other ways, when I made a good moral choice. But of course I found out pretty quick when I made a poor moral choice, like when my mom found out I had stolen a candy bar from the store. So I learned from trial and error. I learned from my own inner moral compass. And I learned from church. So I had a lot of holes when I came to knowing how to live a life that really pleased God and honored him.

Now that was my experience. I'm not sure if that was yours or not, but I think many of our parents generation were just too busy to be very hands on with our moral and spiritual upbringing. We kinda just learned it on our own. A piece here, a piece there. And if some of us have had similar upbringings then we could be at a bit of a disadvantage when it comes to the way we influence our biological and spiritual children. Before those of you who do not have children zone out, thinking this sermon won't apply to you, let me just say that the passage here in Deuteronomy was written for not just parents, but for the whole community. It wasn't good enough for just one family to heed these words, it was meant for every member of God's community to listen and heed the words that were given here. And many of us who are not parents just yet, will be parents some day, so I hope we'll all listen to these words.

I think passage is basically teaching this. It is imperative that the community of faith (whether you take community in it's smallest form as a nuclear family or in a larger form in the church, or both), in any case, it is imperative that the community of faith passes down a legacy of faith to the next generations.

***NIV Deuteronomy 6:1-9** 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. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress 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. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Let me first give you the context of this passage. In chapter 4 – the Israelites, after being in slavery for years and have since been delivered by God in an incredibly magnificent display of his power, and because of their disobedience they were commanded to wander the desert for forty

years. And here they are, about to enter and take possession of the promised land. So Moses gives the exhortation to the Israelites to obey God's commands. During that charge to the people Moses teaches one of the reasons they obey God.

6 Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." **7** What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? **8** And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

And then, immediately following in verse 9 God says. "Teach them to your children and to their children after them."

V10 he says it again, "teach them to your children"

Don't get sucked into idolatry.

Seek the Lord

Remember His deliverance.

Remember the uniqueness of God that you are so privileged and blessed to have the one true God as your God. Remember who He is and that there is no other.

Remember and acknowledge the Lord is God.

And then in chapter 5, the Ten Commandments are given, for the second time in the Pentateuch, Torah, the books of Moses, or the first five books of Hebrew bible. And that's why the book is called Deuteronomy, which literally means second law. So before the people are about to enter the promised land, Moses repeats to them the Ten Commandments God gave to him and the people on Mount Sinai.

After the Commandments are stated, this interchange occurs. The people promise to Moses that they would obey and follow God. And the Moses says this.

28 The LORD heard you when you spoke to me and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. **29** Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

So God's desire is that the hearts of parents would be inclined to fear God and all of God's commands all the time...That's what he longs for parents. And the reason is for the present, next and all future generations. "So that it might go well with them (present) and their children (next) forever (all subsequent)."

And so now we come to chapter six. Let me read it again.

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.* ⁶ *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.* ⁷ *Impress 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.* ⁸

Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Parents must teach their children the ‘fear of the Lord.’

The ‘fear of the Lord’ is a phrase that we have domesticated because it’s an uncomfortable phrase for many Christians. We don’t like talking about the angry, vengeful, God of wrath. We don’t like to think of a God who sends people to hell. Or even a God that punishes and chastises his children while we’re still living. We have a tendency to ignore that aspect of God and in doing so, we’ve domesticated him. And in domesticating him, we’ve worshipped idols, our own image of God; not the true God revealed to us in the bible.

The phrase ‘Fear of God’ carries two nuances, and both of these nuances are rooted in his character, especially his holiness. One is a honoring and respecting nuance. And the other is a trembling horror. Both of those nuances are taught in scripture. Let me say this. If we truly begin to understand the character of God, his holiness, then to fear the Lord is normal, natural, it’s an expression of worship. It’s only those of us who’ve domesticated God into a pocket sized deity that fail to fear him. He has all authority to give and take life. He has the winds of the earth in his hands. He’s the one that is so holy that none can approach him and live. He is the one that cannot and will not allow his glory to be shared, because he alone is glorious. And when realize that that is who God is, we fear him. That’s a normal worship response.

That’s the responsibility of parents and the church community. First, we ourselves must fear the Lord, but we must also teach that to our children.

And how do we do that? Well the passage tells us. “By keeping his decrees and commands”. We fear the Lord, respect and honor the Lord by obeying the Lord. Are you a person who displays that in our own lives as a teacher, a leader, a witness, a parent? We need to be.

There’s one more thing to teach our children, our future generations.

We need to teach them to love the Lord our God.

How we are to love the Lord is not left for our own interpretation. If it was left to us, we’d most likely love God the wrong way. We must express our love to God in the way God wants to be loved. It’s like the book, The Five Love Languages. God too has a love language.

His love language is devoted affectionate obedience in a personal intimate and trusting relationship.

The passage says to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength. Basically, the totality of our being. Everything that makes you, you, with all of that, love God. We’re emotional, we’re physical, we’re relational, we’re spiritual, we’re creative, with all these things love God.

It’s affection obedience-- joyful, loving obedience, not resentful, robotic, or heartless obedience.

And it’s in the context of a personal relationship of trust in, and reliance on God.

Or as one commentator said, “It was never left unclear how Israel was to manifest love toward the Lord. In worship and in obedience to the requirements of the covenant, the love of the Lord was to be demonstrated.” (102)

So this love for God, we're to pass down to the next generation. Look at the words that are used to instruct us. Verse 7.

⁷ Impress 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. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

keep in hearts
impress,
talk,
tie,
write

What's it all saying? LIFESTYLE! The love of God is a lifestyle. Because God is all, he is all to me. And because he is all to me, he is all in every aspect and part of my life. He's my all in my work and he's my all in my play. Paul got it right when he said, So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Don't compartmentalize God lest our children compartmentalize God. Don't leave God at church, lest our kids leave God and church. Take God to work, and our kids will take God to school. Take God to our families and our kids will take God to their families.

Conclusion:

I want to conclude by sharing a personal story of a legacy that was left. It's a story of my grandfather. Many of you have those stories too, as our spiritual heritage in only about 120 years.

My grandfather passed away last week and we were blessed to be able to bury him before coming back to Toronto. He lived to the ripe old age of 87. He was born in 1915 and at the age of 8 he became a Christian and for that he was kicked out of the family. And later on as he grew older he learned to be a farmer and started a farming ministry distributing produce to people in need. Well, two weeks before his death when he couldn't really speak I visited him at the nursing home. He was pretty discouraged being so sick and immobile. So I said to him, "Grandpa, you were the first Christian in your family. Look at your children they all became elders and kwonsas. Look at your grandchildren, three are in the ministry as pastors, you have two doctors and other jobs, but more importantly we're all believers. Look at your four great grandchildren. They love the Lord too. As I shared this with him tears began to fall from the corner of his and fall down the side of his face.