

J.J.

FAITH AND FAMILY : ESTABLISHING GODLY ROOTS
Deutoronomy 6: 1-12

Deutoronomy 6 : 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 on 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.

PRAY

Ontario is celebrating Family Day tomorrow.

Most of us here are establishing your home as Christian homes and I want to continue to encourage you to do that.

I hope we are not like this story.

THERE'S THIS STORY : After the dedication of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally the boy replied, "That pastor said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, and I want to stay with you guys!"

It's a humorous story but the child doesn't even recognize that he was living in a home that follows Christ.

Even if we are Christians ourselves, I encourage you to make sure that our families are always following Christ.

IT IS TIME FOR US TO MAKE SURE THAT THE GENERATIONS AFTER US ARE FOLLOWING THE LORD.

We read Deutoronomy 6 earlier and that will be the basis of our sermon. In Deutoronomy, they were about to enter the Promised Land.

In the time of Joshua, they already entered the Promised Land through the leadership of Joshua.

But after Joshua died look at what happened?

Judges 2: 8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of a hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres[b] in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

10 After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel. 11 Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 They forsook the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the Lord's anger

This is one of the most tragic thing that can happen to a person who grew up in a Christian family.

So you might ask me, “Pastor, how do I make sure that this does not happen to the next generation.”

BY ESTABLISHING THE ROOTS.

Illustration : If you watch Karate Kid when you were younger. We know that the mentor of Daniel San is Mr. Miyagi.

Mr. Miyagi has a bonsai that he took care of very well. But then bad guys, took the bonsai and destroyed it.

Daniel San was so angry and sad and was so afraid that the bonsai will eventually die.

Here’s what Mr. Miyagi said,

“If roots strong, tree will survive”.

Why did I use this illustration? Remember, our enemy will try to destroy us and our children.

Remember in *John 10:10... “The thief came to steal, kill and destroy.”*

There will be a time, he will try to destroy our children BUT IF ROOTS ARE STRONG, OUR CHILDREN WILL SURVIVE AND EVENTUALLY THRIVE.

So how do we make sure that we make sure that our families’ roots are strong?

This is where I believe Deuteronomy 6 comes in.

I’ll give you the context and then we’ll expose God’s Word to you by God’s grace.

CONTEXT : We have to remember, that the Israelites are about to enter the Promised Land. In the Promised Land, there were Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites and all kinds of termites... total of seven nations as the Bible says.

Deuteronomy 7: 1... seven nations larger and stronger than you

And they are all pagan nations.

This means, the pressure will be great on them. And isn’t that what happens, the pressure to conform to this world is great rather than following God.

Even Christians are not immuned to this...

2 Timothy 4:10 Demas has deserted me because he loves the things of this life and has gone to Thessalonica. (NLT)

That’s why the Bible says :

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Quote : The greatest evil that the love of money produces is that we trust money more than we trust God.

So let’s be careful what kind of root we are establishing? Is it love for money or love for God?

Deuteronomy 6 is establishing the foundation (the roots) to make sure that the generations after them will not be influenced by the “world” around them.

So let’s look at this right now and by God’s grace, let’s divide the word faithfully :

ESTABLISHING GODLY ROOTS :

- Sanctification
- Prioritization
- Saturation

1. SANCTIFICATION

Deuteronomy 6: 4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

The Jews call this the “Shema”

Etymology : Hear “shema” Listen.

Now that word “Shema” it doesn’t only mean to let the sound waves come in.

It means, the next words that is going to be said, you should focus, on it and understand it AND LET IT TAKE ROOT IN YOUR HEART.

What is the first thing that as God’s people *O Israel* or as God’s household that should take root in our hearts?

The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Context : Remember, they live in a polytheistic world with pagan practices.

We need to establish in our hearts and in our children’s heart that there is only one God and **we should follow Him as Lord.**

That’s why what is written is “*The Lord our God*” (*Yehovah Elohim*)

What God is saying... you are not like this people. I have chosen you... BE SEPARATE, BE DIFFERENT from the world.

Deuteronomy 7: 6 For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

As Christians, that’s who we are, sanctified, chosen.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

As Christians, our Lord is Jesus Christ. We follow Jesus Christ.

And as followers of Jesus Christ, this is what He said,

John 15:19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Are you ready to be ridiculed by the world? Abandoned by friends and even family? And worst, persecuted because of your faith?

Let me give you an example and then we'll move forward.

Example

My kids studied also in Catholic schools here. But you know in Catholic schools, they are asked to pray the rosary. I told my kids that we do not participate in that. They also do not make the sign of the cross. They also do not participate in Mass.

One time, he came home upset because he refused to participate in the rosary because he says he's a Christian and the teacher said to him, "If you don't want to practice our religion why don't you get out of this school." (something like that). I talked with the teacher and she apologized.

Some might say, "Pastor, wala namang masama kung gagawin nila yung mag-sign of the cross, mag rosary or participate in mass" If you know the truth, you know there is something wrong with "mass", and the praying the rosary is equivalent to praying to idols.

But remember, you are establishing roots and God said that He is the only Lord and Jesus is our Lord and we follow His Word. Right from the very beginning, establish in the minds of your kids the truth and don't let them compromise with the truth.

Illustration : Last Friday night, after Bible study, I attended a small party with friends at work. They were mostly Indians and their religion is Hindu – they have many gods. I was late in that party and they know the reason why I was late is because I have to lead Bible study. So the topic went into religion. Since I'm Filipino, they know the religion is mostly Catholic, so they asked me if I'm Catholic. I said no. Then they asked me why not? By God's grace, opportune time to share the Gospel. I said to them that I know what truth is all about. Religion believes that we will go to heaven by doing good works and making penance for our sins. I told them that God became man so that He will be the one to pay for our sins and this man's name is Jesus. And I explained to them I know this is true because He rose again from the dead after three days and no one can refute that.

We need to teach our kids to stand up for Jesus and be known

There's a saying :

Quote : If you don't stand for something, you will fall for everything. – Malcolm X.

People who stand up for Jesus have great rewards in heaven.

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

2. PRIORITIZATION

5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ called this the first and greatest commandment.

Matthew 22: 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

This means that's our greatest affection, our greatest pleasure should be our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why? It would be a pleasure to follow God's commandments if we follow it out of love.

John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (aorist, the result of loving the Lord is the obeying Him)

What does this mean?

Quote : If love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. The love for God is the root of obedience. This means we need to focus on loving God.

HOW? BY MAKING HIM NO.1! BY MAKING HIM THE PRIORITY

THAT'S WHY if you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and strength... it means he's going to be No.1. He is going to be priority.

This is the reason why, it is very important what or who we love most.

Quote : It's because whoever we love most becomes our priority.

Quote : "Whatever you love most, that is your idol." - Peter Tan-Chi

That's why the Word of God says : IMMIGRANT FAMILIES LIKE US WILL RELATE TO THIS.

Deuteronomy 6: 10 When 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, 11 houses 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, 12 be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

This year, it will be our 17th year here in Canada. We migrated as one family here.

I was talking to my friends in the Philippines and one of them said, "Everything is a step-up there."

But I had only one prayer to the Lord and that is the prayer of Moses.

Exodus 33:15 "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here

I knew God is with us when we were here months after we arrived.

One time, in the middle of my wife's cancer and I was having trouble at work and etc. I was so down. So after work, while walking at the parking lot towards my car, I looked up at the sky and said to our Father, "Mahal mo ba talaga ako?"

Afterwards, my phone rang. It was a pastor whom I haven't talked for quite some time. I'm not even close to this pastor. So when I answered the phone, the pastor said to me, "Pastor Jerry, the reason why I called is because the Lord has put you in my mind the whole day. God wants me to tell you, "Mahal na mahal ka Niya." I just bawled inside my car.

Before we landed here, I have no set job on sight. But my kids know that I have set my priorities.

What were those?

- God and his church (not because I'm a pastor, when I arrived here, people never knew I was a pastor, the reason why I prioritized God and His church is because I know God is present in His church and His Word is being preached in church.)
- Family (which means, I will not compromise time with family)
- Work

A lot of people and sometimes even Christians, the first thing that they prioritize when they land here in Canada is what? WORK!!!

What did the Lord say?

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Which brings us to No. 3

3. SATURATION

Deuteronomy 6: 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on 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's properly interpret God's Word first by God's grace before we apply.

QUOTE : THE BEST INHERITANCE WE CAN LEAVE OUR CHILDREN IS NOT MONEY, IT'S NOT HOUSES, BUT THE WORD OF GOD. Why? Because that's the only thing that will last.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Let's quickly go one by one :

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts

Note : You have to remember, this is not still talking about the children...it's about the ones who are nurturing the next generation because it's only in the next verse that says... *"Impress them on your children."*

To be on your hearts... "take it to heart" that you really take it seriously, you understand it, you think about it, you nurture it.

For example : These Word of God you're hearing now, take it to heart. Don't just listen to it and then forget it...practice it.

In short, let the Word of God take root in your heart!!!

Psalms 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

If the Word of God is rooted in your heart, guess what is the fruit? A life of obedience by God's grace. And what is the promise of the Lord?

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, 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 ancestors, promised you.

Here's the thing, as Tony Evans said, "I do not believe in prosperity theology but I believe that God can prosper you." If we seek Him first and follow Him!

The next verses only show that we need to saturate the next generation under our care with God's Word.

7 Impress them on your children.

Etymology : “Impress” shaman” to be wounded, to be pierced to sharpen.
It means make sure that it penetrates the heart of 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.

Application : Does your kids only hear God’s Word every Sunday? Are you talking about God’s Word at home? Do you intentionally teach God’s Word to your children.

I remember when the kids were young, before we go to sleep, we will read God’s Word and I will also ask them to memorize God’s Word. I will give them money if they memorize, let’s say Psalm 23.
And for them it was fun.

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.

This means, they should not only hear or speak God’s Word but hey should also see God’s Word.
Verse 8 is what you see in the Jews called phylacteries where it contains what I mentioned earlier, the shema.

It means, make sure they are reminded by God’s Word.

I remember when they were young, I will be printing Bible verses and then I will pin them in the mirror of the bathroom and in their bedroom and in the front door so that wherever they are, they will see God’s Word!

You see this... Impress them, talk about them, tie them as symbols, write them...
SATURATE THEM WITH GOD’S WORD!

Note : This is the reason why we bring our family to church so that they will hear God’s Word.
You might say, but pastor, whenever in church, they show no interest. While they’re younger, tell them that the family goes to church to hear God’s Word. When they’re older, we ask them if they’re going to church.

Illustration : When you go near a waterfall, you might now go under it but if you’re near it, you will still get the mist.

Beloved of God, we need to saturate ourselves and our families with God’s Word.
Look at what the Word of God says :

*Psalm 1: Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

You know also the result when we saturate our families with God's Word? FAITH!!!!

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

TYING IT ALL UP : ESTABLISHING GOD'S ROOT

STORY : In my father-in-law's house in Marikina before, there was a huge mango tree that just kept on producing fruit and the grandkids were enjoying it.

My father-in-law said that it was his father who planted that and when he was planting that, he remembered the words of his father, "Kayo na ang makikinabang dito." He won't be able to see the fruit of his labor but his joy is knowing that one of these days, the people after him will continue to keep on enjoying what he planted.

Yesterday, while driving with my wife, she asked a question since we are already nearing the usual retirement age (although I do not plan to retire from ministry), "How many years do you think we still have here on earth?" I answered her, "I don't know." Some people don't wake up from their sleep. One of stories that I know is in the vicinity where Chicay works before the pandemic, the lady went to work and went out for lunch but never came back because she got ran over by a truck.

It got me thinking, what if I'm taken by the Lord tomorrow, what is that one thing that I would have left my family. This....

3 John 1:4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

I pray that our children will be walking with the Lord even if we are gone from this earth.

And this can only happen if we establish Godly roots in our family through sanctifying our family, making sure they know they are not of this world, by prioritizing our Lord Jesus Christ in their lives and by saturating them with God's Word.

S.G.D.