

October 4, 2020
“Making Room For Life” (4)
Teach Your Children Well
Deuteronomy 6:4-9
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Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, we have been forced to face lockdowns and quarantines. These lockdowns have compelled us to stay home with our families like never before. Before the pandemic, each of us as members of a family have our own schedules. Most parents are at work and children are at school or college. We usually get to spend time together only in the evenings or on weekends. However, by the effect of COVID-19 we have been forced to stay within the confines of our homes. Suddenly the family has become the only place of security. This unpleasant situation with COVID-19 and the new normal life make me realize that families are the core, as they form the fabric of our society and the world at large.

Today’s text is an exhortation to love and fear God by keeping His commandments and to pass this on to future generations. It is not only concerned with the individual’s obedience to God, but also concerned with families. It constantly references our children along with obedience. God cares very much about how we raise our children. Central to this passage is what the Jews called the Shema, from the Hebrew, meaning “hear.” Verse 4 says, “*Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our God, Yahweh is one*” (or Yahweh alone). This verse teaches monotheism and the exclusivity of God. We are to worship no one else. The Shema is followed by what we call the Great Commandment. Verse 5 says, “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*” Jesus quoted this and said that the Law and all Prophets depend on this command and the command to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” “God alone is our Lord” means we are to worship Him with our all.

God’s design for the family is to make God’s Word a part of everything we do. Whether it be family meals, family devotions, attending church, schooling our children, or playing sports, everything is to involve the Word of God. His Word should be read, meditated on, and memorized. But more so, we ought to be applying God’s Word to every aspect of life. We want to think God’s thoughts after Him. This is how we help our whole family – ourselves, spouse, and children – to love God with our whole being. We are to make God’s Word central to our lives. The role of parents is important. Ephesians 6:4 says, “*Fathers (and mothers), do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*” Parents have great authority over their children. They have the great responsibility of training their children in the way of Christ. Faithfulness in this area may lead to a godly line of descendants, while unfaithfulness may lead to shame upon families.

Many people think that education belongs to the sphere of the government and the state. But that is not how God regards it. The responsibility of educating children belongs to the family. Parents are to teach their children the way of Christ. Education does not only equate with schooling, but it is a lifelong journey. We know that children need an education. They need to be taught basic skills – reading, critical thinking, writing, and arithmetic. They need to understand the world – Bible, science, math, literature, history, and so on. We know that the God of Scripture is the foundation for all such knowledge and wisdom. As Proverbs 1:7 says, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.*” If we want to teach children genuine knowledge, we must teach from a Christian foundation.

But where will children get such an education? Neither Deuteronomy 6 nor Ephesians 6 nor anywhere else in the Bible gives specific instructions for educating our children. They only give a principle. There is no mandate for sending kids to a school, nor for prohibiting them any public education at a school. However, the principle is quite clear. We are to give our children a Christian education, training our children in the way of Christ. And

if God's Word is to be part of everything we do, it ought to be a part of children's education. So let this be the guiding principle in how we train up our children. We are not to forget the Lord our God. We are to keep God's commands. We are to train up our children in His ways, so that we may not forget God and go after false gods.

In his book, *Coming Apart: The State of White America 1960–2010*, Charles Murray examines how much our nation has declined. He shows that we are less religious, less industrious, less honest, and less communal than previous generations. How did this decline happen? Many Christians were unfaithful in their parental task. There were other factors, including an increasingly secular media and an increasingly secular school system. America's educational system has been the driving force behind the secularism that now dominates modern America. We must return to our Lord. God is calling us to first seek Him individually, to worship Him and keep His commands. And then He is calling us to dedicate our children to Him and raise them in His ways. We must dedicate ourselves to Christian education. This is God's call for families today. Our greatest concern for our children should be that they love God more than anyone or anything else in this world. This is how we will pass on the faith from generation to generation, so that our children and our children's children may walk with Him.

This morning we are going to have Holy Communion together. Just like Moses was said "Remember this," when we participate in communion and take the bread and the cup, let us remember Christ. Come close to Christ, because He has come close to you. He will give you the strength that you need as you take communion here in the sanctuary or in your home. We will come to a place of spiritual maturity when we confess that God has everything we will ever need for a blessed life and to love God with all that we are. Even though we have failures, it is the surest way to please our heavenly father and to teach our children well.

Let us rebuild our families giving priority to worshipping God, reading the Bible, and praying together. Do not be content to make this a once a week ritual. The Lord Jesus should be the Head of our homes, and we must live this life of faith and obedience every day of the week. Our children must know that God is important to us every day of the week and they must witness it at home. Our families are God's blessings to us and our children are His precious gifts whom He has graciously entrusted to us. May God grant us His grace to raise a godly generation who will love God, walk in His ways and serve Him whole heartedly. Let us share with them the testimonies of God's grace, His provision, His protection, and the miracles that He has performed and continues to accomplish in our lives.