"PASS ON THE TORCH"

(How to Preserve the Generation to Come)
Deuteronomy 6:4-9
6/13/93

INTRODUCTION:

***God wants you to begin a legacy that you hand down to the next generation.**

How can you begin a new legacy (that upholds and preserves God's moral and spiritual principles for others to follow)?

I. Be All That You Should Be (v. 4-6)

(Let God light the torch in your own life!)

A. Let the Lord be the only God of your life (v. 4)

B. Love the Lord with whole-hearted devotion (v. 5)

C. Hide the Word of the Lord in your heart by memorizing it (v. 6)

II. Pass On To Your Children What God Gave You (v. 7)

(Pass on the torch to the succeeding generation!)

This teaching is to be:

A. Repetitious

B. Specific (in content)

C. Informal

D. Continual

III. Fill Your Life And Home With God's Word So You Never Forget It (v. 8-9)

(Keep the torch burning!)

CONCLUSION:

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INTRODUCTION:

Illus: Passing on the baton (relay races).

ASK: How many first generation Christians do we have here today?

The salvation, moral principles, standards, values, world view that God gave you - He intends that you impart it to others.

God wants to stem the tide of corruption and misplaced values and worldly ideologies with your life and home.

--This is why God is so adamant about the permanence of marriage.
God made the two of you *"one" "that He might seek a Godly seed"* (Mal. 2:15).

*SEE: Psalm 78:3-8

"Deuteronomy" - "second giving of the Law."

God gave this book to Israel (and us) to reinforce (by repeating, commenting on, and explaining) many laws previously given in Exodus, Leviticus, & Numbers.

It was given so that Israel would not <u>forget</u> God's Law, but that it would be applied to every-day life when they settled in their promised land.

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I. Be All That You Should Be (v. 4-6)

(Let God light the torch in your own life!)

"Hear" - Heb. *shema* - This word begins the well-known "Shema" which encompassed v. 4-9 and set these verses apart as Judaism's basic confession of faith (their doctrinal statement in brief).

According to rabbinic law, these verses became the contents of their phylacteries (little leather pouches containing short sections of the law), bound on the forehead and on the left arm above the elbow (cp. Ex. 13:9; Dt. 11:18; Mt. 23:5).

A. Let the Lord be the only God of your life (v. 4)

"Yahweh our Elohim is <u>one</u> Yahweh" - In a day of idolatry and polytheism, this sentence proclaims the exclusiveness and uniqueness of God.

This proclamation instilled the fundamental truth dealing with the nature of God, and this truth is that Yahweh is the <u>one</u> and <u>only</u> Yahweh (monotheism).

(In contrast to the 33 million false gods of Hinduism, Christians believe in one God)

NOTE: This declaration of the uniqueness of God in no way denies or contradicts the doctrine of the Trinity. (for example: the word *"one" (echad)* is the same word which is used when God said of Adam and Eve that the two shall be *"one"* flesh (Gen. 2:24).

B. Love the Lord with whole-hearted devotion (v. 5)

It's not enough to merely know God theologically; we must love Him relationally.

According to Jesus, this is the first and greatest command in Scripture (Mk. 12:30).

"Thou shalt love" - The imperitival force shows that our love for God is not automatic emotion but a deliberate decision (volitional, act of the will, a choice).

No half-hearted devotion will do.

"Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God . . . This is the first commandment." (v. 30) Compare Mark 12:28-33)

Cp. Rev. 2:4 - "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee,
because thou hast left thy first love."

*Good substitutes cannot replace your first love!
(Ephesus was a working [v. 2a], discerning [v. 2b, 6], and enduring [v. 3] church, yet had left her first love)

Loving Christ even comes above loving our family and everyone else (Mt. 10:37 - "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint.

SEE - Deut. 10:12

1. HOW should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

a. The center of my affections

"Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects my priorities).

b. The center of my life

"Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects my priorities).

[c. The center of my thoughts] Mark 12:28

One area of the soul is the mind, so Jesus expands upon the word soul and includes the mind in our love of God.

"Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects my priorities).

d. The center of my activity

"Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects my priorities)

2. WHY should we love God?

a. Loving God is the key to obedience
(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:40; cp. Gal. 4:14)

I Jn. 5:3 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the motivating factor behind everything we do.

If one loves God, he will seek to please God.
If one loves God, he will be holy.
If one loves God, he will do right.
If one loves God, he will keep His commandments.

--John 14:15, 21

b. Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."

Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

c. Loving God is the key to blessedness.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that love God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

*SEE Psalm 91:14-16

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).

As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

C. Hide the Word of the Lord in your heart by memorizing it (v. 6)

*"**These words**"* - the command to love God, as well as the rest of Deuteronomy.

The only way to keep God's Word *"in our heart"* is to memorize it.

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11).

Ps. 37:31 - *"The law of his God is in his heart: none of his steps shall slide."*

Ps. 40:8 - *"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."*

II Cor. 3:3 - *"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in*

tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

"In thine heart" - not in one of thine ears and out of the other -- but permanently stored away!

God does not want His Word in our short term "RAM" memory, but in our long term "hard disk" (C drive).

It is not accidental that God calls upon us to love Him and then to memorize His Word, because if our motive is not right, the memory work will be cold, mechanical, and hypocritical.

What are the benefits of memorizing Scripture? Having Scripture imbedded in your heart will bring:

1) Comfort in trouble
(you need to know God's promises before you can "stand" on them)

2) Deliverance from temptation (Mt. 4)
(God's Word is like a goad that pricks our conscience when we contemplate sin)

3) Recollection for witnessing
(The Holy Spirit cannot bring back into **remembrance** that which you gave no attempt at learning)

4) Substance for meditation
(you can't think about God's Word if you don't internalize it - Ps. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 97)

Set the right example!

ILLUS: of a little boy trying to walk in Daddy's shoes.

We should never be hypocrites and command something of our children that we don't do. If you do, your children may comply (they will listen to you) until they become teenagers.

Don't set double standards.

If you impress upon your sons the need for diligence, truthfulness, respect for the "golden rule" but are a quitter (jobs, serving Christ, etc.), boast of shady business conquest, or boast of your own getting even with others - don't be shocked at the children you produce!

Joshua didn't just say, "My house will serve the Lord." He didn't just send the wife and kids off to church. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

Dad, don't let Satan get a foothold in your life; if he does, he has the main entrance to the whole home!

Fundamental, eternal principle: Like produces like.

If you sow potatoes, you don't reap tomatoes.

What is there about you worth copying?

Whatever you do, will be exaggerated in your children.

"Like Father, like Son" is true.

However, your sons will not merely tend to copy your faults, but will magnify them!

Deut. 6:5 - Half-hearted devotion is unacceptable. Verse 6 - Love must come from the inner self

It is only after personally appropriating truth, after internalizing it ourselves , that we can teach our children.

II. Pass On To Your Children What God Gave You (v. 7) (Pass on the torch to the succeeding generation!)

This teaching is to be:

A. Repetitious
B. Specific (in content)
C. Informal
D. Continual

Teaching children spiritual truth is primarily the father's responsibility."

"The Father to the children shall make known Thy truth." (Is. 28:19)

Abraham was responsible to instruct his children and his household" (Gen. 18:19)

Joshua claimed this responsibility (Josh. 24:15)

God held Eli responsible for failing to instruct and correct his sons (I Sam. 3:f13).

In the N.T. the command is to Fathers to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4; cp. I thes. 2:11)

SEE Psalms 78:5-7

Teaching is to be:

1) Repetitious - "Diligently" = from which describes the activity of sharpening a metal object by repeated strokes of a sanding block. (ILLUS: How God must teach us over and over)

2) Specific content - "Them" = the "words" of verse 6. The word, law, or commands of God.

3) Informal - weave teaching into your normal everyday routine.
   a. Simultaneous with other activity (when - sitting, walking, lying down)
   b. Different locations - house road, bed (ILLUS: how God teaches us

not only at church [formally] but also during work, home, etc.)

4) Continual -
   a. At different times (day & night activities)
   b. All the time (from morning to morning)

While a continual, informal teaching of our children is the real key to their spiritual knowledge and growth, a specific time set apart each day is also vitally important.

A "Family Time"; "Family Devotions"; or "Family Altar" should be short, serious, and interesting.

ILLUS: A child said, "Dad, what is God like?" The reply: "I don't know - go ask your mother."

No dad knows all the answers, but he should know the elementary doctrines of the Christian faith - for we are responsible to God to teach our children!

A family without a father is like a teach without a coach; like a plane without a pilot; like a ship without a navigator.

When a home is without a father, God promises to step in as our Heavenly Father.
"He relieveth the fatherless [children] and the widow" (Ps. 146:9; cp. Hos. 14:3)

However, a family with a father who fails in his God-given roles is worse than no father at all!

III. Fill Your Life And Home With God's Word So You Never Forget It (v. 8-9)

(Keep the torch burning!)

V. 8

"Hand" - To be a a reminder that God's Word is to regulate our behavior (what we do).

"Between eyes" - to be a reminder that God's Word should permeate our thought

life (what we think).

V. 9

A home should have God's Word displayed throughout it.

Suggestions:

--verses on cards (taped at conspicuous places)
--posters
--bumper stickers
--framed Scripture verses

CONCLUSION:

ILLUS: of a boy in the snow trying to step into his father's giant tracks, and saying, "Look, Mom, I'm walking in Daddy's footsteps!"

Are you the kind of person you would want your son to become?

Would you want your daughter to marry someone like you, Dad?

When you die, will you leave behind memories that point to God?

Will you leave your children a faith and example that will guide them when your voice speaks no more?

SEE POEM "To Any Daddy"