

Harris Creek Baptist Church
Dale Wallace
Series: Uncommon Family
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Uncommon Legacy

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

“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.”

Good morning, Harris Creek! How're we doing? *(Some response from the audience.)* Come on, y'all, this is the 11; you're two cups of coffee deep. How're we doing? *(Louder response from audience.)* There we go! You just beat the 9 o'clock. Great work.

Hey, as Scott mentioned, my name is Dale. This is my first day of work here at Harris Creek, but it's an honor to be jumping on staff with the team. My wife has been on staff; her name is Jacie. *(Cheer from the audience.)* Whoo! There we go! We got some Jacie fans! I am as well. She's in charge of all things international missions here at Harris Creek. We got married in September, and we were just so excited for what was in store. We were planning to travel and be in different places and just get all things started for international missions here at Harris Creek—and then God gave us twins. We got pregnant two months in, and we are expecting twins this summer, so you can pray for us: new job, twins, and we just bought a house, which has been amazing but quite the experience. Yeah, you can clap for that. That does feel like a miracle in this market. Definitely feels like a miracle in this market.

We buy this house about the same time that we're in this sermon series called "Unseen Battles." This was about a month or two ago. Harris Creek was in "Unseen Battles," which was on spiritual warfare. We buy this house, and one day, as I'm walking into the house, I notice that there's this thing on the doorpost that kind of looks like it's from *Survivor* or something. I have a picture on the screen of what I see on my doorpost. So my spiritual spidey-senses are up and ready. We've been learning about spiritual warfare, so I'm wondering, "Am I going to become a ninja and have to start casting out stuff and bringing out the worship music and the boombox so we can worship and pray in here?" So I went ahead and did what any of y'all would've done. What would you have done? *(Answer from audience.)* You would've googled it. I'm not that smart. Okay, any other thoughts? Taken it off? Well, I forgot about it. That's what I think most of you would have done. I just totally forgot. In fact, I didn't tell my wife. She found out at the last service about this thing that's on our door. I forgot to tell her. That's how much I forgot—until this week, as I'm studying Deuteronomy 6, where we're about to turn. I learned that Moses taught the Israelites to pass on their faiths in a way where he mentions a doorpost, which is the Word *mezuzah* in Hebrew. There you go if you want to write that one down. I know some of y'all love Hebrew. There's one of your words for today. The Hebrew word *mezuzah* is what's on our doorpost. That blew my mind; that's where we're going to be in the Scriptures today. But what's weirder to me is that that was thousands of years ago. That was a really, really, really long time ago in the Middle East. Something happened in the Middle East thousands of years ago that

somehow got to the promised land of Waco, TX, on my doorstep. Even on the back door, I realized there was another thing: a little scroll. I know it looks like a cigarette, but it's a scroll. It's on the screen. Written on this scroll is this passage in Hebrew, which is amazing. This was so important that it's been passed on for generations. Generation after generation, this has been passed on. As we are in our series, "Uncommon Family," we're going to see today how to pass it on.

A few weeks ago, Nate taught us about uncommon mothers; Wes taught us about biblical gender identity; JP taught us not to take with us the luggage from parents and generational sin. He told us to not take with us this baggage and luggage. This week is all about what we *are* going to pass on. What's the baton that we are supposed to pass on to the next generation? We're going to be teaching on parenting and all of these different things, but there is a very, very clear elephant in the room if you haven't caught it. I'm not a parent (yet). I'm not a parent. What you need to know is that I've spent the last ten years around college students. I haven't parented. I don't know how hard it is. I see how hard it is, but I don't truly know. But what I've gotten to see is the products of parenting. For the last ten years, I've seen what happens when they get to Waco at 18 years old. I've gotten to look back, and I get to ask them questions. Where did they come from? How did they get here? How did that secure, content, Gospel-sharing student get to Waco? What is it about their family? What is it about their parents? Honestly, what I've seen is that it's not a private school education. It's not public-school education. It's not that they're from Texas, honestly. It was a thought: "I wonder if they're all from Texas." Nope. What I've seen is that—from Connecticut to California—public, private, or classical school—what I've seen is that the students that flourish in college, the 18-year-olds that make it, have parents that love God and disciple them. They love God and disciple them.

You know what they haven't done? They haven't just gone to church. There are plenty of students that flop and don't flourish because they've been "church-goers," but it meant nothing for their parents' lives. It's not just going to church. It's not private school. It's not public school. It's not a state. It's not all those things. The thing that sets apart the students that flourish are the families that love God and have disciplined them. The parents that love God and disciple them.

If you're in here and you're a parent, it's very clear what today is about: passing it on to the next generation. For those that aren't parents in the room, I've been teaching not to parents for the last six years. You're my people: the single young adults, the college students, maybe you're married, and you don't have children. Here's the deal: this passage in Deuteronomy 6 is Moses speaking to all of Israel. It's interesting; it's not a parenting conference where he's like, "All the parents, come here. Let's talk just for a minute. This is how we're going pass things on to the next generation." Nope. The first few words are "Hear, Israel." This is for everyone. How is it for everyone? Here's the beauty of this passage: if you're not a parent, you get to choose who you pass it on to. Parents don't necessarily get to choose. They're required. They get to include others as well in who they pass it on to. They can add others as they disciple, but for the rest of us in the room, this message is for you passing it on to whomever you choose: the kid's ministry, the youth ministry, there are plenty of ministries at work in different places. You can pass it on. You just get to choose. We're going to turn to Deuteronomy 6. We're going to be in verses 4 through 9 today. We're going to see that Moses is preparing the Israelites for the Promised Land, but Moses isn't going himself. We're inserting ourselves into one of the speeches that he gave to prepare the next

generation to hand it off to the next generation. We're going to see from the text today that we're going to pass it on by:

1. *Setting an example*
2. *Showing the Way*
3. *Surrounding them with Scripture.*

Starting in verse 4, Deuteronomy 6: "**Hear!**" Your Bible might say, "Listen!" I'm in the ESV this morning. This is the Word *shema* in Hebrew. This is what the Jewish people call the Shema. "**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 mezuzahs [doorposts] of your house and on your gates.**" That's where we're going to be today.

First, I shared with you that he's talking to Israel. Moses is saying, "**Hear!** Listen, Israel!" This is a listening that comes with obedience. Then he says that "**the Lord our God, the Lord is one.**" What he's saying is that He's our Lord. He's our Master. He's in control of our lives; that's what "Lord" means. We only have One of them. Success can't be our Master. Status, sports—as parents and for our kids—we can't have those idols as our gods. We can only have One. "**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.**"

Let's talk about love for a second. When we think about love and loving God, we immediately just think of emotion. That's the natural first thing to think about: emotion or even romantic love. What we must understand is that love is this verb. It's emotion and action, and decision. The best example of love in the history of the world is to lay down your life for another, which we've gotten to see in Jesus. That's love. It's sacrificial. When Moses tells the Israelites to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, it's sacrificial. Sometimes it's emotional and filled with joy. Sometimes it's found in mourning and obedience despite not wanting to. Moses is telling the Israelites, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength."

1. *Set the example*

The first point: if we pass it on to the next generations, it starts with us. We have to set the example. We must set the example. It starts with us. If we want to pass anything off to the next generation, it starts with us. It's not half-hearted. It's whole-hearted. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. I added "mind" because there's no Hebrew word for "mind." Jesus added "mind." When He quoted this, He included "mind" because what the Scriptures are telling us is that half-heartedness isn't an option. You can't halfway love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Undivided hearts are required here. We set the example with undivided hearts. Jesus is not an accessory; He's our everything. Holistic love. If we want to pass it on to the next generation, we have to understand that we cannot pass

on what we don't possess. We cannot pass on what we don't possess ourselves. We must set the example in loving God.

We so often think we can outsource examples. This might be a touchy topic. We're entering into summer camp season. I think there might even be one at Harris Creek in the next few weeks, which is great. Summer camps are great. There's nothing wrong with summer camps, but some of us, when we're parenting, we're just trying to outsource examples. We're constantly outsourcing. We take them to the kids' ministry and the youth ministry, and we think that maybe they'll get disciplined by a good college student here in Waco. Or we take them to a camp, and we think, "Maybe they'll catch that example of that college student or that person." Or maybe we even send them to Christian school. We're like, "Maybe that Christian teacher." We're just going to outsource our example. Here's what we've got to know. Those are all supplements to discipleship. They are not a substitute for us discipling our kids. There's no question. It's not a substitute. It's a supplement, not a substitute, for the way that we disciple the next generation. I think the best way that I can show you this is that your kids—or whoever's under you, whoever you're discipling, whoever you're teaching—they're going to love what you love. One of my favorite examples of this: I love to fish. That doesn't make any sense. I'm from the city of Houston. There aren't many places to fish in Houston. I'm wearing athleisure. I don't really look like a fisherman. I don't dress like a fisherman. I'm extremely impatient, which means that I shouldn't like fishing. It requires a ton of patience. I'm not even good at fishing. If one of you wanted to fish with me, it wouldn't go well. In fact, these guys in the front row—I fish with them. I'm not sure how many fish we caught. I don't remember. He doesn't either—which isn't a good sign! It's not a good sign. I love fishing because my dad loves fishing. That's it. That's the only reason. It doesn't make any sense except that my dad loved fishing. I, therefore, love fishing. They will love what you love, so we must set the example. If we want to pass it on, we set the example by loving God.

How do we do that? We seek Him. We humbly learn from the Lord. Do they see our example? Do they see us reading the Scriptures? Do they see us in our Life Groups? Do they see us confessing sin? Do they see us praying on our knees? What do they catch us doing? Another thought in setting the example by loving God: what could we do to love God more? Is there anything you could do? Is there anything you could remove? Think about this for ten seconds. Is there anything you could remove from your life: a distraction, something that is distracting you from wholeheartedly loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Is there anything that comes to mind? See if the Spirit brings anything to mind.

I remember when I was in Dallas at a student's house. I was with her dad, and we were scrolling through the movie channels. He clicked on some harmless movie channel, and we were going to watch something. I don't really remember the context other than that we were turning on a channel, and it didn't work. It had a restriction code. And he just nonchalantly was like, "Yeah. My wife has the restriction code. We care about purity in this house." That moment was very weird to me. I'd never seen a father openly admit that. "Hey, we care about purity. We restrict things in this house." I think that's such an incredible way of setting the example because he wasn't just a parent saying, "Give me your phone! Let me set some screen time. Not that much Instagram. Not that much TikTok. I'm just going to restrict you, Student/Kid/whatever. I'm just going to restrict you." It's not just, "I'm going to restrict you." It's, "Hey, we all are going to do

whatever it takes. If it takes restricting some movie channels, we're going to do that as a family. I'm going to set the example in this." That struck me. I'll never forget that moment. It really was like, "Whoa. I didn't know you could do that." You fast forward, and his daughter transferred to Baylor. She'd been having a ton of health challenges. When you transfer, it can be challenging sometimes in it of itself. She gets to Baylor, and she starts to thrive. She starts to flourish. She leads a Life Group. She's discipling. She's being disciplined. That's a product of the example that was set by her parents. I've gotten to see the product. I got to see the parents. That is how we pass it on: by first setting the example.

Verse 6 is where we'll see the second point. Moses says this: "**And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.** This is God's Word. The things that I'm going to speak to you, O Israel, **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.** The second way that we pass it on, as Moses is showing us is that we

1. *Show them the Way.*

We do that through teaching. We teach them the Way. Good parenting is both caught when they see our example and taught with our words. I read this as I was studying this week and realized that 1) parenting is so hard. I kind of forgot about that. I just got really excited about this text. I'm like, "This says to teach them diligently! I'm going to charge them to teach them diligently! It's going to be awesome!" When I get excited, I get intense, and it gets weird; things get fast. That's what was happening in me until I thought, "Oh my gosh. Parenting is so hard, yet it's a command to teach your children the Word of God." I was really excited about this, but now I'm like, "This is kind of a hard command to give everyone." We are all commanded to pass on our faith to the next generation. It's a command for us all. Even though I'm excited about it, this is a lot. This is a big responsibility. It begs a lot of questions. When do we teach them? "**When we sit.**" Maybe at dinner. "**When we walk.**" Or maybe drive. "**When we lie down.**" Bedtime. "**When we rise.**" Breakfast. It seems as though he just means to teach them diligently. That's what he says in verse 7. "**You shall teach them diligently.**" We repeat it. We engrave it. We drill it in. When we show them the Way, what we must also understand is that, as New Testament believers, Jesus actually says He is the Way. When it says to show them the Way, it's using our words, it's teaching them, it's showing them Jesus. Showing them the Way is showing them Jesus. I honestly think that we've settled for babysitting. This is what I mean: babysitting is when we ask somebody to take care of our kids and make sure they don't eat the crayons or stick their fingers in the socket. "We're going to just drop them off with you; can you keep them alive? Whatever it takes, keep them alive and we'll be back." That's not discipleship. That's, in fact, not even what they're doing in the kids' or youth ministry over there. As you send your kids over there, they're being taught the Word of God in an age-appropriate lesson. It's not babysitting. We don't call it that. We call it "kids' ministry" and "youth ministry." They disciple them as supplements, not substitutes. We show them the Way. We teach them the Way with our words. There are natural other thoughts. "What if I'm not a good teacher? I'm not as good of a teacher as JP." I get it. You're not as big. You're not as good at inflection and illustrating and all these things. He is gifted! That's OK. You don't need to be JP. I don't need to be JP. Parents—none of you—need to be JP. We just need to faithfully teach the Word of God as best we can. It's OK if

you're not a teacher or whatever it is. In fact, Moses—who wrote this and said this—was a stutterer! That's even more encouraging. All the more glory to God. If we're not a good teacher, know that Moses was a stutterer. If you're too busy to teach your children, TikTok is not too busy. They will teach your children. TikTok and YouTube and Instagram and their friends are great teachers. If you allow them to be the only teacher, it will not go well. Busyness—I understand it—but we have to understand that we cannot allow that to be an excuse. If we don't know the Bible well enough—this is one of my personal favorites and I think this might be a lot of us, myself included—"what should I teach? We need to know the Bible better. I don't know enough Bible to teach it."

Here's the deal: we learn it by teaching it. That's how we do it. Just think about the times you have read the Bible and you've forgotten it. We read Philemon this week for the Bible Reading Plan. I've read Philemon before. I've taught Philemon before. I'm reading it and realizing that I forgot about this. What I realized is that I haven't taught it enough. I haven't taught it enough. I must continually teach it. We learn it by teaching it over and over and over again. If we don't know it, we teach it. We learn it and then we teach our kids what we're learning. We teach the next generation what we're learning, whether we're discipling them in youth, kids' ministry, or they're our own kids. If you don't have the answers, that's great. Seek out the answers together. Look to the Scriptures, look to gotquestions.org, all of these different things. I've never met a student who was overequipped. I've never met a student who made me think, "You know too much Bible. You're a little bit overboard. You've got to chill on the Bible thing. You just know too much of it. We're going to have to teach you social skills or something like that. We're going to have to teach you something different." I've never met that student. I'm still waiting to meet that student, but I've met a ton of students that know a ton about politics. They know a lot about politics. In fact, I've met a ton of students that know a lot about sports. I don't know anything about sports. That's just a personal thing. I don't understand what's going on; I just like to play them. NBA? Something is happening right now; that's what I've heard. I don't know. I don't know what y'all like. Anybody keep up with sports? No sports fans here? Totally. Nobody in the room? Okay, cool. NBA. Yes. The Super Bowl is happening in the NBA. That's how I feel too. Are the Mavs in it? That wasn't even a joke. They're not? Cool. Sorry for my Dallas friends here. That was sincere; I did not know that.

A lot of students know politics. A lot of students know sports. A lot of students know celebrities. Not many know the Bible. We show them the Way by showing them Jesus and teaching them God's Word. We teach them God's Word. Honestly, it's freeing that it's like, "Teach them everywhere. Teach them randomly. Teach them in the mundane. Yes, teach them at the dinner table, but also teach them as their sibling's playing at a sporting event. Teach them everywhere." The best example I've seen of this in a college student is a junior that's at Harris Creek. She also was a part of Vertical, which is the ministry that I led until this last season. There is just something different about her. When she got to Baylor, she's 18 and she's like, "All right, we've got to start sharing the Gospel with people. We need to reach the unreached people on the campus." She specifically had a heart for the international students. Where did this come from? She's not doing the sorority thing. She didn't really care about all of the other stuff that you could do in college. She's laser focused. She's got a mission. She got to campus on a mission. I'm thinking, "Where did you come from? Can we recreate you? You're a product of something. What can I learn from you?" She's so amazing. What I learned is that her parents would invite

international students to their house. They would teach the Bible and ask questions and learn together. Her parents would teach their children the Bible with international students around the table. When she got to college, it wasn't her making her own faith; really, what it was is that she was continuing the mission that she had already been a part of. She was just there to continue it. It wasn't this fresh, new thing—like, "I've never been a believer before! College!" It was like, "I'm here on a mission. This is what I've been taught." She had an example and somebody that showed her the Way and taught her the Word.

We pass it on by setting the example, showing them the way, and the last point is from verse 8: **"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."** The third way that we pass it on is to

1. *Surround them with Scripture.*

Whoever God has given us to disciple and pass it on to, we surround them with Scripture. Moses is telling the next generation: "You're going to need to set reminders everywhere. Set things that will help you remember who God is and what God has done. Write it on your wrists, your forehead, whatever. Surround yourself with God's Word." Why? Verse 6 tells us: **"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart."** They shall be on our heart. The Word of God is meant to be on our heart, but we're so quick to forget.

We've got to set reminders in different places. Whether you're married or single, have kids or don't have kids, we put God's Word everywhere. Put it on the mirror, Expo marker, not permanent marker. No emails on that one. You can write it on the mirror. That's one of my favorite ways that I've seen. You can put God's Word on a sticky note, index card, in your car. As a family, you could write out a passage of God's Word and frame it. Maybe every month, celebrate if anyone in the family has memorized it. Do a new one each month. If you miss a month, there's grace. Welcome to church. We can put God's Word everywhere. Again, we can celebrate it. We're so quick to celebrate the home run or the honor roll. I'm still waiting on the honor roll party, but that's something different. We haven't celebrated the kids that have been memorizing and putting the Word of God on their hearts. Celebrate it.

The weird thing about this passage is that Jesus actually calls out the Pharisees for putting the Word of God on their foreheads through what looked like a headlamp. You know what I'm talking about? Through a headlamp with a light, they would put the Scriptures on their forehead because of this verse in the Old Testament. Jesus called them out on it. It's not just, "put God's Word everywhere so people will see you put God's Word everywhere." It's, "we put God's Word everywhere so that it can be on our hearts." He gives us a warning. What I love about Jesus is that He helps with this. This is when we come in and talk about parenting. It can feel like a burden. Maybe we're grandparents or don't have as many opportunities to teach our kids or whatever it is. It can be a burden. There can be guilt. "I didn't do this." "I don't have as many opportunities to do this" or whatever it is. There can be guilt. There can be all this responsibility. There can be all this pressure. There can be all this stuff. At one point in the Scriptures, they come up to Jesus and they say, "Hey, what's the most important of all the commandments?" And He quotes this. **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.** Don't worry about all these rules. It all boils down to

loving God. Obedience will come. It all starts with loving God." If you feel guilty, don't miss this: Jesus is all about grace. That's who He is. He's grace in the flesh. That's the story of the Gospel. Forgiveness. There is so much grace.

As we pass it on by setting the example, showing them the Way, and surrounding them with Scripture, it's so easy to say, "Hey, I wish I'd started that 20 years ago." The best day to start was always 20 years ago. The second-best day to start? Today. As I was preparing for this, I thought about my own story. My parents separated when I was five and divorced when I was in 7th grade. I kindly asked my mom this weekend, as we were moving into our house: "Do you think that you taught us the Bible?" She said, "No, no, no. I didn't teach the Bible." I thought that she might think that. What my mom did—what you did—you didn't teach me the Bible, but I got to catch you hit your knees. I presume you were praying for me. I'm so grateful for your example. I'm grateful that you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, all your strength. She didn't teach me a ton. She didn't know a ton. She's been learning. We now get to talk about the Scriptures, and she gets to teach me now. I still don't always love it, parents. I still don't love it, but I'm thankful for it. Most importantly, I'm thankful for her example of loving the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. Let me pray we would be a people—a church, a body—that would pass on our love for God to the next generation. Let me pray that we would.

God, we just come to you humbly. We need help. Something like this—we can't do this alone. We can't pass on love for you to the next generation. Lord, if there's any guilt here, I pray you'd remove it. I pray that those who have prodigals would know that they're loved. Our responsibility is to disciple. The outcome is up to you, God. It's not on us. We can experience grace and forgiveness. There's nothing that we have to look back on. I pray you'd remove burdens and guilt, any of that, in the room, Lord. Would you make us a people that pass it on? Would you make us a people that set the example in our love for you? We don't just tell those we're discipling to set restrictions. We ourselves set restrictions. We set the pace in our love for you. We show the Way. We teach the Scriptures. Show them, Jesus. We surround ourselves with Scriptures and reminders of who you are and what you've done for us, God. I really, really believe that if we caught this and pass it on to the next generation, it would be amazing. It would be like wildfire. It would be unstoppable. Would you help us to live this out by your grace? In your Son Jesus' name, Amen.