

XXVII. God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective

Foundations From Genesis

The Family: Parenting – Part 4

Deuteronomy 6:4–6

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

August 21, 2022 • Sunday Evening Sermon

I love this passage in Deuteronomy 6 for every family would have learned this in God's Old Covenant. This passage would have been repeated in worship, at the table, at the Passover and in the home. It's a glorious text which contains some wonderful insights which I would like to kind of pull out and give to you through ten observations on Biblical Parenting from Deuteronomy 6. So far in this series, we've looked at the sanctity of God, the sanctity of creation, the sanctity of divine revelation, the sanctity of life, the sanctity of work, the sanctity of marriage and the family through what God has laid out in His Word as foundational pillars of the faith that really need to be understood and embraced in a culture that is sifting and shifting so rapidly. And one of them, of course, is the sanctity of marriage.

We have looked at the biblical understanding of singleness to the glory of God and how that season of life is embraced with confidence and contentment in the Lord. Then also, we've looked at this matter of parenting in the context of the sanctity of family. We will be looking at one more text on parenting in the next study, but let's get into Deuteronomy 6.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says [4] *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. [5] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. [6] And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. [7] 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. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

This is a glorious text of Scripture from the Word of God and as I walk you through it, I want to give you a distillation statement of ten elements that would affect biblical parenting from Deuteronomy 6. So, to begin this passage it says ‘Hear O Israel, now what is Israel? Israel is a nation but it hasn't always been a nation. Israel in the providence of God and in the redemptive work of God, began with a man that God called out of the land of the Chaldeans. Then God sent him as He told him to leave his home, leave his family, and go to a land that God promised to give to him and his seed. Now, he didn't even have a seed at the time which is a child, but he was told to rise up with his wife and make his way to this land of promise. God would tell him when to stop so he goes to an area where he begins to dwell in that place. Then we follow this patriarch, Abram and his wife, Sarai, who become Abraham and Sarah in terms of God's covenant to mercies and establishing with them the Abrahamic covenant in which He promises to give them land, a seed, and to bless them and bless all those that bless him. Not only will God bless the nations through Abraham and kings will come from him, and he will be a blessing to nations, but also He will bless the nations that bless Abraham and his seed.

Then, comes Abraham's son, Isaac, then Jacob and he engages in parenting from the promise of God – I will be a God to you and to your seed after you. I will remember My covenant made with you from generation to generation – then He establishes the covenant with Abraham. In Genesis 15, God causes Abraham to go into a deep sleep and a dream comes to him in which the Lord God has commanded the sacrifices to be cut in half, and He cuts the covenant.

A covenant is that God gives is a divine deal and I'm not meaning to be sacrilegious, but it comes with the cutting of the deal. Here's the point. We, as His covenant people receive the blessings while God Himself takes the cursing for our sin and that is pictured in this covenant moment in Genesis 15.

As the sacrifices are separated, then the smoking lamp and the cloud come through the sacrifice to Abraham. In the covenants of men, the Hittite covenants, for instance, and others that they would have been familiar with, it is the covenant receivers that come to the covenant maker, but not so in the Divine covenant. It is the covenant Giver that comes to seal the covenant for the covenant recipients. Thus, what you see is a covenantal baby step declaring and revealing what will come to fruition from the covenant of Abraham, to a covenant with Moses, to a covenant with David, and then the fulfillment in the New Covenant with a True Mediator, who is that Sacrifice and that is Christ Himself.

As God establishes them, He causes a deep sleep to fall upon Abraham. Then God tells him the terror that he is feeling is that his family will become a nation and God, in making it a nation will take them into a nation where God will use that nation to multiply them, to mature them, and to mobilize them. Then after 430 years, God will send another mediator who will bring them out and deliver them as they make their exodus from the slavery that that nation has imposed upon them. That is the anticipation of what we see in the Book of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Then we see how God continues that covenant with Abraham to Isaac, then to Jacob and then to the sons of Jacob, the 12 tribes.

The famine happens and they sell Joseph, who rises up as say the vice president of Egypt. Joseph is put as second in command, and God gives him great favor with Pharaoh. As he is in command now, his brothers come to him because of the famine, and they tremble when they realize this is the one that they left for dead, but yet he assures them that he has no revenge planned for them at all. On the contrary, he declares his confidence in the sovereign God. Joseph, who was sold into slavery, was faithful to the Lord as a slave, sold into Potiphar's house, continued his faithfulness to the Lord even in the false accusations and convictions of Potiphar's wife, then put into a prison, abandoned by those who he ministered to he continues to honor the Lord and then God in His plan raises him in the very house of Pharaoh. That's why he says to his brothers, 'do not fear, for what you meant for evil, God meant for good to bring about this present blessing to you.' As one preacher says, 'We serve a sovereign God that draws straight lines with crooked sticks.' So, they come into Egypt where they are cared for.

Then rises up a pharaoh that does not know Joseph and out of his fear, he employs genocidal policies to control this population that he is fearful of in their midst. As he brings those judgments, then God raises up Moses to bring them out through ten plagues. The Passover Covenant Meal is established that points to Christ the LAMB of God. Then they are brought through a baptism as they are taken through the Red Sea. It's Pharaoh's army that gets immersed not the Israelites for they come through on dry land. Now they go into the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. There are all of these marvelous lessons of God's grace being taught throughout those opening books in the Book of Exodus.

This is where we pick up in Deuteronomy 6. In Hebrew, Deuteronomy means the second giving of the law. This is the second giving. Remember, Moses had thrown the tablets down and broke them. Now, He gives the law a second time and as from the mountain, the law comes down, now Moses delivers a sermon. Deuteronomy is the sermon of giving glory to God for His grace manifested to His covenant people. We are now at chapter 6, do you happen to know what is in Deuteronomy 5? We do believe in verbal plenary inspiration. It's important when we study

a text, we know what comes before the text because God has not only inspired the words – verbal of the text – plenary, but He has inspired the order. The law is given in Deuteronomy 5. Here is that second giving of the law that has now come to them from God through Moses. Now we're ready to understand the text.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says [4] “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*” The Lord is God, but what He's emphasizing here is the covenant relationship that this people have with God. He is our God. Do not slip past that. Here is not only a statement of fact that the Lord is God, but it is also a statement of fact that they have a covenantal relationship with Him unlike any other nation in all of history. There has only been one nation which has enjoyed a covenanted relationship with God at the command and provisions of God, and that is Israel, the nation through which He would bring the seed of the Redeemer, Himself, and that Redeemer that comes through this nation will bless according to the Abrahamic Covenant, all the nations. That One is Christ Himself. This covenanted nation that God has established is called to listen to the Word of God – Hear O Israel. They were not a nation when they came into Egypt. They are now past the Red Sea, on their way for a 40-year journey in the wilderness, ultimately on the way to the promised land and in that they are now a nation.

Here are a people that were not a nation that has become a nation through which God will accomplish His promises through the promised Seed. That Seed will then proclaim God's covenant of grace to all the nations and make a royal nation from every tribe and nation. So as this nation is formed under the sovereign hand of God, in the midst of their suffering so God is going to bring a Redeemer who will suffer for His people from every tribe and nation, and will establish a nation unto Himself, a royal nation, a nation of priests that will be established.

Israel can now be given this statement; The Lord our God. Then comes what we call proper theology. That is theological focus upon who God is. *The Lord is one.* There are actually two Hebrew words for the word, one, in the Bible. There is one that means one, but there is another Hebrew word that's translated in your Bible one and rightly so, is a word that means one with multiplicity. This is the very word that is used, for instance, in the book of Numbers, when the spies come out where they have a pole between them and they talk about the milk, honey and fruit that is in the Promised Land with glowing terms. On this pole between them the translation says there is a grape on it. It's so heavy it bends the pole. It is not a 500-pound grape. It is referencing a grape in cluster. It's called a grape, but it's referring to the multiplicity of a cluster of grapes.

That's the word that's used to describe God. Now, that word does not teach us the doctrine of the Trinity – one God who dwells in three Persons, but it does accommodate the doctrine of the Trinity. It's not the Hebrew one for one singular, but the Hebrew word for one with multiplicity. It's just like we don't know how many grapes were in that cluster that called a grape. Yet here it doesn't tell us that the Lord, our God, is one in three Persons, but it does say one, and it's the word that accommodates multiplicity.

We see this same issue dealing with baptism for we are baptized in to the name singular of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, not names, not plural. It's not three gods acting as one, but the name singular – one God in three persons. Here is a declaration, a confession. A confession is not something that supersedes the Scripture. It's a distillation of essential truth from the Scripture that you need to know and here is a confession for this nation. Just like we have numerous confessions of the early church that are embedded in the New Testament.

‘Hear O Israel, is the Lord our God.’ He owns us. We own Him. It is this One who has delivered us out of bondage. It is this God, the Lord our God, who is One. ‘Lord’ has different

ways of showing up in the Bible. Sometimes it means the Lord – Yahweh, the God who is. Sometimes it means the Lord – Adonai, the God who is sovereign. But this God who is ours, and we are His, He is the Lord and He is One. He exists as One which is the word for multiplicity. As the Scripture unfolds, we realize that the Lord our God is one – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then we invent a word that's not in the Bible to theologically express this confessionally. It's the word Trinity – the Tri unity of the one God in the three Persons. Now what should you do? Let's continue in the text.

Deuteronomy 6:5 says [5] *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.* Does this sound familiar to you? It sounds familiar because it is a summation of the Ten Commandments with a focus on the first tablet. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest of the commandments He goes back to Deuteronomy and Exodus which sums up the two tablets that you shall love the Lord, your God, with all of your heart, soul and mind, and then teaching you with the second tablet how you love those made in His image – how you love your neighbor, the image bearers of God as you have been taught by God's grace. The love of God gives you a Biblical love of yourself owned by God and devoted to God. In other words, when He tells them to teach, this is shorthand for the Ten Commandments. You shall with My commandments, love the Lord, your God, with all of your heart, soul and mind which would then lead you to love the image bearers of God.

When God gives Israel the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai that means they have already gone through the Red Sea. They've been delivered, which means that God has brought judgment upon the nation that He used to mature them, multiply them, and mobilize them because He told them the nations that bless you I'll bless and the nations that curse you, I'll bring judgment upon. What had Egypt done? Egypt had brought a genocidal policy upon them. So, God brings judgment upon them. You can see in the annals of history the very judgment of God upon Egypt and as He does that, He delivers His people out of bondage, then through the Red Sea, and then to Mount Sinai to worship. God delivers His people to the praise of His glorious grace.

Now, how shall they live as those who have been delivered from bondage? He gives them the commandments. He doesn't give them the commandments to do and earn His deliverance. He delivers them by grace. He gives them his law after He delivers them. They don't have to keep the law to get delivered. That's an act of God's unmerited and unstoppable love called His grace. Now He gives them the law for its lawful use. We don't obey the law to be saved. We obey the law for the One who delivered us from the curse of the law and that is Jesus. We're not under that law. We can use that law because He – our Redeemer, who has delivered us out of the bondage of sin – didn't come to abolish it, but we're not under it because we don't see it with any power. Now that God has saved us, we can use His law for its spiritual and good use.

The law has not power but it has direction. Hear Me and My commandment and if you love Me, you will keep my commandments (John 14:15). Why do you love Him? You don't love Him to keep His commandments so He will love you. You love Him because He first loved you. Now when you love Him, you keep His commandments because you love Him, not because you're seeking to save yourself, but you love Him who saves you. So hear My law and make its lawful use as a director, as a tutor, to lead you to Me as to how you love Me with all of your heart, soul and mind. Let's continue in the text.

Deuteronomy 6:6 says [6] *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.* What do you have with Him? You have a heart relationship. When God gives us the prophecy and the promises of the New Covenant, what does He tell us? He says, "I've got a

people who are not a people. They shall become My people from all the nations. I will bring them from the lands into My land. I will sprinkle clean water upon them. (There's the sign of the covenant.) I will forgive their sins and make them righteous. (There's the new record.) I will give them a new heart, for the stony heart I'll cut out." For those whom He has saved by God's grace by His power and from the curse of the law, He writes His law upon their hearts and praise God in Christ that has come to fulfillment. Now, what should you do? Let's continue in the text.

Deuteronomy 6:7-9 says [7] *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. [8] You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [9] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* My Word marks your mind and your life. My Word, embraced by you becomes a sign to the world that you are mine and I am yours.

You can almost hear the echo that is coming years later, as Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). It's on the door post of your house and on your gates. That is everything around you – your abiding place in life is marked out by the grace of God, demonstrated in your love and identification with the Word of God.

Here are some things we are learning from this. The first one is, a saving relationship with God as your Redeemer is a heart relationship that is directly related to and informed by God's Word. It is also empowered by the Spirit of God and it is directed through the pathway of saving grace to the heart and the pathway of saving grace to the heart is the mind. People who are saved have the marks and the evidences of salvation in their life. Your changed life doesn't save you. II Corinthians 5:17 says [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* Something has happened.

There is one deathbed conversion in Scripture – the thief on the cross. Did he have a life change? Yes, it wasn't long, but there was a change. He went from a mocker to a worshiper. He went from an unbeliever to a believer. He went from condemning Christ to confessing Christ. He went from exalting himself to depending upon Christ alone and the marks were there. That only happens with a changed heart. A changed heart will evidence with the changed life, but it's not the changed life that saves you – the changed life is the evidence. Now, how does the heart get changed? It is by the power of God's grace. How does the heart tell the members of our body – our tongue, our hands, our feet, what to do for God's glory? It is because the heart must be instructed and the pathway of saving grace that is evidenced in life is from the mind to the new heart that God gives.

It's not simply to have a job, because you can't do what you don't know and you can't know what you need to know without God's grace giving you a new heart that hungers for His Word, and then a renewed mind that instructs the heart as to how the life is to be lived. That's why we encourage a small group discipleship in your life. That's why we encourage not only fellowship in relationships in the Sunday school community, but teaching as well so that we continually are being instructed by the Word of God.

There is no Biblical parenting without pointing your kids to Christ in a heart relationship by informing their mind from the Word of God. I can't get any more basic in biblical parenting than that. It's not just informing them of the Word of God. It's informing them through the Word of God, of their need of a heart relationship that's demonstrated in life. We're not looking to raise Pharisees, nor are we looking to raise urchins. We are looking to raise warriors for Christ – Divine arrows in the hand of the Divine Warrior and that means that they are to have a heart relationship. We will not direct our children to a heart relationship with Christ directed by the

Word of God manifested in life until we have one. You can't parent your children where you haven't gone. You can't lead where you haven't been.

That's why He makes this statement that you're to love the Lord with all your heart and these words are to be on your heart. We're pointing our children to a saving relationship with God, which means a heart relationship by the grace of God that is directed through the Word of God in the power of the Spirit of God and we get to their heart through their mind. We cannot open their mind or their heart. But we can open the Word of God to teach their heart through their mind as we are utterly dependent upon God's grace, not only in our opening of the Word, but in their response to that Word. Praise God, you start with a promise – I will be a God to you and to your children after you.

Number two, a relationship with Christ that is saving is one of a total commitment of heart, soul, mind and might. You don't come to Jesus on an ala carte menu. You don't come to Jesus saying "I'll take your Savior, but not as Lord." It is an all commitment to Him who gave His all for you and that is what we need to be teaching our children. We want you not to put Jesus in your back pocket to get through life, but that Jesus is Lord of your life, even Jesus is simply your life. To live is Christ to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).

Number three, we teach the holiness of God. He is one. There are no facsimiles. There are no replications. There are duplicitous facsimiles and there are deceptive declarations of gods in this world, but there is only One. Hear, the Lord, our God is one. There is none like Him as He exists as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Number four, you cannot faithfully teach or effectually engage someone through teaching to Christ unless you have been united to Christ yourself. You've got to know the Lord your God. I was raised in the Christian Missionary Alliance, and I love the Lord's Day but that's not the way it was when I was growing up and my dad could care less whether I wanted to come to church or not. He would say "We're going, son" and that was it. Then when the youth group announced to my parents there was going to be a retreat or a camp or something, I was going to that as well. I, like many other people, could find any and every reason not to go to a Sunday night worship service. My number one avoidance of Sunday night was the two times a year they were showing two programs I wanted to see on television and I would say to my dad, "Can we not go to church tonight? They're showing Peter Pan tonight." Mary Martin as Peter Pan was my number one argument to miss Sunday night and then if that one didn't work, I knew six months later The Wizard of Oz would be showing on Sunday night, and I would say to my dad, "The Wizard of Oz is on and, oh, he kind of teaches us about God, so Daddy, can't we stay home and watch The Wizard of Oz?" That didn't work either.

I did not want to be a part of the youth group let alone go on a youth retreat. My thinking was 'Do not bring water torture into my life.' I did not want to do that, particularly after I became 15 years of age. I remember my dad telling me about a youth function happening all day on a Saturday and that I'd have a great time. I said 'Daddy, you know, I've got I've got a game Friday night and Saturday I think I'm going to be tired. I might even have a cold or something. You never can know what I need to avoid here.' He said, "No, you're going and by the way, you're riding with..." and he had already called a family whose kids were old enough to drive and I was riding with them. When we got there, I thought "okay, I can get by this. We're coming home at 4:00 in the afternoon. I can make this." We drove up that morning and here were these college kids that had come from a Bible college, and I had no idea it was evangelism training. They did not tell us this is what it was. They just took us there and the next thing I know, I'm out

with two other high school students and this college guy who is teaching us how to share our faith.

This college guy said to us “I want you to do these five things. When you share your faith, we're going door to door.” I thought, “No way!” Sure enough, we went door to door and by the way, that's when I found out that God answers prayers of unbelievers. I was an unbeliever. As we went up to the first door and I prayed, “God, please let there not be anyone home.” Guess what? Nobody was home, answered prayer and then the second home answered prayer. The third home, they were not only there, they said, “Oh, you fine young people. Why don't you come in? I've got something to give you to drink.” So, we went in, they gave us a Coca-Cola and a cookie and the college guy began to share with this couple.

The college guy got to this point and said “Ike (that was my nickname), why don't you share what we're talking about?” I said, ‘What?’ “Why don't you share?” I remembered the three points he hadn't said so I said all three of them and he said, “now, Ike, you have a question for them, don't you?” I didn't quite get the question right the way I asked it for I said ‘you wouldn't want to be a Christian, would you?’ I'll never forget this because they said, “Yeah, we really want to be a Christian.” You can only go so far so I said, “Well, I'm going to let my friend share with you.” So, he then prayed with them and they committed their life to Christ.

So if anybody ever ask you, can the power of the Gospel even overcome an unbeliever and people still get saved? The answer is absolutely, but the basic rule of thumb is you can't take people where you haven't been. Therefore, as a parent, please realize that Biblical parenting is made more effective in the life of your children as you are growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ. My daddy and mama didn't send me to go to something that they didn't go to themselves. They took us and we could see it in their lives and that made an impact in our lives.

Number five, Biblical education of children is a God ordered responsibility for parents. You are responsible for educating your children for God has appointed you to do this. This church is responsible to fulfill the Great Commission in your life and your children's life and you can make use of it. You may choose a public school, you may choose a private school. You may make use of a Sunday school. You may make use of a Christian school. I've got my pastoral advice of what you ought to choose, but your responsibility is to educate your children Biblically. God doesn't tell you what venue to use and what to get to assist you in it as a parent, but it is your God ordained responsibility as a parent.

Number six, Biblical parenting is intentional. Deuteronomy 6 doesn't just say you shall teach but it says you shall diligently teach your children. It is intentional and systematic. You are to be thinking through it and planning out. You're the controller of the curriculum of education in the life of your child.

Number seven, our education is to be life changing and life applicable. You are to teach them about sitting down, rising up, walking by the wayside. You're to teach them of the rhythms of life, the relationships of life – you are to teach them God's truth for life comprehensively in every arena of life. You are to teach what it means to live, directed by the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, through the grace of God to live for the glory of God.

Number eight, you are not only to do so intentionally, but you are to do so thoughtfully. Number nine, you are to do so with an environment in which God is honored with His Word. His words are to be on your hands, arms, mind, and on your head between your eyes. In Orthodox Judaism, they've reduced this into a legalistic presentation of putting a piece of a Bible in a box and strapping it on the head. That is not the purpose. Your mind is informed by the Word. Your hands are directed by the Word. The sign before the world is people who love the

God of the Word, directed by the Word of God, empowered by the Spirit of God to live to the glory of God. You create that environment.

Having said that, it doesn't hurt to put the Bible all over your house. I can take you throughout our house where Cindy did a needlepoint that had a Bible verse on it, where someone gave us something with a Bible verse on it, and it was hung where something was placed here. So that wherever you turn God's Word is reverberating. It's obvious, it's read, it's seen, it's everywhere. God calls us to create the environment of the Word of God in teaching in every sphere of life.

Number ten is peripatetic teaching. What do I mean by peripatetic? You teach the way you walk and the way you talk. I remember one day, not long after I was a believer and we had our first child. I was thinking about how to teach them, what school they would go to and about this and that. Then I remembered this big movement came up under the presidency of Ronald Reagan, if I'm not mistaken, where there was this encouragement to take your daughter or your son to work with you one day. Businesses were encouraged to make that as a viable option that people could bring their children at least one day a week or one day a month or something like that. I remember thinking "I wonder how that fits with economic theory and this and that."

Then I remembered that's exactly what my daddy did. I remember when my daddy came, took me out of school and I went on a one-week trip with him as he was in a minor league baseball. I stayed a whole week in Chattanooga and went with him to all the games as I sat in the stadium. He introduced to Pete Rose, met Johnny Bench, and met all these baseball players. Probably the greatest thing is hearing my dad say, "Hey, Pete, I want you to meet my son." My dad took me into life. I can remember Saturdays when dad, during the off season was always selling something to get from off season back into the season and he would take me with him as he was calling on a shop or a person and he would show me how to live life. I got to see him walk. I got to see him talk. I got to see him interact. I got to see the way he dealt with people. My mother would say, "Why don't you come up on Saturday to me and my sisters?" And we would come up and spend time with her and watch the way she would do things.

I think it's great when you go in the backyard and play catch with your kids or go with them over to the playground or go with them to their Little League games and many of you are stressed out overdoing that. Here is something that is even more powerful than that. Just take them with you. I remember taking my kids on mission trips. I can remember taking my kids with me to a hospital visit and when we'd there I may as well not have been there because the people I visited wanted to talk more with my kids than me. I found out this is pretty good in ministry, but more than that, they learned that their Dad and Mom's job wasn't something that took them from us, but it was something they brought us with them and you get to watch them. Because we learn not only by instruction, we learn more by imitation.

Take your children into life with you so they can see how the Word of God directs your life in responsibilities, in relationships, in ethics and in your vocation. It is amazing what that will do in multiplying. There will be one more study in this series and we will be looking in the Psalms for one more passage of Scripture on parenting. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time when we've been able to be together in this passage of Scripture. Please bless all of my brothers and sisters who are diligently wanting to know Your Word. I pray that You would take that which is faithful, that's been taught and build it into their life and may You not only bless them, but may they bless their children and their children's children according

to Your covenant promises in Jesus Christ. We believe You and as we know, the promise is that when we believe on You, we are saved, us and our household by Your grace, through the means of grace and really Jesus, parenting is the joy of evangelizing and discipling our children for Christ, I pray this in Jesus, Name, Amen.