



## Part 1 – Our Number 1 Priority

Deut. 6:4-9 – May 9, 2010

Intro: Are you ready to have children?

*Have you ever asked yourself as parent, “What is my number 1 priority or goal in parenting”? If we get down to the bedrock of what is most important, what would you say? Let’s look at the most quoted parenting passage in the Old Testament.*

### I. The Proposition: Our number 1 priority in parenting...

**A. Simply stated:** Our number 1 priority in parenting is to *help our children to move from dependence on us to dependence on Jesus Christ* as they grow to maturity. We gradually transfer our child’s dependence from us as parents until it rests **solely** on God!

*These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live... Deut. 6:1-2*

### B. From birth our kids need us....

1. Physically: We are more needy and dependent than any other mammal.
2. Emotionally: Moms wipe the tears from our eyes well into childhood.
3. Spiritually: Is the job ever done?
4. And over time, we will help transfer their dependence to where they will no longer depend on us, but instead, they depend on the only One who will ever be completely faithful and true to them in every single way. We teach them to depend on God.

**C. Sometimes we need them more than they need us.** We have a hard time of letting go. We create an unhealthy dependence on us. We need to teach them how to transfer this dependence.

D. Spiritual nurture takes both parents. Kids who become active Christ-followers as adults...

- If mom and dad went to church: 72% of kids will as adults.
- If dad only went to church: 55% of kids will as adults.
- If mom only went to church: 15% of kids will as adults.
- If neither mom nor dad: 06% of kids will as adults.

As we teach your children to *depend on God*, we teach them to live according to His commands, not only will we be changed, but the next generation and the generation after that will be different if we, as parents, train our children not to depend on us or themselves or what they see, but instead, on the One who created everything. Do you realize that as a parent, God has put within you the power to change generations and generations to come?

II. The Principle: **Love God completely** (v. 4-5)

A. God's **supremacy** is declared (v. 4)

*<sup>4</sup>“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”*

1. This flew right in the face of the polytheism of Moses' day. (The 10 plagues challenged the different Egyptian god's.)
  - Def – No equal... no comparison... no one like Him... He is sovereign, King of Kings, Lord; No close 2<sup>nd</sup>; He is one & #1! Does your family see that God is #1 in your life?
  - Question – Is there anything that competes for His attention? (Ex. – sports page vs. daily quiet time.) Is Jesus Christ the Lord of your life or are you?
2. Quote: “Too many men/women climb the ladder of success, only to find that it is leaning against the wrong wall” – Dobson
3. John Piper – “God is most glorified, when we are most satisfied in Him”

B. God's **love** is demanded/desired (v. 5)

<sup>5</sup>*“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”*

1. **Background:** The Heb. Shema – was the foundational truth for Old Testament parents.
  - Its New Testament counterpart is *Mt. 22:37-38*.
  - *Love the Lord your God* (v. 37)... (*Mt. 19:19; Mark 12:30*)
  - *Love your neighbor as yourself* (v. 39)... *Lev. 19:18; Gal. 5:14; Mk. 12:31; Rom. 13.9*
2. **How encompassing?** With (*Mk. 12:30* includes all 4)
  - Heart, Soul, Might/Strength and Mind (From *Mt. 22:37*)
  - Notice this is a command; Lordship results in a love relationship... we want to, not have to!
  - **ALL:** God wants all of our hearts, not partial! Only loving God partially is one the most dangerous things that we can do as parents!
  - **Flu shots:** When we get a flu shot what is actually put into my body? The shot gives me what? A little bit of the flu, right? Just a little bit and this makes me immune to the whole thing. I would argue that many parents unknowingly give their children just a little bit of the things of God, making them immune to all of His goodness, glory, power and majesty. They find themselves knowing just a little bit about God, but not knowing God personally and intimately in a life-changing way. Exposing our kids “to a little bit “of God only inoculates them against the real thing! Do I love God with all of my heart or just some of it? Does He have all of me? All the time?

### 3. What keeps us from loving God with all our hearts?

- **Busyness**: We are so busy driving kids around to soccer, track, baseball, piano lessons, dance, etc. that we run out of time to really focus on God. Church attendance takes a back seat to the more important athletic activities. If we are not careful, we become child-centered parents rather than God-centered parents. Our lives revolve around our children rather than revolving around God.
- **Fatigue**: Because of the above schedule, we are too tired to spend time alone with God, get up in the morning to have devotions, get to church, etc. We collapse into bed only to start the whole grind again the next day!
- **Wrong priorities**: Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and you don't have time to worship with God's people and come to church? Now, parents, don't kid yourselves. This will send a significant message to your children. Going to church is what I do when I have time or when it is convenient!

### 4. Where do our families see the love of God in our lives?

- **Tenderness**: Men, how do you treat your wife? Are you abrupt with her on phone? They see it in our relationships! Men: how we love our wives gives our kids a clue about how God loves us.
- **Touch**: Tucking our kids into bed. They need hugs (physical) and words of affirmation (emotional)
- **Trials**: When things are stressful. They'll see how much you love God in adversity and how you handle pain!
- **Transition**: Let's move from "what" to pass on to "how".

### III. The Practice: How do we transfer spiritual dependence?

#### A. **Lead your family consistently** (v. 6)

*“And these words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart” (v. 6)*

1. It starts with your own heart. Can't pass what you don't have! Don't be educated beyond your obedience!
2. Self-examination precedes verbal dissemination!
3. Question: Are you leading your children, or are your children leading you? Think about that. You lead them spiritually, you set the tone. You are the divine authority in the household.
4. Do you have child-centered home, or a Christ-centered home?
5. **The thing that impresses me most about America is the way the parents obey their children.**” Edward, Duke of Windsor
6. Transition: How do we do it?

#### B. **Train your family systematically!**

*<sup>7</sup>and you shall **teach** (impress) them diligently to your sons 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 up**. <sup>8</sup>“And you shall **bind** them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. <sup>9</sup>“And you shall **write** them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deut. 6:6-9)*

The process of transferring spiritual dependence involves 4 steps! There is 4-step process...

##### 1. **Teach - Formal**

- It is inescapable... you are the primary teacher, not church, not our Sunday school, not the youth ministry.
- How? Diligently – “Don't expect long term results with short term effort”! **New Year's resolution losing weight; It takes effort.**

- *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6*

Train them to....

- (1) Fear God. (Prov. 1:7)
- (2) Manage God’s money. (Prov. 3:9-10)
- (3) Tell the truth. (Prov. 4:24)
- (4) Be responsible and plan ahead. (Prov. 6:6-8)
- (5) Be generous. (Prov. 11: 25)
- (6) Carefully select friends. (Prov. 13:20)
- (7) Guard their minds. (Prov. 23:7)

2. **Talk – Informal**

Implication: Find teachable moments... in your daily activities. Four suggested times to talk informally...

Passage	Modern Parallel
<i>“Sit in your House”</i>	* Meal times (ex. Mom’s canned questions) * TV – Teach or turn it off “watch and stop” * Be home – How many nights are you out?
<i>“Walk by the Way”</i>	*In the car – turn off the radio *Shopping – illus.: “shopping with Katie” *Special dates – “lunch at school”
<i>“When you lie down”</i>	*Bed times – snuggle...talk time...stories *For teenagers: late nights...their agenda
<i>“Rise up”</i>	*What kind of environment do you set in the morning? Rushed, shouting, pressure? Or CD’s of praise? Pray them out the door before school?

3. **Tie (bind them)** (v. 8)... **Be intentional!**

- Priests would wear scripture verses from the Torah on their forehead. **Implication:** Never lose sight of God as

**your priority and passion.** *Keep your eyes on Jesus – Heb. 12:2 – “Fixing our eyes”...on Jesus*

- Practical: Keep a Bible in the car or Bible on CD. Scripture memory cards (3x5)
4. **Tell (write them)** (v. 9, 13)... Be invested!
- This harkens back to Passover in (*Ex. 13: 9, 11*) of God’s protection and provision. The writing on the doorpost marked with blood saved the 1<sup>st</sup> born of every family. Egyptians thought the death angel was coming for #2 son next. (*Ex. 12:33 – we shall all be dead*). They thought that if Pharaoh continued to be stubborn, the angel would eventually kill everyone.
  - After Passover they are commanded to “tell”  
*Ex. 13:8 – “and you shall tell”; Prov. 3:6 – “In all your ways acknowledge Him”*
    - (1) Do other people know about your commitment to God? Is your gratefulness to God obvious? When people come to your house is there evidence of God? (ex. – pictures, Bible on the coffee table, prayer at meals, even with non-Christians.
    - (2) Are you a lighthouse in your neighborhood?

#### IV. The Plan: What spiritual legacy will you leave?

##### A. Focus on the **eternal** not just the external!

1. I was challenged by my youth pastor in H.S, “What will last for eternity”? The answer: The Word of God and people. Is what I am doing having an eternal impact? Does my family see something different in me?
2. Don’t take spiritual shortcuts.
  - Skipping quiet time
  - Hurried prayer
  - Lack of solitude/reflection

3. The time and energy you are investing in your family and in your walk with God are worth it! Your investment in your marriage or children is making a difference, even if no one else sees it!
- B. Spend your **time** not just your treasure on the things that are truly important! Kids spell love T.I.M.E. They don't care how much time you spent in the office or who you know or ultimately what you buy them. Redeem the time. Is what you are doing, really that important? The ministry of presence... just being there!

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