

Sept. 1-2, 2012

Deuteronomy 6:1-12: Back To School

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Announce "Come to Carson"

Communion

Introduction:

The first couple weeks of school were always the most exciting before the mundane set in and the homework piled up along with the pressure that only kids understand.

As parents, many of you eager wait for the day that the new school year begins. Whoever created compulsory education and public education is a true hero, as far as you're concerned. It has been said that if there were no schools to take the children away from home part of the time, the insane asylums would be filled with mothers.

It was on an early September afternoon that I remember sitting on bus going home from school and thinking about how big 4th graders were. They were tall, they were cool, and they seemed grown up from my 2nd grade perspective.

But then two years later there I was a 4th grader, and now I was looking up the 6th graders. As a Freshman in high school the Seniors obviously were living the life – they had the cars, the varsity positions on the teams, they had the letterman's jackets, the jobs, the parties and the girlfriends.

This feeling perpetuated every September of my childhood. Moving up a grade each fall signified growth – I was now older, stronger, faster, more independent and more mature (hopefully).

Each September I would have some new clothes, new school supplies, a new schedule, a new cross country team, and I would attend orientation where I would hear the rules and the secrets

to having another successful year. There was a sense of **arrival** that I felt with each new year.

As an adult, I miss the benchmark of a new grade and a new year to signify another leap of growth and maturity. We are supposed to be growing up spiritually but that process is unclear, obscure or even invisible to ourselves, although some people notice it more or less than others.

But let's assume that this *is* a new season. In fact, this is the day that the Lord has made. Now is the day of salvation. September marks a new grade in God's plan for our lives and He is willing to invest in you and in me through His power and presence, to bless us and to change us for the better. What would He tell us, to help us grow and live the coming season to the maximum? What would He tell us about our own children and families?

A good place to look is in the speech that Moses gave to Israel just before they crossed the Jordan River and entered into the Promised Land. They are about to begin a new chapter in their growth as a nation – a new grade and a new season is about to begin. They are moving from a season of immaturity, struggle and wandering in tents, to a time now where they will have land and cities and homes. God's will for them is blessing, prosperity, and joy, but experiencing those things will depend on their choices and actions. This speech includes 4 timeless actions that will cause every person to grow quickly and consistently.

Deuteronomy 6

I. (Vss. 1-3)

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, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

What commands is he referring to? Primarily, he is referring to the ten commandments that given in the previous chapter.

Here, he admonishes the people to observe and obey the word of God.

So that, you will fear the Lord. So that, your children and grandchildren will also live lives that include the values of the word of God. So that, you may enjoy long life. So that you may

increase in the promised land.

Obedience isn't a burden. It is a pathway to blessing. It is a way that is trustworthy.

The commandments of the Lord give us broad channels to live within. There is freedom within the commandments of God. They provide us with boundaries that would allow all people to live at peace with one another. They tell us what loving one another looks like.

God isn't the great joy killer. He is the great joy giver. There is joy in a life of obedience.

The words here "observe", "keep" and "obey" are all closely related. But observing requires focusing on something. I need to put the Bible in front of my eyes daily, getting it fresh into my thinking, in order to be able to keep and obey it.

Blessings come from observing and obeying the word of God. (eyes)

Four Actions for Consistent Growth:

1. ***Observe***

II. (Vss. 4-6)

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

The declaration of verse 4 is called "The Great Shema" – Shema being the Hebrew word meaning "Hear". It is a call to listen up. It is the motto of the Hebrew faith, proclaiming their monotheism, and also it serves as a reminder to us that our God is triune, with an emphasis on the unity of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heidi and I just got back from a week and a half long vacation. The best part of it was spending a week with our two children. We had a great time together. But what if a parent's relationship with their child was only about helping that child have a good life? What if the parent was there to meet every demand of the child?: To make them happy: To get them a job. To help them feel better. To give them money. And what if that relationship went on like that year, after year, after year. The parent loves the child unconditionally, but...what is wrong? The relationship isn't healthy.

We would call that dysfunctional. Why? What is missing from the relationship? There is one important ingredient. The child must love the parent. Then the relationship becomes healthy. Love is meant to be shared. If it isn't, it is heartbreaking.

How are you doing at loving God?

I see that in my relationship with God, I can be like that demanding child.

There is one thing that the Lord wants of us more than anything else. He isn't calling us to a cold obedience. There is one quality that is to make up the life of a follower of Christ that is more evident than anything else. There is one passion in life that is override all other passions and pursuits. There is one love that we are called to. We are called to

Love God deeply and passionately (heart)

Four Actions for Consistent Growth:

2. Second action: Love

We know from the teaching of Jesus that we love God by loving people. Loving God requires that we love people.

And the expression of this love is not casual. It isn't boring. It isn't nonchalant. It is with all of our

Heart

Soul (intellect emotions and will)

(Mind)

Strength

This most important command affects the way I praise the Lord.

This command affects the way I pray.

This command affects the way I read the word of God.

This command affects the way I volunteer and serve others.

III. (Vss. 7-9)

⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Phylacteries: little boxes held on by leather straps

Mezuzah: The small boxes containing Scripture which you find on the doorposts of Jews.

Orthodox Jews do this. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for doing this because He said these practices had become expressions of self righteousness.

What the Lord wants is He wants the word on us – in us. Bound to our minds. Rooted into our thinking. If that happens, it will be easy to talk about the Lord.

When you're in love, you talk about the one that you love. You can't help it.

Discipleship takes place when we talk to one another about the Lord.

Discipleship is not meant for a classroom. It is meant for the real world.

The best times for discipleship in our house, with our children were:

Bedtime stories.

In the car (music and stories).

After church using the take home pages from Sunday school.

Around the table.

Playing Christian music.

That kind of environment will build a strong foundation in a child.

Example: The story of Talia. A girl who was adopted by a family when she was three years old. She had been kept in a terrible orphanage in Russia where she was literally tied to her bed every day and night. She was adopted by a Christian family in the Bay Area. She had never been in a quiet home and she couldn't sleep at night. She wouldn't speak. She was far behind developmentally in every way. Her parents purchased the New Testament on CD and would play it for her at night. 13 years later, she still goes to sleep that way and she now has the entire New Testament memorized...and she is well adjusted and loves God.

It was the word of God that healed her.

God has designed the home to be the redemptive center of the world. Not church buildings, but rather our dwelling places.

Create a culture of discipleship in your home (mouth)

Four Actions for Consistent Growth:

3. Third action: Teach

IV. (Vss. 10-12)

¹⁰ *When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, ¹¹ houses filled*

with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant—then when you eat and are satisfied,¹² be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

We are forgetful people...

Forget and you will neglect.

The Lord never forgets us.

On the first day of our vacation we were driving north to Oakland, Oregon, where my Father in law lives. We had some extra time...

Remember where you've come from and where the blessings have come from. (mind)

Four Actions for Consistent Growth:

4. ***Fourth action: Remember***

Four actions that are a part of every person who is growing in Christ:

- Observe
- Love
- Teach
- Remember

Be blessed by doing what it takes to keep your relationship with Jesus strong.

On the last day of the Olympics...mountain biking...the road turned into a trail. The trail then was washed out and soon was overgrown. Yes, there had been a road there at one time, but the road was mostly gone. Without these actions my life, the wilderness begins to encroach. Weeds begin to spring up.

These are the actions that cultivate my heart. They till the soil of my life – spiritually, emotionally,

The Holy Spirit is the one who makes this all possible. It is His efforts, combined with our cooperation, that makes all of these things happen.

- **Invitation**
- **Communion: Have people take communion as the trays are passed during the last song at the close of the service**

Announce: Next series, and Come to Carson