

Family Issues #5 – A Home of Loyalty (*Deuteronomy 6*)

Introduction – As parents, we are not simply trying to get our children to conform to a set of standards we believe to be biblical (which is, in fact, not biblical). The task is to lead our children in the fear of the Lord, and the love of God from whole hearts. Loyalty to the Lord and loyalty to the family in the Lord is the center of the task of godly child-rearing.

An Overview of the Chapter – This sermon, coming after the giving of the Ten Commandments, highlights the need for personal and familial loyalty to the Lord.

God Has Commanded and Promised (vv 1-3) – The covenant community of believers shall live according to the Word of the Lord and He in turn will provide great blessings (Ps 16:11, 68:19). Fear of the Lord moves us to obedience.

The Shema (v4) – Christ told us this was the greatest commandment and that the second was like it. Fear and love are both a part of obedience. Our love for God is a weighty love; it is tangible, objective, full of affection, and obvious to all around.

Reminding, Teaching, Applying (vv5-9) – That weighty loyalty, which pervades all of our lives, is to be passed on to our children. We must teach them in all situations and at all times.

Do Not Forget His Kindness (vv 10-19) – The temptation when we are blessed is that we will forget the Lord. The temptation in trials will be to tempt the Lord with our stiff-necked complaining and lack of trust in Him. The temptation will also be to neglect teaching our children in fat times and lean times to trust, fear, love, and serve God.

Do Not Let Your Children Forget (vv20-25) – Even though this next generation was not there when Israel was brought out of Egypt, Moses instructs the parents to teach the children that ‘we were brought out of Egypt.’ Your children need to understand that this is a Christian home, we are a Christian people, and we serve the Lord. They need to understand, see, feel, touch, and smell the difference and then grow in it themselves by grace through faith.

The Context of Loyalty: Love – Seeing the chapter as a whole, we see that the Lord’s requirement for obedience is given in the context of His love upon us. He loved us in our unloveliness (Rom 5:8). Husbands love their wives and make them lovely. Parents love their children and, in that context, require and are promised loyalty. The aroma of our covenant with God is grace, favor, and lovingkindness. This must be the aroma of our home.

Central to the Home: Love God – We are to bring our children up “in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6). Fundamentally, this means we are to teach our children to believe God. In the context of God’s promises to our children, we should not teach them to doubt when they say they love God. We should do all we can to encourage that with all the weightiness of the Shema.

Discipline in the Context of Love and Loyalty – Now, when the rules are broken, the child sees in the discipline a break in fellowship, not a loss of status. He sees that he has broken God’s laws; he is not being disciplined because he irritated or embarrassed his Dad. He sees Dad and Mom remain spiritually qualified to administer God’s instruction (Gal 6:1). He hears and sees forgiveness given, fellowship restored, and joy returned. In the end, discipline becomes a great cleansing agent, and a time of fruit (Heb 12:11).

Loyalty Taught in all the Corners – We should look at Deut 6:5-9 again. Informal education and quantity time are the only way to accomplish this task. They must see and hear in your day-to-day activities, “this is what I mean to be honest, to be kind, to not complain, to defer to others, to believe the best, to trust God, to confess your sin, to respect your Mother...” The great double-edged sword of informal education is that you are always teaching – truths or lies about God and about covenant loyalty. The number one reason kids leave the church has to be the hypocrisy they saw in their own home.

“Teach Diligently” (Deut 6:7) - This verb means to sharpen, and has the idea of constant, over and over again sharpening, as of a weapon being prepared for battle. Yes, Psalm 127 should come to mind.

Incarnational Loyalty – When Jesus quotes this greatest commandment, He is quick to add the second greatest. Godly loyalty wears a particular garb and speaks in a particular way. It is not simply down ‘in our heart.’ How you speak to your wife and how your children speak to their mother measures their loyalty. Their ‘need’ or lack thereof to individually express themselves with rebellious clothing, hairstyles, or piercings, is nothing more than additional measurements.

Loyalty That Produces Humility – Diligent parents often attempt to do their childrearing by the book, but not by grace through faith. Faithful parents confess their shortcomings, and give the glory to God alone for every fruit that is given. There is no back-slapping and no sidelong glances. Faithful parents begin and end their work by faith – faith in the promises of God.

The Shaping of Loyalty – Most of what your children will become will not be due to those super-memorable moments, special events, and carefully thought out teaching times. Most of what your children will become will be due to the atmosphere, the aroma, of your home. Does it smell of fear and love for the Lord? Does it explode in joy, forgiveness, grace, and love because of all that Christ has done for you? Is the standard of God’s law central in discipline and discipling because the love from and for God is central and objectively noticeable in all that you say and do? This is how you live in the promises of God. This is how you train and admonish your children in the Lord.