

# When Moses Speaks To Parents

## Introduction

- A. Turn to **Deuteronomy 6:1-9**. As the time draws near for Heidi and I to leave Dowlen Road, my mind has turned for the last few weeks to what I might do with the precious few opportunities I have left to study with you between now and September.
1. One of the very first things that came to my mind is that I would like one more chance to say something about our kids.
    - a. For those of you who've been around for the last nine years, you know that I like to talk about kids.
    - b. If my count is correct, I've preached almost fifty sermons that were specifically for our kids or about our kids.
  2. I've been pretty open with you about why I chose do that; why all of us have to lot to say about our youth in our teaching.
    - a. Our young people constitute the most at rick group among us.
    - b. Over the next 25 years, we will not lose very many of our people who are in their 30's, 40's and 50's.
    - c. But if we are just average, we will lose 60-70% of our youth.
    - d. We must do better than this!
  3. And so, we've talked a lot over the years we have worked together about our kids and how to inspire them to serve the Lord.
  4. As we begin to draw our work together to a close, I'd like take this chance to touch on that subject again.
- B. I have chosen as my text the words of Moses to Israelite parents in Deuteronomy 6.
1. I feel some connection with Moses as he writes these words.
    - a. He was saying goodbye to people he loved. Deuteronomy is his farewell address to the nation. He was about to die and they would enter Canaan without him.
    - b. But as he writers, he is concerned about the kids (**6:1-3**).
  2. As I think about saying goodbye, I'm thinking about all the kids who have come to be so special to me. I'm thinking about the awesome duty we have to bring up our kids to know and serve the Lord.

3. I'd like for you to think with me about some of the things Moses says in this passage to Israelite parents as they are about to enter the promise land.
  - a. Lots of books have been written on parenting. I've read some of them. But you'll never find one that will improve on the simple counsel the Holy Spirit gives these parents through His servant Moses.
  - b. There are five admonitions that he gives that I want you to note with me.

## **"love the Lord your God with all your heart" (vs. 4-5)**

- A. A friend of mine taught for several years at Florida College. This is a small school in Tampa where almost all of the students are Christians.
  1. Although the vast majority of these kids grew up in homes where they attended services every Sunday, he we struck with how different they were spiritually. Some were very strong, but others very weak.
  2. He began talking to the kids he judged to be strong to see if he could determine what made them that way.
  3. He found one common thread. It was not the size of the congregation or some special plan for family Bible study. The one thing all of the strong kids shared was the belief that their mom and dad loved God and wanted to place Him more than anything else.
- B. His discovery takes my mind back to these words spoken by Moses (**vs. 4-5**).
  1. This is where it all begins.
    - a. If I want my kids to love God, then I need to love God. My faith, my trust, and my respect for Him...it all has to be real!
    - b. I cannot pass on to them what I do not first possess myself.
  2. And they will know.
    - a. We can fool others. We can put on a jacket and tie or a nice dress each Sunday and teach Bible classes and sing. Everyone else may believe we are sincere and devout.
    - b. But our kids live with us every day, on the good days and the bad days. They are with us when we come here to worship, but they are also with us behind the closed doors of our homes. They know the truth.
  3. Let me also emphasize that it isn't one big thing we say or do that will make the difference. Instead, our love for God will be communicated to them through thousands of little things that go on every day at our house.
    - a. The apology for harsh words spoken in anger

- b. The food being loaded in the back of the car to take to someone who just got out of the hospital
- c. The extra hundred miles driven to worship with a congregation of twelve people while on vacation
- d. The stranger that dad met at Walmart who came over Thursday night for Bible study at our kitchen table

Summary: If we want to give our kids a tremendous spiritual advantage in life, we need to be real. We need to make sure that our love and devotion to God is genuine.

## “these words...shall be on your heart” (vs. 6)

- A. Moses narrows his focus in this next verse.
  - 1. One way that love for God expresses itself is in our passion for His word.
    - a. Let’s be clear on this point, you cannot love God without loving His word.
    - b. In fact, one of the most important ways we demonstrate our love and devotion to God is by learning his word and doing what He said (**John 8:31; 14:15**).
    - c. There is an inseparable link between love for God, and love for His word.
  - 2. And so, in verse 6 Moses tells Israel to have these words on their heart. But what does that mean?
    - a. My mind immediately goes to David and some of the things he said about the law of God in **Psalm 119**.
      - 1) **Vs. 123-125**, He wanted to know God’s word.
      - 2) **V. 97**, As he went through his day, the law of God is on his mind; it shares his thoughts with everything else going on.
      - 3) **V. 148**, He looked forward to the evening when the day slowed down and he could let his mind leave the business of being king and dwell on God’s words.
    - b. To put it simply, they needed to get to know the law and think about it all the time.
- B. So, what should I carry away from this admonition? If I want my kids to have God’s word on their heart, if I want them to desire to know the Bible and do what it says, then I need to have it on our hearts.

1. I just don't think we will be very effective at passing on to our kids what we do not possess ourselves. If I'm not excited about knowing God's word and thinking about it all the time, I'm going to have a hard time getting my kids to be that way.
2. Again, this has to be real; I can't fake this. It's about a thousand little things every day that say to my kids, "I have God's word on my heart."
  - a. Dad's Bible laying open on the coffee table with the Bible reading scheduled on top
  - b. Catching mom at the breakfast table on Tuesday morning filling out questions in a lesson book for Bible class
  - c. The conversations that keep finding their way back to God, whether we are talking about the sermon that Sunday morning or the movie we are planning to see Friday night

Summary: If we want our kids to have God's word on their heart – to be thinking about what He would want when someone hands them a beer or tempts them to have sex, then I need to make sure that it's on my heart.

## **"you shall teach them diligently to your sons" (vs. 7)**

- A. Remember that Moses is concerned about future generations keeping the commandments of God (**6:2**).
  1. Bringing this down to a very practical level, if that was going to happen, then someone would have to teach them the law. There would be other teachers among the people (priests, prophets), but the center of this teaching was to be the home and parents were to do the teaching.
  2. The same this is true for us.
    - a. Kids can come to services and sit at the feet of Bible class teachers and listen to preacher present lessons.
    - b. But the primary place where God's word is to be learned is at home and parents are to serve as the primary teacher (**Ephesians 6:4**).
    - c. My kids ought to hear far more about God and His will FROM ME than they do for any other source.
- B. What should this teaching look like at my house?
  1. It certainly not the same with every family.

- a. Some parents have formal family Bible studies. They pick a time (at the breakfast table; before bed time) and they get together with their kids for an hour or so and study the Bible.
  - b. Some parents use Bible class lessons as a launching point for Bible discussions with their kids. They sit down a couple of times each week and go over the lesson together.
  - c. Others talk use the Bible reading for that day to talk with their kids about scripture.
  - d. Over the years that our kids were at home we used a number of different approaches.
2. But the bottom line is this: if I want my kids to know the commandments of God for their lives, then I've got to be busy teaching the Bible at my house.
- a. It's great to have a strong Bible class program and relevant lessons for kids from this pulpit. It's great to have all kinds of extra devotions and weekend studies for kids.
  - b. But let's be clear on one point. The battle for my kids will not be won or lost at this building. It will all boil down to what I do (or don't do) at my house.
  - c. In fact, we are living in a time when there are more resources to help parents with this task than there have ever been. There is no reason not to be teaching our kids at home.
  - d. Moses will go on to add another critical dimension to this teaching work of parents...

## **“talk of them when you sit in your house” (vs. 7)**

- A. I believe there are two dimensions of teaching being described in this verse.
1. First, the first I think is intended to be a bit more formal where mom and dad actually instruct their kids about the law.
  2. But second, there were also to be more informal moments where that teaching is brought to bear on real life circumstances.
- B. We understand that.
1. We might have moments when we sit down talk about the Bible reading or go over a Bible class lesson.
  2. But just as important, we need to seize those teachable moments that pop up almost every day where we can apply God's word to real situations. Do you see why it's so important to have God's word on your heart?

3. Don't let these pass by...they are too valuable.
  - a. When you're watching TV and there is some hidden message promoting homosexuality, pause the program, get your Bible and talk to your kids about what's biblically wrong with that message.
  - b. When they preparing for a date, take five minutes to have a quiet conversation about some of the biblical principles that should guide their behavior when they are out.
  - c. When you have to say "no" to that party or movie or hanging out with that friend, take the time to pull out the book and show them why.
4. In fact, when you really start trying to do this, you will find opportunities all over the place to bring God and His word to bear on all the stuff going on in their life.

## **"write them on the doorposts of your house" (vs. 8-9)**

- A. The Jews of Jesus' day completely missed the point of this passage.
  1. They would literally put little pieces of scripture into small boxes or phylacteries that they would bind to their arm and forehead.
  2. Moses was not suggesting that they literally bind the scripture their forehead. He was saying that the law of God was to be kept in front of them all the time.
  3. Whatever parents could do to get God's law in front of their children, they needed to do this!
- B. Does that challenge us?
  1. Parents keep all kinds of things in front of their kids.
    - a. We fuss about their grades. We sit down at the breakfast table and make sure homework is finished. We post good report cards on the refrigerator.
    - b. We fuss about baseball and football skills. We get out and practice in the backyard. We watch the pros together on TV to see the right way to do it. We video tape games and even check on eight-year-olds stats. We talk for the next three days about mistakes that were made in a loss.
    - c. We even have our favorite TV shows. We talk about the best and worst from American idol and who should get eliminated this week.
  2. Let me just impose a little perspective on all of us.
    - a. Your kid isn't going to play pro baseball and his education will only have limited value to him. I won't even mention idol.

- b. What will make a difference both now and forever is what He knows about God and His will for my kid's life.
- c. Is this what I'm putting in front of my kids every day!? Or is the atmosphere at our house filled with stuff that does not matter?
- d. For those who refuse to hear the wisdom of the Holy Spirit through Moses, there will be a price in grief to pay.

**Conclusion: Maybe you need to take some step today to demonstrate what is truly important to you.**