

Topic	Building Gospel Centered Families
Reference	Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25
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The bigger picture of the context, this is what people call us the Shema and you don't need to be a scholar to know this. There are three texts in the Torah, which begin with this word, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, The Lord is one'. They are known as the Shema and or Jewish friends practice this. Now the 'shema' is a call to prayer. In Jewish literature, they call it Shema Yahveh or Shema Israel. Now that is taken from a larger picture known as the decalogue and that is simply coming from two words that are in chapter 5, deca and logue, which is logos, which means the word of God. The decalogue is simply the Ten Commandments. So the way to understand this text, is to understand it in context of the Ten Commandments and to understand it in this very strong declaration against idolatry. That is our framework that we are going to do and basically what Moses is teaching us is to move the Ten Commandments from a contract to a covenant. That's the misunderstanding, from tablets of stone to heart and that's why the ten commandments he reminds them, you know what, no point memorizing it if you don't love the lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength. No point in saying that you have done all the ten commandments, if the intent to love God is not there. So it reminds us that the Ten Commandments is covenant driven and it requires every inch of you, your heart which has been renewed by the mind, the soul. In Ancient Hebrew it means every part of a person's being and the might which means the willpower. Think of it like a marriage and God wants the Ten Commandments to be like a marriage to us. So if you so in love with God, all of these things flow well.

I just want to take you through a few parts of verse 7 and I want to see whether you pick up a continuity, a common denominator, impress them on your children, talk about them when you sit at home...write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

The commandment is given in verse 5

⁵ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

How do you do it? Verse 6 to 8 tells you how to do it.

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 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.

That's how you break it. We are not talking about a church here, so this great commandment to love your Lord, your God, this fills every part of the scripture. Jesus says I come to fulfil it. The starting point is not church, it is home. So here is one very big misunderstanding, we think discipleship begins in the church, it doesn't, it begins at home. Asians have a habit of subcontracting everything. So for our children's spiritual needs, we subcontract out to Sunday School. We think that our job is to bring the bread home and we neglect the spiritual nourishment of our children. The verse is very clear, impress them on your children. It didn't say, go and talk to the Sunday School or the Youth and ask them to teach your children. So God gives you the way, talk about them when you sit, when you walk, when you lie down and when you get up. He is basically saying, make loving God your DNA at home. Infuse it so much into your family life, because they always say children see, children do. If children see you having a certain behavior at home, inconsistent with your behavior in church, you can be a preacher in FBC, it has no value to them. Because children learn how to adapt and they won't tell you because you are going to whack them, so they keep quiet.

This morning I am not going to make this a parenting thing, but this applies to any family member, especially if they are not Christians. Your children see you and that's why the text tells you, walk, lie down, get up, sit, every single activity. Why do we have a problem with this? Because we have another issue. In the New Testament, they like to talk about this heresy known as agnosticism. It is the thing when you divide your world into two parts, without going to the philosophical. Agnosticism, one part is where I am all very holy, this part, the bodily part doesn't matter. It actually comes from a Greek thinking from Plato. We all practice this philosophy.

The problem with us is that we have separated the world. We think discipleship is on Sundays where we do prayer and small group meetings and we are trying to be authentic and worship. I am telling you, it is not what Deuteronomy said. Deuteronomy says, it is on your week days, when you work, when you do all these things, they are discipleship and the starting point is the family. Discipleship begins also involves the church, but here is the problem. When does it involve the church? It is normally when you have a problem. So suddenly a guy's marriage breaks down, they may call the church because they don't know where else to go, can you help. Certainly the issue with parenting, they call the church and says, can you help. So only when it is at the crisis mode the church comes in.

now what Deuteronomy is telling you that we should learn to do prescriptive and preventive, meaning don't wait until your family life is a complete mess before you call the pastors or the elders.

If you take care of your health, you don't need to see the doctor so much. So if you take care of your family lives according to scripture, the chances of your marriage life breaking down, your parenting issues having problems is less. In fact, that's a very strong indicator on this verse in this which I am going to tell you in the second point, but God wants you in this text to have a good family life, a healthy family life. Sometimes, you can't avoid it. They go to school and they learn bad things, you have issues. A lot of times we just want to keep it to ourselves and we don't share with other fellow believers.

We have to start by opening up, now that takes courage, it takes confidentiality and that's why this is called a family life ministry. The church wants to help if you would come alongside. Together as a spiritual family, we can come and help you. Why? Because Deuteronomy is tied to the story of the Exodus and the next text tells us, when you ask

Deuteronomy 6:20-25 (NIV)

20 In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" 21 tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Before our eyes the Lord sent signs and wonders—great and terrible—on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. 23 But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. 24 The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. 25 And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

The exodus rescue involves family or to be more accurate, the gospel rescue a family.

- *What are the greatest needs of families in FBC?*
- *How do we gently deal with sin in families?*
- *How do we teach family members to love each other as Christ did?*
- *When we relate to others in FBC, do we consider their spouses, their children, their parents, etc.?*
- *How do we support those with difficult marriages, those who have divorced, etc.?*

- *How do we make widows, struggling singles, struggling childless couples NOT feel like they are 2nd class members of FBC?*
- *How do we assist parents with children who believe they are gay?*
- *How do we assist to transition empty Nesters to their new phase in life?*

We have to disciple in every aspect of our lives.

Francis Chan was born in 1967. His mother died giving birth to him. After being raised by his Buddhist grandmother in Hong Kong, he came to America at the age of 5. His father remarried, and then his step mother died in a car accident when he was 9. Then his father died of cancer when he was 12 years old. The only close relatives he had were his aunt and uncle. But when he was in high school, his aunt and uncle got in a fight, and his uncle shot his wife then killed himself. The losses were profound. Physical and verbal affection in his family, particularly from his father, was rare. His only memory of affection from his dad came when he and his father were on the way to his stepmother's funeral, and his father put his arm around him for about 30 seconds.

If my life was like this, me being such a soft tempered person, I would have gone into depression and if you are honest with yourself most of us have gone into depression, because Francis Chan basically had a very rough childhood. He is one of the mostly godly person nowadays. What happened to shift this man from such a dysfunctional family to becoming a model example, he will tell you that somebody stood in the gap. In fact, two people stood in the gap, one applies to all of you, spiritual family. We church have to love those who are aliens, because previously we were also aliens. So it is our job to be the spiritual family to those around us, who are unfortunate enough to have bad families. It is not the job to be subcontracted out to the counseling department or the elders or the pastors. Francis Chan was able to turn his life around because the church stood in the gap and today here I will tell you many in our midst suffer and they suffer quietly, why because they think people either in FBC don't care or they talk too much. So we have work to do.

The other group was his relatives, Christian relatives. So here is your job. You can show love to people in your family, uncles, aunty, sons and parents, anyone who struggle. If you cannot start off in your family, in my view you come to church and you can do all your Christian stuff, it has compartmentalization.

24 The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.

When you honor your father and mother you may live long and go well. What is the commandment telling you? It is not about prospering, it is about continuity because if your family is bad there is no continuity but if your family is healthy there is continuity from generation to generation. We see this in the first line in verse 20 in the future.

DEVELOP A GENERATIONAL MINDSET

We all don't have this, in a church we have another mindset which is my own kind mindset.

2 Timothy 1:5: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you."

Timothy became a godly man because of his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois. Very likely they were widows. So it means even if some people don't stand in the gap, you can stand in the gap. That's why woman in many ways are much more empathetic than man, because man just find their actualization in work. To a man their sense of being is work, everything else is not important. So grandmother stood in the gap and this is the continuity. Eunice comes in because grandmother influenced mother, mother than influences son, who takes over after that, Paul. That's family and church, joint venture. So families and church have to work together for discipleship.

Generational Case study: Jacob- nature or nurture?

The classic story that answers this is the story of the two sons, Jacob and Esau, because the story tells us that Esau came out first and Jacob at the back caught him. The whole idea was that, this family, there is a family line of being manipulative. Abraham was a liar, he lied to pharaoh about his wife, Isaac exact template lied, he was a manipulator and you go on it spikes in Jacob, it goes onto Joseph. So this family line has one particular sin, it is called they are manipulators and it extends to the extended family like Laban and all of that, the relatives are also manipulators. But here is my question to you? Is Jacob the deceiver is because of nature or nurture or is it a combination of both. It is both. How do we know it is a combination of both? Because of this story, because the mom favors Jacob

Genesis 27:5-10

5 Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring me some

game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.' 8 Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: 9 Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. 10 Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies."

They call this controlling parent. It is the controlling parent persona. John Calvin in his exegesis says, it is the misplaced sense of martyrdom, it is the martyr persona and it goes back to the first commandment, because you are now taking God as an idol. The third persona is the victim. In psychology they call it the Karpman's Drama Triangle, because there are three personas here. There is a persecutor who dominates, that's the controlling part of Rebecca. There is the rescuer, don't worry I will help you let the curse fall on me. Then there is the victim.

In toxic relationships you feel defeated all the time and I would tell you, it is the church job to step in. That's why we do study a bit of psychology because we are not equipped. God reveals himself in the scripture and he specifically reveals himself in science but scripture dominates. Under the cross, we are all sinners. Jesus is our cure.

- **Parental Mindset** – care for others as God the Father loved us.
- **Adult Mindset**- to be a mature disciple of Christ.
- **Child Mindset**- to have the total dependency of a child in our faith walk.

CONNECT TO YOUR FAMILY TO CONNECT THEM TO THE GOSPEL.

In the end we must always understand one thing. The challenge to all of us this, because the Shema commandment is about a commandment against idolatry that means God is first, everything else is second. Can we honestly say that we love God more than our own family. The story of Isaac is this, why is it discipleship because God first and if I cannot surrender my wife, my husband, my children, my parents to God we dishonor him, and God is a good God. The story of Isaac is that, you give it back to God, God gives back in return.

20 In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" 6:20

You got to have your family members to open their hearts, you don't get them to open their hearts, you put any structure in there, they just go in through the emotions. How do we do it?

First, we don't do it by artificially trying to legally force people into all this Christian stuff. We start by engaging in conversations and what the text is telling you, is what they call a bouncing ball discussion. To get your children or your parents or your spouse to go into a deep conversation, it has to be through and back. What we do is that, we don't know how to connect from simple conversations to deep conversations. The text is telling us that we need to be able to have a platform to bounce. They call it bouncing ball discussion. You have to cultivate a family culture inquiry. You have to be ready at all times to answer hard questions from your children, you practice gratitude for salvation at home and verse 10 tells us, remember and don't be so arrogant. Your family blessings are not due to you.

When the shema was a given, there was a TED and the whole of Israel gathered around it and God shown his light and any family who had problem looked at the light and they knew where to go and as the Israelites journeyed along in their pilgrimage of life, God went before them in the cloud, a pillar of cloud in the night and fire. So whenever they struggle with their children, with their family, they looked at that pillar of fire, they look at the cloud and they say I turn to Yahweh.

Everyone here should be able to turn to the church, because we are that representation. As all of us go on this journey, in this Exodus in our faith, all of you who struggle, you should be able to turn to the church and the church will then connect you to Christ and together as a spiritual family we will walk together with all our issues.