



A Parent's First Priority
Sermon Discussion Guide
February 11, 2018

Ice Breaker: Name someone who had a great influence on you growing up. What about that person and your relationship impacted you?

Open in prayer

- What kind of future do you want your kids to have, or if you don't have children, what kind of future do you hope the next generation has?
- What is one of the biggest/memorable lessons you learned from your parents or those who raised you?
- How can people without children support the children (and parents) in the Body of Christ?

The Big Idea: As parents we have many hopes and dreams for our children, but none of them are as important raising our children to serve Jesus. Our first priority must be to teach them to love God with all of their hearts.

Pastor Loren said, all parents -- atheists and agnostics and Buddhists, etc -- want their children to be well-rounded, moral, happy and productive members of society. As Christians, how and why should our desires for our children differ?

We have a completely different purpose and authority in life! That purpose is to love and obey Jesus!

Background - In Deuteronomy 6 Moses is talking to the generation that is about to enter the Promised Land. They have seen God do great things. They were miraculously delivered from Egyptian slavery. God has provided and protected them in the wilderness. You can imagine the excitement and anticipation of reaching their destination and receiving their promise.

However, Moses is concerned. He is concerned about what happens to the people when they enter the Promised Land. In other words, what happens spiritually when things are good? Will they continue to follow God? Will they continue to serve Him? Will they stay faithful to God in the good times?

Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9



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- Why do you think Moses focuses his advice on family behavior and expectations?
- What role does family play in God's design for humanity? Salvation?
- Read this quote and discuss its implications: It's a simple truth but profound and consequential for our perspective as parents: We're raising worshipers. Tripp goes so far as to say that your children's capacity to worship is "the most important biblical insight for parents" (157). Our children need redemption because they're idolaters. "The danger that makes parenting both essential and difficult lives inside your child, not outside him" (105). The hearts of our children have loves, and what our children love will determine what they worship. What they worship will then determine what they do. For the parent, being "an instrument of change means getting at worship issues with your child" (150).¹

Four roles of parents in raising influencing their children for Jesus.

1. Love God with all of your heart, soul, and strength.

Love the Lord your God with EVERYthing.

- How are love and obedience connected in our lives? How was love and obedience connected in Jesus' life?

John 14:15: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

In the Hebrew language the heart was the seat of the intellect, the rational part of the person. The Hebrew understanding of the heart includes what we would consider the mind. Second, we're told to love God with all of our soul. This is mainly referring to our will and our desires. And then, lastly, love God with all of our might, or strength. This refers to the physical side of the person.

- What does it look like to love God with all of our heart? Mind? Soul? Strength?
- What is the difference between legalism and obedience?

2. Let the Word of God be constantly on your heart.

Before Moses talks about parenting, before he talks about impacting the next generation he talks about us. The best way to truly raise kids that love Jesus above all else, is by loving Jesus above all else ourselves!

¹ Parenting with a Big Gospel Picture. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/parenting/>



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“Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” (Joshua 1:8 NIV)

3. Leave a spiritual impression on the lives of your children.

- Who is someone who made a spiritual impact on your life. How?

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6 NIV)

Isaiah 55:11 (NKJV) - “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please...”

So, let's make an impression on our kids by what we love and by what we are genuinely faithful to.

4. Look for teachable moments.

convenient. If I don't allow God's Word to transform my life, they won't allow it to transform their life.

We are in the ultimate fight. This is more important than you being a success. It's more important than your career. It's more important than your hobbies or interests. This is our responsibility.

As you are attentive to your own spiritual growth, your children will notice. They will be learning an important lessons without you saying a word.

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4 NIV)

In the end, nothing matters more than your relationship with Jesus.

- It's never too late to start doing what is right.
- Trust the power of prayer
- Don't forget God's incredible grace and mercy
- He loves your kids more than you do!