



# TRUTH APPLICATIONS

Sermon Notes

## Making Disciples: Remember the Children (1)

Deuteronomy 6:1-19

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### Introduction

1. Mary Jane Kurtz tells how, as a young single mom of four, it was hard to get her children ready for church on Sunday. One Sunday, as the children complained and squabbled, she stomped from one room to the next, saying aloud why it was important to go to church as a family and have a good attitude. Then, she noticed all four children huddled together, laughing. "What's so funny?" she asked. "Mom," they said, "every time you slam down your foot, smoke comes out. It must be the wrath of God." In fact, it was the powder she had sprinkled in her shoes. But it made a point. They made it to church that Sunday and nearly every Sunday thereafter.<sup>1</sup>
2. Probably most of us who have been parents have had times when we would have been grateful for assistance from "the wrath of God," however inadvertent.
3. Christian child rearing is hard, a reality we often acknowledge.
  - a. How often have you heard that the church is "losing 50% of our young people"?
  - b. I know of few churches who have tracked and documented the faithfulness of their young people. So, in terms of hard numbers, we can ask about the accuracy of the "50%" claim.
  - c. But we have plenty of anecdotal evidence that leads us to believe we do have a significant problem. Most can think of specific people who were raised in church but left.
  - d. Here, then, is a matter we need to think about seriously as we think about making disciples.
4. While we know of specific cases where children have exercised their free will and/or been drawn away into unfaithfulness, we also know the principle declared in Proverbs 22:6 is generally true.
  - a. But we should stop and make sure we know what the principle in that verse really is.
    - 1) The word "train" has to do with dedicating something to a higher purpose, as we see in the other OT texts where the word is used (Deut 20:5; 1 Kings 8:63; 2 Chron 7:5).
    - 2) Seen in that light, is it possible that some of what has called "training" has been merely a *suggestion* to follow the Lord?
  - b. What, then, is true "training"? Our text answers that question. We will study it in two parts.

### Body

- I. Train Ourselves (vv 1-19).

<sup>1</sup> From Edward K. Rowell, ed., *Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal*, 80.

- A. In this text, many go straight to the issues of the uniqueness of God (vv 4-5) and the training of children (vv 6-7). But Moses began with “*the commandment*” (singular, *contra* NIV) (vv 1-6).
1. “The commandment” is best taken as the principle of God’s authority,<sup>2</sup> the application of which are “the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God has commanded me to teach...” (v 1).
  2. Before telling the people to pass on the commands, Moses told them to obey them.
    - a) That is what it means to “fear” (or reverence) God (v 2).
    - b) It is what is involved in “hearing” God (vv 3-4).
    - c) It is what it means to be dedicated to God (vv 5-6).
      - (1) The fact that the commands are to be “on [the] heart” of the parents’ generation is significant: “...that is, the people were to think on them and meditate about them, so that obedience would not be a matter of formal legalism, but a response based upon understanding” (Craigie, 170).
- B. Verses 8-19 are clear that this is not an occasional thing, a happenstance that depends on whether we can fit service to God into our busy schedules and leisure; it is something that we are expected to do consistently.
1. Verses 8-9, which may have been intended to be metaphorical (see Craigie, 171), show that the law of God is to be a daily and integral part of our lives.
  2. Verses 10-15 draw the contrast between allegiance to the true God and divine pretenders, the influence of whom is often more pernicious because it is more subtle.<sup>3</sup>
  3. Verses 16-19 remind us how easy it is to slip in our respect and obedience for God’s word.
- C. We cannot stress this point too much.
1. The reality is, if we are not as dedicated to following God as we say we are, our kids will see that and respond accordingly.
    - a) Illustration: most of my sons’ growing up years were spent with their dad serving as the one in charge of the Bible school program. When we traveled, Carlynn and I were especially conscious of the importance of attending Bible school. We were not concerned with “how many we can we miss and still be okay. We were conscious of the the deeper issue of consistency. If our sons saw that Bible school was important only when it was my “job” for it to be important, they could conclude that it was really not all that important, that our priority did not match our profession.
  2. The point is not perfection (one of the most best things we can do for our children is teach them to understand grace and forgiveness by modeling our own need for such things); the issue is consistency in our determination to obey and make God # 1.

### Conclusion

1. Robert Schmidgall said, “We teach what we know; we reproduce what we are.”<sup>4</sup>
2. Paul told the Corinthians that, as Christians, they were being transformed into the image of Jesus (2 Cor 3:18). Is that who are we becoming?

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<sup>2</sup> See Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 167.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 13 is of special interest here. As Craigie notes, “*You shall serve* is in contrast to the house of *slavery* [v 12]; both words are derived from the same root and contrast vividly the old man and the new masters of Israel” (173).

<sup>4</sup> Edward K. Rowell, ed., *Quotes & Idea Starters for Preaching & Teaching from Leadership Journal*, 47.