

“Talk of Them when You Sit in Your House”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Deut. 6:4-9 - The recipe for a healthy family. God, the Creator of the family gets to define a healthy family and what will make it so
 - 1. The family is the basic social unit around which everything in society revolves. As the family goes so goes society. If the family is undermined, the civilization will soon fall. A strong wholesome family is the strength of society.
 - 2. Common characteristics of healthy families:
 - a. They are committed to family unity.
 - b. They spend quality time together as a family.
 - c. They have good communication skills within the family.
 - d. They consistently express appreciation to each other.
 - e. They apply problem-solving skills in times of crisis.
 - f. They have a commitment to a wholesome spiritual life. (Nick Stinnett, PhD., University of Nebraska)
 - 3. Food tastes better when eaten with family; the hearth is warmer, the sleep more refreshing, the days are kinder. Family, where life begins and love never ends; a link to our past and a bridge to our future; we may not have it all together, but together we have it all. A happy family is but an early heaven.

I. RESPONSIBILITIES IN A HEALTHY FAMILY

- A. We must learn to love God before all others, including family - Deut. 6:4-5
 - 1. Deut. 6:4 is the “Shema,” which comes from the Hebrew command translated “Hear.”
 - 2. Literally the Hebrew is, “the Lord, our God, the Lord, one.” God is unique, one in essence and being, and alone is God. There are no other gods.
 - 3. God dealt with them in a consistent righteous standard contained in the Law of Moses.
 - 4. The word for God is plural (elohim), implying the Trinity, and “one” declares harmony in the Godhead.
 - 5. Our fundamental duty in life is to respond to His love - Deut. 6:5
 - a. Deut. 7:9, 10:12, 30:19-20
 - b. It has always been this way - 1John 4:16
- B. We must spend a lot of time thinking about God and His word - Deut. 6:6
 - 1. This is our first and facilitating responsibility. We are to keep His words in our heart, thinking about them, meditating on them, reflecting on them at great length.
 - 2. We cannot give our children what we do not possess. No one else can do it for us. Our children’s Bible classes and public school cannot assume that responsibility. It is our responsibility as parents. We are to love the Lord with all our heart and to share that love with our children.

3. Our children are watching us and modeling our attitudes and behaviors about Christ and His church. We cannot train up children to love the Lord with all their heart if we do not first know Him and love Him.

II. ROLE MODELS IN A HEALTHY FAMILY

- A. We must teach by means of our own manner of life - Deut. 6:7
 1. Teaching children by repetition runs throughout the book.
 2. "The commandments were to be the subject of conversation both inside and outside the home, from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. In summary, the commandments were to permeate every sphere of the life of man." (P. C. Craig)
 3. The word "diligently" means "to sharpen, to pierce through, to give a sharp edge, like sharpening a knife." It is an intensely strong command with the idea of an assertive teaching process in a family setting.
 4. The Amplified Bible: "You shall whet and sharpen them, so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently upon the minds and hearts of your children"
- B. We must talk about spiritual things in our homes.
 1. The emphasis is not on formal teaching and training, but in our casual conversation at home talk about the things of God. Let it be part of your lifestyle. Make it part of the comfortable family conversation, a natural part of daily life. Often, the only time some children hear their parents talk of the Lord, His church, His word, and Christians is when complaining about them.
 2. "When you sit in your house" at mealtime, cook outs, back packing, picnics, a walk in the park or in the woods, fishing, etc. Let your spontaneous conversations be about spiritual things. Leisure time
 3. "When you walk by the way" In the car, walking through the store, to work or to school.
 4. "When you lie down and rise up" those quiet moments before going to bed, at the breakfast table, in quiet moments at the beginning and end of the day
- C. We must make our lives and homes a book read by all - Deut. 6:8-9
 1. Moses is not talking about actually adorning ourselves with religious jewelry. Let God's Word be bound up in all we do and think. Our children as well as others see it written all over our lives. Our lives are open books read daily by our families. We don't need to wear a phylactery so that others will know we belong to the Lord
 2. We don't need a mezuzah (a small box containing a parchment of scripture) or a placard on our houses in order for our family and others to know we are the people of God.

III. REMEMBERING A HEALTHY FAMILY

- A. Jesus' home with parents committed to fully serving God - Luke 2:39
- B. Jesus' growing years following his parents' godly example - Luke 2:40-42
- C. Jesus' teen years with parents who worshiped God - Luke 2:43-52

IV. RESTORING HEALTH TO OUR FAMILIES

- A. What do you want for your child spiritually? Three common approaches:
1. The naive approach to spiritual influence. "I want my children to make up their own minds about religion when they are grown. I do not wish to impose my spiritual values on them."
 - a. Blindly assumes that there is no anti-spiritual influence exerted on the children.
 - b. Assumes the child or children will make an unprejudiced decision at 18 years of age.
 - c. A refusal to give spiritual guidance is tantamount to giving bad spiritual guidance
 2. The limited emphasis approach to spiritual influence. "We simply want to introduce our children to religion. We do not wish to overdo it."
 - a. The child is taught to serve God casually and intermittently
 3. The spiritual foundation approach. Spirituality is a way of life that surrounds the child.
 - a. He is taught to do spiritual things long before he understands spiritual ways. He is encouraged to ask why and understand why. The child is taught how to live for God, develop relationships, accept responsibility, and understand morals.
- B. What do you teach them by your example?
1. If the choice is between school work and worship or Bible study, which is the priority?
 2. If the choice is between fun and spirituality, what choice is made?
 3. Do you show them the joy of worship or the duty of assembly?
 4. Do you prepare to worship, or do you just get it out of the way?
 5. Do you speak of Christian works as an opportunity and privilege or as an irritating drudgery?
 6. Do you show them Christian work is a part of our nature, or do you teach them to do just enough to avoid criticism?
 7. Do you encourage them to get Bible lessons?
 8. Do you see them read the Bible and pray, as a result of them having seen you read the Bible and pray?
- C. What will be the result? - 2Tim. 1:5; 2Tim. 3:15