**A Father’s Legacy**

Deuteronomy 6:1 – 9

**Proposition:** Leaving a legacy of faith involves fearing God reverently, loving Him fervently and teaching our children diligently.

**Application:**

* We build into the next generation by letting our children see our awe and wonder at who God is and what He has done.
* We build into the next generation by loving the Lord our God with our whole being.
* We build into the next generation by teaching the love of God to our children and grandchildren in such a way that it goes deep into their hearts.

**Introduction**

Why Father’s Day? We all agree that Mother’s Day is a good idea. Mothers are renown for their love and their vital role in shaping a child’s life. But why Father’s Day? How did it come into being? Two concerned and caring mothers had much to do with bringing Father’s Day into existence.

One such woman was Jane Adams who wrote in 1911, “*Poor fathers have been left out in the cold. He doesn’t get much recognition. It would be a good thing if a father had a day that would give recognition to him.*” Another woman who helped make Father’s Day a reality was Sonora Louise Dodd of Spokane, Washington in 1910. She said her father was a “*kind and loving man*” who kept their family of six children together when her mother died. After hearing a sermon extolling the virtues of mothers, Mrs. Dodd suggested to the pastor that a day of recognition should also be set aside for fathers. The pastor presented the idea to other pastors in the region who then set aside the third Sunday in June for such a purpose. Sixty-two years later President Richard Nixon signed a bill into law designating Father’s Day as a national American holiday.

The passage we are looking at this morning is often deemed the *Magna Carta* (Great Charter) of the Christian home. It is a constitution that secures the well being of children in the purposes of God. It was first spoken to Moses who then relayed it to the people of Israel as they prepared to enter the land the Lord had given them.

But it also applies to us in the 21st century; especially to parents and more specifically to fathers whom the Lord has appointed as spiritual leaders in the home. From this passage we will explore how fathers and grand fathers can leave a legacy of faith for the next generation.

**Proposition:** Leaving a legacy of faith involves fearing God, loving God and teaching our children the Word of God.

**I. Fearing the Lord Reverently** (6:1 – 3)

*Commandment is singular* (6:1): Notice the word *commandment* is in the singular. God has given us one commandment. It will take a lifetime to get it right. Thankfully, God in His grace does not wait for us to get it right only that we should begin to work it out. Leaving a legacy of faith for the next generation rests on our devotion to this one commandment.

*First things first* (6:2, 3)*:* The word *fear* has the sense of *awe* and *reverence.* It carries the idea of wonder, amazement, and worship.

**Illustration:**  I was a biology student in college when I first became a Christian. I recall sitting in the library reading a boring Cell Biology textbook. I was amazed at the intricate and complex design of the cell.

Only a wise, powerful, and infinite God could engineer such an amazing machine. I was in awe. I recall getting up from the desk in the library looking for a quiet place where I could praise and worship God out of reverence for His wisdom and power.

**Read** Ps 8:3, 4

You may experience the *fear of the Lord* when you look up at the night sky and are awed by the immensity of space and the billions of stars. Such awe leads to reverence. The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom. It is where we must start if we are to discern the will of God.

**Illustration:** A person without the *fear of God* is like a homeowner who has title to a fully furnished house but does not have the key to enter the house. If the homeowner is barred from entering the house, they will never be able to enjoy the contents of the home.

The *fear of God* is the key that allows us to access the knowledge of God’s will. So that we may share His will with our children.

**Transition:** Leaving a legacy of faith involves fearing God reverently. But it also involves loving God fervently. Loving the Lord fervently begins by hearing the Lord properly.

**II. Loving the Lord Intimately** (6:4 – 6)

*Hear Properly* (6:4): What are we to hear? First, there is no God like our God. He is the God of creation. He is the God of Israel. He is the God of the Lord Jesus. He is the God of PBC. He is your God. He is my God. He is incomparable. He is incomprehensible.

There is no God like our God. He is *our* God means we can know Him personally.

What else are we to hear? That there is only one Lord. There is not a plethora of gods. There is only one God and He alone is worthy of our worship.

What else are we to hear? Not only that we can know God personally. Not only that He alone is worthy of our worship. But also that He is to be the One we most love.

*Love Intimately* (6:5): There is not a breathing person on this planet who does not love something or someone, even if that someone is self. We love our spouse, our children, our parents, our friends. We were created to love. But love for family and friends must be a lesser love than our love for the Lord. The problem is we settle for loving the lesser things in the greater way. But God is to be our first love.

**Transition:** We need to hear from the Lord properly in order to love the Lord fervently. Just as the *fear of God* leads to worship, the *love of God* leads to obedience.

*Love Obeys:* The commandment to love God is what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment. Those who love Him will obey His commandments. Love comes before obedience. Love for God is expressed in action.

For God so loved the world that He took action. God did not send His Son into the world so He could love the world, He sent His Son into the world because He loved the world. Love for God comes before obedience to God.

*Love for God and the fear of God are two distinct motives to obey God:* We are to love the Lord with our whole being. We are to love Him with our intellect, with our desires, with our strength and with our resources of time and money.

*Total Obedience is Tough:* The more genuine the love is the more the lover abandons any though of personal gain. True love is not based on reciprocity. To love the Lord in this way is not easy. Not because the Lord is hard to love, but because we are so prone to love other things more.

**Read** Rev 2:4

How can we love the Lord as our first love? It starts by letting God first love us.

**Read** 1 John 4:19

*Internalize the Command* (8:6): The heart is a tablet upon which the commandment is written. The commandment to love the Lord our God is to be written on our hearts and not on stone.

**Read** Jer 31:31 – 33; Rom 5:5b

**Transition:** The fear of God, leads to worship, the love of God leads to obedience. Fathers and grandfathers, leaving a legacy of faith to the next generation involves fearing God reverently, it involves loving God fervently and lastly it involves teaching our children the Word of God diligently.

**III. Teach our Children Diligently** (6:7 – 9)

*Teaching our children diligently* (6:7)*:* The greatest thing a father can do is to make hearing the Word of God and loving the Lord our God the greatest priority in his life. We cannot pass on what we do not possess. In general, if loving the Lord is not a priority to parents, it will not be a priority to children.

The well being of our children is linked to being taught of the Lord. And the Lord uses fathers and grandfathers to teach their children.

**Read** Isa 54:13

A good teacher loves their subject. When we sit under a good teacher, we get inspired with his or her love for the subject. When we love God, we will transmit His Word to our children.

We will teach His Word, by example and by explanation in such a way that it penetrates their heart.

The meaning behind the word *diligent* is *incisive.* Like a surgeon making an incision to get into the deep tissue.

If we have an contagious love for God, our instruction will be like an incision which goes deep into the heart of our children.

*Teaching our children throughout the* day: As fathers we teach the principles of Scripture to our children by example and by explanation at all conceivable times from the start of the day to the end of the day and in all conceivable places both inside and outside the home.

It is hard to love the Lord because we are prone to wander from our first love. We need to keep the commandment to love the Lord alive. A good way to do this is through the use of symbols.

*Teaching our children using symbols* (6:8)*:* Symbols are an outward sign of an inward reality. The rainbow is God’s symbol that He will never flood the world again. A wedding ring is a symbol of the marriage bond between a husband and wife. The elements of communion remind us of the sacrifice Jesus made to secure our salvation. Jewish people put a mezuzah on the door post of their homes to remind them of this commandment as they come and go. In the same way we can remind our children through symbols that serve to communicate our devotion to the Lord. The best tangible symbol is our example.

**Conclusion**

Over the last 200 years, there has been a steady decline in the social role of fatherhood. Fathers have gradually moved from the center to the margins of family life. The story of fatherhood in the West has been downhill since the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Before then, fathers were seen as primary and irreplaceable caregivers in the family. The central role fathers played in the nurture of their children can be seen in at least three distinct ways:

1. Throughout the eighteenth century, child-rearing manuals were generally addressed to fathers, not mothers.

2. Until the early nineteenth century, when there was a divorce, it was the custom to award custody of children to fathers.

3. Thirdly, fathers had the primary role for what was seen as the most essential of parental tasks: the moral education of the children. It would be the father who was praised or blamed for the eventual outcome of a child’s life.

It has been said that is easier to build a child than to repair an adult. Fathers we have the privilege and responsibility to build into the lives of the next generation.

* We build into the next generation by fearing the Lord reverently. Let our children see our awe and wonder for who God is and for what He has done.
* We build into the next generation by loving the Lord our God with our whole being. It begins by receiving God’s love for us.
* We build into the next generation by teaching the love of God to our children through example and explanation so that God’s Word may go deep into their hearts. When our children are taught by the Lord through our example and explanations their well being will be great.