

EVANGELIZING YOUR GREAT GRAND-CHILDREN (The Idea of the Necessity of Generational Training)

TEXT: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

INTRODUCTION

Those of us who are Christian parents should realize that we are responsible to nurture our children in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1ff). Sunday School teachers can do their work once a week, but our children are in our homes seven days a week, and so we should shepherd their hearts in those many days. God gives them to us for approximately 20 years. We must ensure that, by the grace of God, in those years we finally bring up men and women of God, who will in turn be able to impact their children with the truth of God. This was the challenge faced by the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Promised Land with all its false worship.

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

In order for us to disciple our children properly despite the cultural pressures that they will find themselves in, we ourselves need to be persuaded that there is only one true God; namely, the God of the Bible. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Ruler of the universe, the coming Judge of the living and the dead. This is what the Israelites were being reminded about on the eve of their entrance upon a land that had as many gods as it had nations (v.4, 4:35)! The God of the Israelites was not just one option among many. He was the only God. Apart from him there was no other (Isaiah 44:6-8, 45:5-6). Hence, Elijah's and Jeremiah's challenges (1 Kings 18:21, Jeremiah 10:10-11). This is the only way a person can be saved—by believing this (John 17:3). So, although our culture may point to other gods, they are all lies (1 Cor 8:4-6). Belief in this one God inevitably implies one way of salvation, i.e. in Christ (1 Tim 2:5). Do you strongly believe this monotheism as a Christian parent?

HOW TO LOVE THIS GOD

Once you believe this, the next challenge if you are going to properly disciple your children in the midst of the cultural pressures they find themselves in, is for you to know how to live your life before such a God. This is because your example will speak louder than your words. So, you are to love this God with your entire being. This is what Moses said to the Israelites on the eve of their entrance upon the Promised Land (v.5). They were to love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul and strength—i.e. their everything, their entire beings (Deut. 10:12). This was to express itself through obedience to his commands (1 John 5:3). To do otherwise was to merit the judgement of God (Deut 11:13-17). This, according to the Lord Jesus, is the greatest commandment (Mark 12:29-32). To know that there is one God but fail to love him is the faith of demons (James 2:19). Is there an area in your life that is not yet yielded to God? That will hinder your fulfilling of this duty!

HOW TO PRESERVE HIS WORDS

Yet, your example is not enough. If you are to preserve true religion to the third and fourth generation, you must also preserve God's Word in your heart and teach it diligently to your children at every opportunity. You must be the primary teacher of God's Word in your home, applying it to all the cultural challenges your children face. This is what Moses insisted on as

he spoke to the Jews who were about to enter the Promised Land (v.7-9, 11:18-25). They needed to teach them during devotional exercises, to talk about them in ordinary situations of life, and they were to bind/write them wherever the children's eyes could see (Numbers 15:37-41). In other words, if they are in books, the books must be read regularly. God's concern was not just for the children, but also the grandchildren onwards (Deut 6:1-2, Psalm 78:1-8). This is what God expected of Abraham, if his children and grandchildren for generations were to be favoured by the Lord (Gen. 18:19). The Israelites were exhorted to keep their history repeated to each generation (Deut. 4:9-10). Are you doing that?

CONCLUSION

It is clear from all this, then, that when the children of Israel went astray and started adopting the religion of the nations around them, it was because fathers neglected their duty. They were neither a good example nor were they consistent teachers to their children. Before we throw stones at them, we need to examine ourselves and see if we are faring any better. Are you completely convinced that the Christian Faith is the only true faith in the world? Do you unreservedly love the Lord your God, so that even your children can see it? Are you taking the trouble to educate your children concerning this "faith of our fathers"? Do it now. Amen!