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Perpetuating Truth to Subsequent Generations

Text: Deut. 6: 1 – 25.

Introduction: God gave His instructions to Moses to pass them on to the children of Israel. He wanted them to have such a committed love towards God that would lead to obedience. The parents were to teach and pass God's Law to subsequent generations after settling in the Promised Land. This would result to continued blessings from God. The principles of God's Word never change and even though we are not Israelites, such principles have a lot of application for us as New Testament believers. God wants His people to perpetuate truth and godliness to subsequent generations and continue enjoying His blessings.

Proposition: We must perpetuate God's truth and godliness to subsequent generations

I) The truth and godliness is to be perpetuated at home, vvs 4 – 9

Without a doubt one can pick from the context of this text that the training of God's law was to take place at home. It was to be repeated when waking up, lying down and upon the door posts at home.

A) The truth to be taught is; God is to be loved and obeyed as the ultimate Authority vs 4 – 6

The other heathen deities could be opposed to each other. Verse 4, "... The Lord (Jehovah) our God (Elohim) is one Lord (Jehovah) affirming not so much moneity but unity unlike other heathen gods which could be opposed to each other. Also a deity could be divided and communicated to many others as the heathens believed. God is indivisible and can share His glory or manifestation with another.

*The first step towards teaching God's Law to children is to establish God as the Ultimate Authority is to be loved and obeyed and not with mere professions. Love is most demonstrated in obedience. (John 14:21)

*It is so easy for those responsible for training children to forget that God is the ultimate Authority and that children are to ultimately please God.

*Young people are able to tell when their "teachers" love God with genuine hearts and when they make mere professions.

B) The truth is to be perpetuated by parents, vs 7

Even though Israel is addressed collectively here the role of each individual parents to train their children the Law (Word) of God cannot be mistaken. The context and words used in vs 7 clearly indicate that the training was to done by the parents of a child.

C) The truth is to be perpetuated diligently, vs 7 -9

*This word *diligently* is only found here in the Hebrew Bible. In other usages it means to sharpen. Literally it meant “thou shalt sharpen them to they children”

** “You shall whet and sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently...” (The Amplified Bible)

*Parents were to impress the commandments of God upon their children like you would impress a sharp weapon into something.

When parents are training their children there are a lot of rough edges to be sharpened. A lot of selfishness, foolishness, pride, arrogance, etc.

i) By talking Word of God repeatedly.

*The Word of God was to be taught repeatedly and repetitiously.

Difference: Repeatedly may mean teach the Laws regularly but repetitiously means teaching the same principle over and over again.

There is to be constant inculcation of God’s Word by the parents to the children. Parents should also help the children memorize the Bible.

ii) By Making the Word of God obviously available for the children

The parents are to deliberately make the Word of God readily available for the children to see and hear it over and over again.

a) They are to bind Gods’ Word for a sign upon their hand- for a memorial.

*It seems to have been a prevalent culture among the ancient Eastern people to carry parchments written with sentences of moral or religious import as their commitment to their gods. Moslems do that today. Also, the hand is the instrument of acting and executing God’s Word. God’s Word is to be guidance when we act.

b) They are to have God’s Word as frontlets or bands between their eyes. The eye is the organ for direction. The Word of God is to guide us and give us direction. Psalm 119: 105, Prov. 6:23.

*God commands parents to thoroughly teach their children His Word.

II) The hindrances to perpetuating truth and godliness by the parents, vvs 10, 11, 16.

*God in His Word has warned us of the possible dangers that would hinder parents from perpetuating His truth to subsequent generations.

A) The peril of prosperity, vvs 10 – 15

*It is amazing how people start turning away from God when He prospers them. We all have heard about or seen people who drifted away from following God after He blessed them and that which was meant to be a blessing to them turns to be a peril. As God's people we should be careful of the peril of abusing privileges. There was a danger of forgetting God as the Great Deliverer.

“The sense of daily and hourly dependence upon God for material food is an advantage; it is a constant incentive to gratitude and faith. Poor human nature cannot bear much indulgence. Poverty is more conducive to piety than wealth has ever been.” (H.D.M. Spence & Joseph S. Exell, Pulpit commentaries, pg 129)

*The children of Israel were warned to be careful not to forget about God as their Deliverer after He had prospered them. It is all too easy for us as believers once blessed us to forget His marvelous Grace and mercy toward us. We forget of how He delivered from the power of sin and start to meddle again in the same mire He saved us from. It is not possible to teach children the truth and goodness of God when we forget of His Love, Mercy, Grace to undeserving people like us.

i) Undue tolerance of idolatries around us, 14

*The sin of compromise is not new to God's people. After Israel settled in Canaan they would be surrounded with people who did not worship Jehovah. Easygoingness, accommodativeness, and loosening of biblical principles tend to follow the prosperity of God's people.

*Today there are a lot of pressures from the world upon God's people to conform to its systems.

“So long as men continue in the flesh, they prefer a visible God to an invisible.” (Pulpit commentaries)

*Materialism becomes the god that God's people worship. Even though this trend can be evidently seen in advanced Western societies, one can be as materialistic within the slums in the heart of Africa. The attitude that motivates our pursuit for things and pleasure as our ultimate goal can be exercised anywhere because prosperity is relative.

*When God's people start to loosen biblical principles for favor or gain of some sort, it becomes very hard for them to teach the principles of God's Word to their children.

B) The sin on complaining , vs 16

God had promised to prosper Israel as they obeyed Him. These blessings were also to be enjoyed by subsequent generations based on their obedience to God's Word. In Massah (Exodus 17:2-7), the children of Israel failed to see God through their difficulties. They even doubted whether He was present with them. It is when going through difficulties that we feel deserted by God and complain because we cannot see the whole picture of what He is doing. “Difficulties are an invitation to see the greatness and the goodness of the Lord through them” (Dr. Tetreau.) Another godly man said difficulties are great opportunities for us to show the word our love for the Lord in the way we respond to them. Also, crisis is God's way of revealing you to you” As we enjoy God's blessings, it is very easy for us to take them for granted. We then forget that life does is not a smooth ride all

through. Complaining is a great sin and as God's people should always have the attitude of I Thess. 5:18 & Phil. 4: 4 – 7. It is a great teaching tool of their love for the Lord when parents respond to all the difficulties with thankfulness to God. Children see it.

III) Ways to deal with challenges that hinder perpetuating God's Word, vvs 13, 17,

God gave ways by which the Israel parents would deal with the above challenges.

A) Fearing the Lord, vs 13

*This means to cherish a profound reverence for Him as the Author of all mercies and sole Regulator of their lives and give a supreme affection of heart. (Pulpit commentaries)

B) Keeping God's Word vs 17

*This involves serving the Lord with constant obedience. If these duties were loyally discharged, earthly prosperity and spiritual wellbeing would go together. The same applies to us as Christians.

IV) The value of perpetuating truth and godliness (God's Word), vvs 20 -25

*When God commands His people to do something ultimately it glorifies Him but also His people enjoy the blessing out their obedience.

A) It would provide ready arrangements, and laws, precepts for young lives.

*Israel parents did not need to look elsewhere for principles to teach their children on how to live. There was already an established law and authority from God. Today the Bible remains to be the manual for training young lives the precepts of God and pointing out their need for Him. Unfortunately many today use the TV, house helps, Christian schools etc to do the job that is God-given to them.

B) It would provide biblical answers to inquiring young lives.

*This is a very crucial point. God knows that if the parents do what He has commanded in His Word, it will come a time when they will start inquiring about all they have seen their parents say and do. If the parents do it with such a dedication as God said, their devotion would attract sincere curiosity from their children wanting to know about the God of their parents.

*Israel parents were to explain to their children about God as a powerful Deliverer. They were to talk of their physical deliverance from Egypt and how God set them apart as His chosen people. New Testament parents have a great privilege today that that not only can they talk of a physical deliverance but a spiritual one from the bondage of sin and death and how God has set us apart as His people , (I Pet. 2:5)

*Obedience to God's law was the key. It does not mean that we would get justification by just keeping God's Law but rather obeying God's Law/Word is the justification of our claim of being God's people. "Our claims to be God's people would be justified by our obedience to God's Word.

*Not only would obedience to God's Word and teaching it to their children ensure blessings to Israel but also continued posterity to subsequent generations.

*If this generations of parents teaches their children to keep and obey the Word of God with the passion as God commanded, then the children will have an Authority to look up to and to submit to, identity (example to identify themselves with – parents) , and hope for the future.

What a generation sows is harvested by the next. God commanded Christian parents not only to serve and obey Him but also to teach their subsequent generations to keep His Word.

If today's parents take this God-given responsibility seriously and obey and teach His Word as He has commanded, the children would put their hope in God and enjoy His blessings.