

Introduction

As an infant, my parents had me baptized in the church. They did not immerse me, which is the actual meaning of baptize. The Greek word is bapto, which means to immerse, or dip. It was used in the fabric industry. They would dip a cloth to die it. They did not partially dip it, and they did not sprinkle dye on it; they immersed the whole cloth into the dye. As an infant they sprinkled water on my head and called it baptism.

Later on, as a 13-year old, I was baptized, or sprinkled again. I was made to go through confirmation classes, which I disliked greatly. I was not a believer. Furthermore, my heart was very hardened toward Christianity, but my parents made me join the church and go through confirmation. Part of the confirmation ceremony is to baptize the person, or literally sprinkle the person.

In Acts 8:34-39, an angel of the Lord told Philip to go on the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza. When the Spirit tells you to do something, He has something in mind, and we should be obedient. So, Philip goes and a chariot with an Ethiopian eunuch pulls up. The eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, but does not understand what he is reading. Therefore, Philip explained it to him, and preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road, they came to some water. The eunuch sees water and says, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

(Acts 8:34-39) The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" {35} Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. {36} As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" {37} [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] {38} And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. {39} When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.

Philip answered the eunuch, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The condition for being baptized is whether you believe and have put your trust in Christ. The eunuch responded by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Therefore, they stopped the chariot and Philip baptizes him. It says that when they came up out of the water, the Spirit snatched Philip away, and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. Notice that they came up out of the water. There was no sprinkling of water on the eunuch. He was immersed or baptized. What requirement was there for baptizing? The requirement was that the eunuch had to believe.

As an infant, I did not believe in the Lord with all my heart. As a teenager, being made to join the church, I did not believe in the Lord with all my heart. I did not meet the requirements for being baptized. Furthermore, the baptism was not even done according to Scripture. As a church, we do not sprinkle; we baptize. As a church, we do not baptize unbelievers. We do not baptize those who have not professed to believe in Christ. Therefore, we do not baptize infants.

But, the Scriptures make it very clear that there are some things that parents are supposed to do. Let's read Deuteronomy 6, verses one through nine and glean what we can from this passage.

Parent Commitment

(Deut 6:1-9) "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, {2} so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. {3} "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. {4} "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! {5} "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. {6} "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. {7} "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. {8} "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. {9} "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy. He says, now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you. This was not optional for Moses. He was commanded to teach these principles. You and I have been commanded to do these things. They are not optional.

In verse two he says, "so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments. The goal of the commandment that Moses gave was to pass on our faith to our children and grandchildren. God wants us, and our children, and our grandchildren to fear the LORD, and to keep His statutes and commandments. That is the goal.

Who does this include? Notice that the father wants to see his son taught the word of God and to be obedient. But, the father also wants to see his grandchildren taught the word of God and to be fully obedient. In Psalm 78, Asaph speaks about fathers telling the children, and the generation to come the praises of the Lord. He says that God "commanded our fathers that they should teach them (commandments) to their children that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born." The commandment to train up children is multi-generational.

(Psa 78:3-6) Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. {4} We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. {5} For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, {6} That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children,

I believe that the church should be multi generational. I believe that God wants households. Our culture has moved away from this. The older generation go to the service with hymns. The young generation has music that rocks. I believe that we need to find some way to become more multi-generational so that the great grandparents, grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and everyone can help train up the children. As these parents commit themselves today to train up their children, they need our help. They need all of our help. This is not just about these mothers and fathers listening and teaching their children God's commandments; it is about all of us playing a part in raising these children.

Parent Commitment

In Proverbs, Solomon tells us to train up our children in the ways of the Lord. Where did he get this? He got it from Deuteronomy 6, where God tells us to train our children and grandchildren in the ways of the Lord, so that they might fear Him and keep His commandments.

(Pro 22:6) Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

In the New Testament, John tells us that there is great joy when our children obey. He says, "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth." When we do what God tells us to do with our families, there is great joy. Not just great joy, but there is no greater joy than to have our children walking in the truth. That is the goal, and there is a great reward for achieving it.

(3 John 1:4) I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

1. Listen to God

Well how does this happen? Let's go back to our passage. In verse three Moses tells us to listen and be careful to keep God's commandments. We have to keep listening. We are forgetful. We have to keep listening to the commandments of God. We have to spend time with the Lord every day. As parents, we must set aside time every day to listen to the Lord. It is easy to get busy and leave out the Lord. We may have to go to work at 5:00 in the morning, and we may not want to get up a half hour earlier, just to read our Bible and listen. But, if we want our children and grandchildren to follow the Lord, we must listen to His commands. We have to commit ourselves to getting up earlier to listen to His commandments.

(Deut 6:3) "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey."

The Hebrew word for listen is shama, (Strong's 8085) which means to hear intelligently with the implication of attention and obedience. In fact, it is translated as obey or obedient eighty-nine times. When we spend time in the word with the Lord every day, we must be attentive and hear intelligently. We generally call it a quiet time because for us to give it our undistracted attention, we have to be in a quiet place. We find that this is generally best in the early morning before our wheels start turning. It means that we have to do it before Johnny gets up and needs his diaper changed, and to be fed. It means to do it before we start answering emails and thinking about everything that is going on.

To shama means that we read for understanding. We have to ask questions. We have to do word studies. We have to look up cross references. We have to ponder and meditate on what we are reading.

2. Teach by Example

To shama also means we read for personal application of what we are reading. We have to be obedient to what we are reading. We have to ask ourselves, how can I apply this in my life? How does this apply in my life? What changes do I need to make in my life to apply this Scripture.

Parent Commitment

In verse one, Moses taught the commandments to them that they might do them. The first part of teaching our children and grandchildren to fear the LORD and to keep His commandments is for us to be obedient to God's word. We must walk in the truth. We must be obedient. We must set the example.

(Deut 6:1) "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it,"

In the New Testament, the word for example is tupos. One of the meanings of the word is a die. It is important for the die to be the exact shape of the intended object. Whatever is put into the die, or cast, is going to come out in the same shape as the die. Any flaws in the die will be replicated in every object that is cast. It is extremely important to get the die in the exact shape that you want. In fact, the Lord says that the sins of the fathers go to the third and fourth generation. We pass down sins to our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. The good news is that God shows lovingkindness to thousands of generations, to those who love God and keep His commandments. We want our children to experience the lovingkindness of God in their lives. It is important that we, as parents, love God, and keep His commandments.

(Deut 5:9-10) 'You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, {10} but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

3. Teach His Commandments

Moses taught us to listen to God's commandments, and to be personally obedient to God's commandments. But, then we are commanded to diligently teach God's commandments to our children.

(Deut 6:7) "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

One of the life verses that the Lord gave me as a young Christian was out of Ezra. He was a scribe, which meant he copied manuscripts, and he also taught people the word of God. In Ezra 7:10, it says, "for Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." Notice a few things. Ezra had to listen. He set his heart on studying the Law of the Lord. Notice that he did not just study the law; he practiced the law. He applied it in his own life. He was not going to teach something that he did not know. He was not going to teach things that he was not willing to do himself. He studied the law and practiced it. Those are prerequisites of teachers.

(Ezra 7:10) For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.

In Psalm 111:10 it says "a good understanding have all those who do His commandments." As you and I apply God's word in our own lives, we gain more in depth understanding of it.

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Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.

As we listen and study His commandments, and then practice them ourselves, we gain more understanding and are better prepared to teach His commandments. One of the qualities that sets apart the training company that I manage is our experience. We hire very knowledgeable and experienced drilling engineers. They have not just studied drilling principles; they have applied them in the field. They know what works and what does not work. They know what pitfalls to beware of, and they know ways of optimizing the efficiency of an operation. Their experience saves our clients millions of dollars. They highly value the training they receive from our experienced instructors. This principle applies in spiritual matters just as much as in drilling. "A good understanding have all those who do His commandments."

One other thing I want to bring out about Ezra was his determination. It says he set his heart on studying, practicing and teaching. He made a decision that this is what he was going to do. He set his heart or mind, or will. When we set our will to do something, we are going to find a way to do it. When we set our will to do something, it does not matter what time we have to go to work. It does not matter what things come up in our lives, we will find a way to do get it done.

The purpose of this service is to make that commitment to raise our children in the ways of the Lord. These parents have made a determination in their heart, or their will, to listen to the commandments. They have made a determination to get God's word on their hearts. The purpose of putting the word of God on our hearts is so that we can be careful to do according to all that is in God's word. These parents are making a commitment to practice God's commandments. They are setting their heart on being obedient to the Lord in all areas of their lives. They are setting their heart on loving the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. They are setting their heart in walking in God's ways.

(Deut 6:6) "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.

Moses did not stop there. He tells us to teach them diligently to our children. Let's continue reading.

(Deut 6:7-9) "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. {8}
"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. {9}
"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Parents are told to teach them diligently to their sons. Diligence implies thoroughness and completeness. Children need to know why we do things. They also need to have understanding about God's commandments. When we shama, or listen intelligently, we gain insight and understanding of His Word. Our children need that same understanding. Parents must pass on that understanding to their children. Parents must teach God's word diligently to their children.

The Hebrew word for teach diligently is shanan (Strong's H8150), which means to sharpen or pierce. We are sharpened by the word of God. The word of God gives wisdom, discernment, knowledge, and understanding. It sharpens us. In the New Testament, we find that the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. The word of God sharpens us because it is very sharp.

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(Heb 4:12) For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The word of God is also piercing. The Hebrew word, shanan, means to sharpen or to pierce. Notice that in Hebrews the word of God is not just sharper than any two-edged sword, it is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The word of God pierces our hearts. Parents are charged with piercing their children's hearts with the word of God. It is not a matter of exposing them; it is a matter of continually bringing the word of God to our children until it pierces their hearts. It is when it pierces their hearts that their soul and spirit will be impacted. It is when it pierces their hearts that their thoughts and intentions will be impacted. Parents have a huge responsibility to train up their children in the ways of the Lord.

Many parents say that they do not know how to teach. I use to teach fathering seminars where I taught fathers some basic principles about teaching. I did an equipping workshop for teaching about four years ago. I also led our leadership team through a more advanced teaching course a couple years ago. I am passionate about teaching people how to teach and preach. Where and how did I learn to teach? It came about in many different ways.

First, I learned to teach by studying God's word. I had a love for God's word and could not put it down. As I read, re-read, and thought about what I was reading, God gave me insights. I gained a good overall background to the Scriptures. I read through the whole Bible many times. If you are not studying the word, it is very difficult to teach. Ezra set his heart on studying the law of the Lord, practicing it, and then on teaching it. The studying came first.

There are study tools that are very helpful. Kermit Zarley, a well-known professional golfer, introduced me to the Strong's Concordance. Kermit was one of the founders of the PGA Tour Bible study. When I joined the PGA Tour, I was still very young in the Lord, but I had been reading and memorizing Scripture. Kermit took me aside and began to teach me how to use that tool. I learned to use many of the other tools just by using them. The concordance is a must for any father's library. I use Bible software with concordances now. I do not use the big heavy concordances any longer. It is important to have one and use it, and whether it is hard copy or soft copy is not the issue.

Jim Elliff was the pastor at Florida Shores Baptist Church when I was playing some mini-tour events in Orlando. We became friends and we joined the church. I got back on the PGA Tour and was not there much, but during the off-season he took me through a preaching class. It was life-changing. He used the same books with me that he had used in seminary. Jim is an excellent preacher of the word, and he was an excellent mentor to me.

I share this because there are some things that you will learn on your own. There are some things that you can learn from books. There are some things that you should learn from others. I am grateful for the men that have poured into my life. But, the primary way that I have learned to teach is by teaching. One morning the Lord spoke to me about teaching. He told me that if I would begin to teach my children the word of God, he would develop my teaching skills. And, that is exactly what the Lord did. As I faithfully taught my children every day, he sharpened my teaching skills.

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We set a daily time to teach the children. We would sing one or two songs of praise and worship. Then, we would take a verse, or a paragraph, and I would teach them about it. I took small chunks of Scripture, which were manageable. I also tried to be creative with the teaching times. For example, I was teaching the book of Hebrews to our children. When I covered Hebrews 12:1, it says to lay aside every weight or encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and to run with endurance. I had my son, who was about nine at the time, put on a backpack. In that backpack, I put that big heavy Strong's concordance. I also put in it the Vine's Expository Dictionary, the Hebrew Greek Interlinear Bible, and a big heavy iron. The backpack weighed down my son. Then, I had him race his younger sister from one side of the house to the other and back. His sister, Sarah, who was very competitive, beat him. He was not happy at all. To make him feel better, I took off the backpack and let them race again. This time, he narrowly beat her, but he beat her. The weight weighed him down and affected his ability to run the race. That is what the author of Hebrews was saying. These encumbrances and sins weigh us down and keep us from running the race. God wants us to take those backpacks off and run the race with endurance. This was just an example of the creativity that I developed and used in those teaching times. My children did not quickly forget that lesson. God did exactly what He said He would do. He developed my teaching skills as I faithfully taught God's word to my children. How do you learn to teach? Begin to teach. Look for opportunities to teach. But, most importantly, begin to teach your children.

(Heb 12:1) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

I learned to break passages down, outline passages, and categorize passages. I learned how to give definitions. I learned the many ways to illustrate passages. I learned how to give applications of passages. The Lord taught and developed my teaching gift by teaching.

Moses said to diligently teach God's word to our children when we sit in our house and when we walk by the way and when we lie down and when we rise up. This talks about our whole life. From the time we wake up until the time we retire, we are to teach God's word to our children. We are to teach God's word at meal times. We are to teach God's word when we are going places. We are to talk about the word in our conversations. Our life is to be centered around the word of God. Teaching our children is a lifestyle, not just a schedule time. We need both.

(Deut 6:7-9) "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. {8}
"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. {9}
"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

One thing that Moses does not specify in this passage is when to start training up our children. Since it is a lifestyle, I believe that the training begins long before the children can read and write. They are taught from conception. Babies hear the mothers and fathers talk. When John the Baptist was still in Elizabeth's womb, he heard Mary's voice and jumped. Our children are receiving from us before they are even born.

(Luke 1:41) When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

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In Proverbs 4, Solomon tells us that when he was a son to his father, tender and the only son in the sight of his mother, then David taught him and said to him, “let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live.” Solomon was out of the womb, but he was the only son in the sight of his mother. I am guessing that Solomon was in his first three years of life. He was probably not reading and writing, but David was instructing him in the ways of the Lord. Parents, start early. Start teaching them the word of God early in their lives.

(Pro 4:3-4) When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, {4} Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live;

One of the things that I did was ask the Lord for some children’s music. He gave me songs to teach them how to worship. Before they could read or write, they knew about all the various ways we are commanded in Scripture to worship. They not only sang about it, but they practiced what they were learning. They sang, danced, clapped, and shouted. They loved it. We made it fun for them.

Moses finishes by saying that we shall bind God’s commandments as a sign on our hands, and that they should be as frontals on our foreheads. We are to write them on the doorposts of our house and gates. He is saying that we need many reminders. Our children need these reminders. We need to provide the right environment in our home. As parents, who are going to train up their children in the ways of the Lord, let me encourage you to provide the right atmosphere and environment in your home.

We went into one man’s home, who led Bible studies, and we had to close our eyes. There were pictures of nude women on the walls. There were beer signs and other things in the house. They did not create an environment or atmosphere that was conducive to training up your children in the ways of the Lord. They did just the opposite. We need to clean up our houses. We need to do it for our sakes. But, we also need to do it for the sake of our children. And, we need to replace these worldly things with Godly reminders. Put Scriptures on the walls. Put Scriptures around the house. Have reminders throughout the house for you and your children.

It is not just the pictures and artifacts. What music do you have playing in the house? What TV shows are being watched in the house? What games are being played on the computer? All of these things affect the atmosphere in the home. We want to create an atmosphere in our home that facilitates, supports and continually reminds us of to listen, obey, and instruct the next generation to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, and soul.

Conclusion

This morning, we have looked at training up our children in the ways of the Lord. We saw that we must listen attentively and intelligently. We must also listen obediently, applying the things in our own lives. It is important for parents to be examples to their children. We have also seen that parents must take the time to teach their children the word of God. God is concerned about the next generation, and He has given us this responsibility. This morning these couples are bringing their children before the congregation in a pledge to train them up in the ways of the Lord. We are here, not just to witness their commitment, but to pledge our support and help in teaching their children to follow God’s commands.