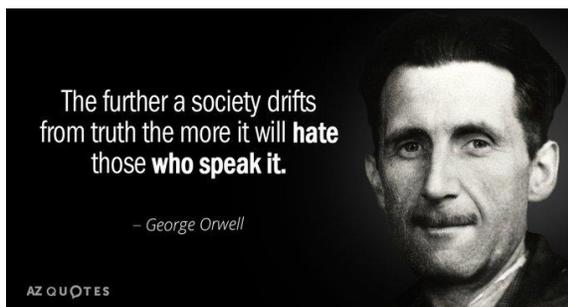


God's Purpose and Design for the Family

Introduction / Quote: "Extremist group Family Heritage Alliance said this morning that the safest place for kids is in families that have a married mom and dad. What a dangerous and un-American belief." - Erin Heally – South Dakota Democrat state lawmaker

- This is a good place to start this morning. There is no doubt in any of your minds who are Christ followers that the nuclear family is under attack.
 - I disagree with the South Dakota law maker and her quote. Most studies you find out there, year after year, government sanctioned, academic sanctioned, etc. will say that a family with kids who has a father and mother who are stable in their marriage and work life who are engaged in their children's lives, have a much greater chance of their children turning out well when they leave home than single parent families, divorced couples' families and same sex marriage families.
 - We as a church need to be willing to minister to all these family types, we see in our world today. They need the Gospel of Christ.
 - We need to minister to the moms' and dads' who are single parents due to a variety of reasons
 - We need to be accepting of children from same sex marriages and welcome them into our church, our Sunday School, our Awana clubs.
 - As Christ followers, we need to let the world know that God's purpose and design for the family **was God's idea and it cannot be improved upon**. It has been proven, time after time that what God taught us beginning in Genesis and how He admonished moms' and dads to parent throughout His scriptures, has worked well over the centuries **if God's commands are followed**



Transition: Let's take our Bibles and turn to Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9 – The Shema

Scripture Reading

Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9 – The Shema

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord 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 And

these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Purpose: Every Christ follower who is a parent must explain to their kids why a personal relationship with God is the key to understanding life and instill in them a Biblical worldview

Transition: That will be the text we will work through this morning with other scriptures and thoughts added in.

Background of the Text

- God called Israel out, through Abraham, to be a nation which was to be set apart for Him. The end of His purpose for calling out Israel to Himself was to send the Gospel out from the Jews, to the Gentiles, to the ends of the earth.
- Israel was not the end in and of itself but a means to the end. Israel was to receive the blessings from God and to spread those blessings to the other nations as they became receptive to knowing Yahweh.
- This brings us to the message of God. This section of scripture which we just read is the most important doctrine the Jewish people point to. Especially Deuteronomy 6:4 which testifies to the truth of God.

Priority – Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 6:33; Luke 16:13; Matthew 7:13 – 14

Deuteronomy 6:4

4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one

- This is not an expository message but a topical one about how a family should function. But we will highlight and discuss briefly these passages as we go this morning.
- This is the centerpiece of the Jewish doctrine. Jehovah / Yahweh / Jehovah is one
- God is at the center of the marriage and in the home when it comes to raising kids.
- Home is so important. Chuck Swindoll says, home is where life makes up its mind.
- Someone is going to raise your child; your children and it better be you as a Christ following parent. Especially in this day and time. Parents need to be aware of the times we are in and be intentional, after understanding the enemy and his strategy.

1 Chronicles 12:32a

Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do

- Parents must give attention to being a student of the culture your kids are in. What is the environment they are in at school, at church, with their peers, programs your kids are involved in, etc. You cannot assume that any of these are teaching your kids in support of what you are teaching at home.
 - Kids face a variety of pressures, indoctrination, and temptations today that I didn't have growing up. The challenges for kids and teens today to live for Christ and not get caught up in the world is overwhelming. They face;
 - Peer pressure – good and bad
 - Choices of the right kind of friends
 - Challenges to their faith – is it exclusive, inclusive. Should we believe in universalism – all roads of religion lead to the same god?
 - Cynicism and challenges to authority especially seen in the classrooms at some schools and how people treat police officers.
 - Media / Entertainment choices
 - Device and video game addiction
 - Drugs / Alcohol / Legalization of marijuana and in some states, hard drugs as well.
 - Social skills and how to have friends and develop healthy and godly relationships.
 - Education – indoctrination and rewriting of history
 - LBGTAI+ - Sexual orientation and gender identity
 - Racial Tensions
 - CRT – 1619 Project vs. 1776 Project
 - Kids need to be taught like Daniel and his friends in Babylon to stand up for what they believe in and impact the culture they are in.
 - Even Christian schools need to be studied carefully before attending them. K-12 and Christian colleges and universities.

Illustration of the Christian School in Kansas City – giving dropped from \$333,000 to now \$14,000 and they are closing their doors at the end of this school year.

- **Teach your kids to accept truth and reality as God defines it.**
 - God is the author and creator of this world
 - God is the original law maker whether is has to do with the laws of nature / science or the laws for governing and protecting people from harm.
 - The Bible is historically accurate and been proven so, time and time again by archaeologists

- The resurrection of Christ gives full approval of Christ's message of salvation and who the true God is – Yahweh.
- So, as the narrative of the Bible goes, it shows us how life is to be lived with God and our fellow man and all the relationships that go along with living in this world with other human beings. It is well defined in God's Book.
- We need to teach our kids from a perspective that God exists and from the Genesis teachings of how the world was created and God uniquely runs this world. Everything consists and subsists because of God – Hebrews 1
- The Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum are must stops for Christian parents with kids at some point in their lives. The Bible Museum in Washington D.C. is important.
- **Two books I highly recommend – Sticky Faith by Kara Powell / A Practical Guide to Culture by John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle**
- Teach your kids to affirm how personal the one true God is and worthy of worship.
 - As parents and grandparents, we must help kids **discover** and make the Gospel their own. Parents are to teach the principles of God's Word as character building, teach kids to study the Bible for themselves and live out the Gospel so their faith becomes their own before they move out of the home.
 - Deuteronomy 6:4 begs for a relationship with God and to reverently worship Him. Kids need a great picture of their God as Father.

Illustration: Gene Getz – leading a woman to Christ – substituting God for Father

- As parents, help your kids understand the attributes of God and how He has worked in the past in the lives of His followers. This will help build their faith on the shoulders of Bible characters and the character of their mom and dad to solidify in their mind that their faith is real and should be grown.

Application: As fathers and mothers, we are charged with intentionally living out and sharing who God is and how your kids can grow in relationship with Him

Transition: The next point is;

Proclamation – Deuteronomy 6:5-6; Matthew 28:19 – 20; John 13:35; I John 3:16-18; 4:7

Deuteronomy 6:5 – 6

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

- Parents must tell their kids that all human beings are commissioned to love God with all our being
 - That is the to be the norm in the home and at church.
 - You are to teach your kids to seek holiness because God is holy over happiness.
 - Blessings come when we obey God but we also need to teach our children that life is not fair and even if you are doing your best to obey God and love Him, we will face trials, testing's and tribulations. It took me many years to accept that and understand it.

Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

- Remind your children that God's measure of success is our faithfulness in obeying, in loving and serving Him and others.
- Remember that Jesus added to verse 5 of Deuteronomy 6 when He came to earth and quoted this verse. He added "and, love your neighbor as yourself".
- By serving others, kids learn how God can use them and what their personality and spiritual gifts are.
- We learn about God's love by studying and memorizing God's word, by worshiping at church and by being in a small group with other believers and using what you are learning to love others through faithful service.
- There are lots and lots of ways for kids to serve. Mentor your kids and help them learn to love God more and to serve Him out of love.
- Parents must tell our kids that all human beings are commanded to do what it takes to keep God at the forefront of our heart

Psalm 119:9 – 11

**How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.
10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!
11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you**

- I will forever be eternally grateful to my youth leaders in my high school youth group that disciplined me and helped me grow in my faith. I am thankful for my Bible teacher in high school at the Christian school I went to. Mr. Klamm was a retired pastor and he did a phenomenal job of teaching us the Bible and memorizing scriptures.
- In high school and college, the memorization of scripture was emphasized and it has been awesome to have an array of verses at my disposal when

I need them the most. For comfort, to stave off temptation, to be content, to not be anxious but to pray, etc.

- Awana is so vitally important because of the memory work and the emphasis on application that gives kids a balanced approach to internalizing scripture.

I John 3:16 – 18

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. 17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth

- It is important to find their identity in Christ and to view themselves as God's child. This brings tremendous security to kids as they grow into being a teen and wading into the stormy waters of adolescence.
- When kids / teens are secure in knowing they are loved by God unconditionally, it allows them the freedom to love others around them in a rich way. This is evidenced by how they relate to their neighbors and serving them.
- When it comes to teaching your kids about sharing their faith, it should be taught at a young age. Kids are more open and honest about sharing their faith than adults are. As adults, we tend to worry more about sharing our faith because we fear being rejected, hurting the relationship, stumbling over the Gospel presentation, etc.

Illustration: CT article – Three generations of people in East Germany, who had been under communist rule until 1990 are seeing churches planted in their part of the reunited Germany. Church planters are saying that the people of the former communist East Germany are not hostile toward God at all. Instead, they live their lives “ignorant and indifferent” to God and the Gospel because they have spent their lives not hearing about it in their homes. They are atheists not necessarily by choice but they do not know any better. These church planters noted that it takes a long time for a skeptic to become a follower of Jesus. This is where we find ourselves here in Scott County and in the QCA. – Faith Among the ‘Nicht Glaubig’ – March 2023

Application: As fathers and mothers, we must teach our children in so many ways how to love God and our neighbors as ourselves

Transition: Make spiritual growth in your family as intentional as you possible.

Preparation – Deuteronomy 6:7 – 9; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 22:6; 23:24; Psalm 45:15 – 17

- Parents must verbally communicate God's truths

Deuteronomy 6:7-9

7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- In verses 7 – 8, the Jewish parents were commanded to prepare their children to have a Biblical worldview by using everyday events as teachable moments about God.

Illustration: Jupiter and Venus in our skies over the QCA the last few evenings. Shows God's consistency and patterns of how He created the world when astronomers can predict when these planets will be in this alignment again for human beings to see with their own eyes. It screams to us of God's handiwork and that creation declares there is a God who is sovereign and in control of the universe – Psalm 19:1 – 4

- Use everyday examples to point kids to God.

Illustration: Butterfly and a caterpillar – metamorphosis – we are changed when we receive Christ and one day, we will have a new body at the resurrection

- As you go through your day, look for teachable moments to point kids to God and to see how God is involved in all aspects of our lives.
- Allow kids to see how you as parents see God at work all around you daily
- Be a human phylactery!!
- The phylacteries – 613 commandments on the frontlets of their forehead, literal rendering of this verse. **Picture of a Jewish rabbi with a phylactery**
- Be intentional to disciple your kids as you grow as a disciple in Christ.

2 Timothy 2:2

And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also

- Parents must visually communicate God's truths
 - As has been said many times, kids learn more about what they see than what they hear.
 - We must as parents and grandparents do all we can to model Christ with our attitudes, our motives, our words and actions. We are to walk the talk.
 - We are to show our kids what a lifelong disciple looks like
 - Always studying God's Word to learn more. Always praying and showing how you as parents trust and depend on God for wisdom,

- strength, courage, etc. Having your kids see that as moms' and dads.
- Sharing devotions with your kids. Spouses talking about what they are learning in God's Word and praying together as a family for their needs and the needs of others around the family.
- All these ideas and more are so essential in building a living and meaningful Biblical worldview that will stand up in a culture gone wrong all around us.

Application: As fathers and mothers, we must be the storytellers of God's Word in the lives of our children with our words and actions

Illustration: This Sunday school teacher was not one of the ordinary types. Mere literal instruction on Sunday did not satisfy his ideal of the teacher's duty. He knew his boys, and, if he knew them, it was because he studied them, because he became acquainted with their occupations and aims, visiting them during the week. It was his custom, moreover, to find opportunity to give to his boys an opportunity to use his experience in seeking the better things of the Spirit. The day came when he resolved to speak to the young man about Christ.

"I started down town to Holton's shoe store," says Mr. Kimball. 'When I was nearly there, I began to wonder whether I ought to go just then, during business hours. And I thought maybe my mission might embarrass the boy, that when I went away the other clerks might ask who I was, and when they learned might taunt him and ask if I was trying to make a good boy out of him. While I was pondering over it all, I passed the store without noticing it. Then when I found I had gone by the door, I determined to make a dash for it and have it over at once. I found him in the back part of the store wrapping up shoes in paper and putting them on shelves. I went up to him and put my hand on his shoulder, and as I leaned over, I placed my foot upon a shoe box. Then I made my plea, and I feel that it was really a very weak one. I don't know just what words I used, nor could he tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was of it. I think he said afterward that there were tears in my eyes. It seemed that the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him, for there at once in the back of that shoe store in Boston the future great evangelist gave himself and his life to Christ."

Edward Kimball had just witnessed to Dwight L. Moody. John W. Chapman attended a revival of D. L. Moody's and accepted Christ. During one of Chapman's revivals Billy Sunday came forward after accepting Christ at one of his Bible Study groups. Billy Sunday preached a revival at which Mordecai Ham was present. He came forward during the invitation to profess in public what he too had experienced in a Bible study. Mordecai Ham preached a revival at which Billy Graham was present and he too professed Christ publicly. Now would you recognize Edward Kimball's name. - 12 Ordinary Men by John McArthur

- God wants to use you as ordinary parents to do great things for God in the lives of your children. Do not ever forget that or underestimate your influence on your children.
- **The most important question that should be on a parent's mind about their children is this; Will my kids be with me in heaven and what do I need to do to make sure they are there?**

Key Thought: Will you be the best representative of Jesus you can be as dads and moms for your children?

Questions to Ponder this Week

1. How are we sharing and showing our children that God is truth and how we live in God's created world is the only true reality?
2. Are we doing a good job of imparting our love for God and for our neighbors to our children?
3. Will our children say when they leave home that they saw Christ lived through their parents' lives?