

Living Faith at Home

Text:

Deuteronomy 6:1-12 (New King James Version)

The Greatest Commandment

1 “Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

4 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, 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 frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

INTRO:

Before we were married my wife and I discussed what our core values were and how we wanted to raise and train our children. The realization that we must not only teach them with words but show them by living it out has really been driven home to me; especially over the last two years. The more I read and study this topic of family and how it relates to the quality of life for the future of our children the more passionate and determined I have become. I cannot pretend that my weaknesses do not matter. Even if I should be saved how will my choices and lifestyle affect my children.

Let me show you what I mean.

Percentage of American teens who say they want to be like their parents: 39%.

Charis Conn, Ed., What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index.

George Barna -*Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions*

“We discovered that in a typical week, fewer than 10 percent of parents who regularly attend church with their kids read the Bible together, pray together (other than at meal times) or participate in an act of service as a family unit. Even fewer families—1 out of 20—have any type of worship experience together with their kids, other than while they are at church during the typical month.”

“As the family goes so goes the future of the church. Religious life in the home is more influential than the church.” Dr. Peter Benson, Search Institute

Gimme Five with your Small Group

Define small group:

1 Timothy 4 (New King James Version)

12 Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. **13** Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. **14** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. **15** Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. **16** Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

NOTE: What is young? I researched to find out how old Timothy was when he received this letter from Paul. Scholars tell us that he was anywhere from 23 to 47.

John Maxwell – The Maxwell Leadership Bible – “The more you walk, the less you have to talk. Our leadership is more caught than taught. People would rather see a sermon than hear one.”

Pray UP – Where is the source of life, love, joy, peace, and strength? There is a saying in the corporate environment, “Loyalty in public gives leverage in private.” I believe that in the spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, it sounds just a little bit different. “Intimacy in private give leverage in public” How can you teach your closest family and friends about Jesus if you don’t know him yourself? How can God give you the answers you need to care for your small group if you don’t spend time with Him and listen to Him?

Read UP – *What percentage of Christian teenagers have experienced regular reading of the Bible and devotions in the home? 9%*

Give UP – Who will show their family and friends how to give of their time, treasure, and talent? *What percentage of youth have experienced a service-oriented event with a parent as an action of faith? 12%*

Show UP – *A study once disclosed that if both Mom and Dad attend church regularly, 72% of their children remain faithful. If only Dad, 55% remain faithful. If only Mom, 15%. If neither attended regularly, only 6% remain faithful. The statistics speak for themselves--the example of*

parents and adults is more important than all the efforts of the church and Sunday School.
Warren Mueller in *Homemade*, May, 1990.

Build UP –

1 Timothy 4:12 (The Message)

11-14Get the word out. Teach all these things. And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity. Stay at your post reading Scripture, giving counsel, teaching. And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed—keep that dusted off and in use.

Conclusion

When I was a small boy, I attended church every Sunday at a big Gothic Presbyterian bastion in Chicago. The preaching was powerful and the music was great. But for me, the most awesome moment in the morning service was the offertory, when twelve solemn, frock-coated ushers marched in lock-step down the main aisle to receive the brass plates for collecting the offering. These men, so serious about their business of serving the Lord in this magnificent house of worship, were the business and professional leaders of Chicago. One of the twelve ushers was a man named Frank Loesch. He was not a very imposing looking man, but in Chicago he was a living legend, for he was the man who had stood up to Al Capone. In the prohibition years, Capone's rule was absolute. The local and state police and even the Federal Bureau of Investigation were afraid to oppose him. But single handedly, Frank Loesch, as a Christian layman and without any government support, organized the Chicago Crime Commission, a group of citizens who were determined to take Mr. Capone to court and put him away. During the months that the Crime Commission met, Frank Loesch's life was in constant danger. There were threats on the lives of his family and friends. But he never wavered. Ultimately he won the case against Capone and was the instrument for removing this blight from the city of Chicago. Frank Loesch had risked his life to live out his faith. Each Sunday at this point of the service, my father, a Chicago businessman himself, never failed to poke me and silently point to Frank Loesch with pride. Sometime I'd catch a tear in my father's eye. For my dad and for all of us this was and is what authentic living is all about.

Bruce Larson, in Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p.124-5.

So I ask you a question: “What is authentic living all about?” Are you acting out your core beliefs in your home and among your friends? OF COURSE YOU ARE! If the thought of those around you becoming like you scares you then you need to make a change. Change until you living out the kind of faith that pleases God. Your daily habits and lifestyle must strengthen your walk with God.

I have a vision of a church full of powerful families.

- Families that pray together and stay together.
- Small groups that have daily devotions together and live out what they learn.
- Families that give as freely as they have received.
- Families that show up at church to be a blessing, not just receive a blessing.
- Families that respect, honor, and protect each other and are always looking for ways to include others in the most important small group on the planet: their family.

Do you hear what the spirit is saying to the church? Pursue Him passionately in all aspects of Gimme Five and then teach your small group to do the same. You must, and we must be living faith at home!