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Sermon Notes

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Saturating Your Children With God's Word

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Introduction: Our Context and Theirs

Our Context:

T.C. Pinckney who was elected 2nd Vice president of Southern Baptist Convention. He made these comments to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee regarding the state of our youth:

"We are losing our children. Research indicates that 70% of teens who are involved in a church youth group will stop attending church within two years of their high school graduation. Think about that statement. It addresses only teenagers who attend church and participate in the youth group. What does that suggest about those teens who may attend church but do not take part in the youth group, or who do not go to church at all?

In a talk at Southwestern Seminary, Josh McDowell noted that less than 1/3 of today's youth attend church. If he is right and 67% do not go to church and then we lose 70% of those who do, that means that within two years of finishing high school only 10% of young Americans will attend church."

Scott Brown, Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church

What is wrong? We are theologically orthodox. We believe in the authority of the Bible, We are conservative. Our intentions are sincere.

What is the root cause?

I submit that the **Biblical order for the church and the home has been unintentionally abandoned.** The Biblical equipping structures have been set aside, marriages have been dishonored, and fathers are not personally teaching their children anymore. Exemplary fatherhood has been reduced to taking the family to church and showing up at soccer games and recitals.

What is so disturbing is that the churches are aiding and abetting the abandonment.

The men in our churches, instead of plunging their energy into saturating themselves in God's Word; and training the future business, government and church leaders; and preparing their children to be evangelists, deacons, elders, mentors and "Titus

two women"; they spend their strength on activities that ignore their basic roles as leaders and teachers of the next generation.

The result is that we are losing the coming generation to secular lifestyles within the church and massive departures from the church after they leave our evangelical youth groups. As Sally Clarkson has said, "In the absence of Biblical training, our children will follow the way of popular culture".

Biblical order for the church and the home has been lost and needs to be recaptured.

Specifically, we need to reclaim the supremacy (and sufficiency) of the Word of God for the forms and practices of the church, the sanctity of marriage, and the leadership/headship of men in their homes, churches and communities.

Today I want to call on the parents of First Baptist Church to evangelize and disciple their children in 2006 as you never have before. I want you to make the Christian faith of your children the top priority of your life of ministry in 2006. I want you to have a plan for each of your children and to execute it, under the leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. I want you to have daily family devotions, and to meet regularly, perhaps weekly, with each of your children to guide them to set spiritual goals and meet them. More than anything, I want you to saturate their moments in every day life with the Word of God... to talk about Jesus and the Bible when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

I want you to have a multigenerational vision of your family spiritually... to think about your children and their children, and their children after them, and to accept your God-given responsibility to live and teach and speak and pray and spend yourselves for their spiritual heritage, for the glory of God and for generations to come.

And I can think of no better passage to accomplish this than Deuteronomy 6:1-9.

Their Context:

Israel was about to enter the Promised Land. For forty years the Jews had wandered in the desert because the generation of the Exodus had disbelieved God and had refused to enter the Promised Land. Therefore God promised on oath that none of that generation would enter the Promised Land, but that their children would.

After the forty years had passed and the last of that generation had died, the time had come for the next generation to enter the Promised Land. Moses stood in front of the Israelites on the other side of the Jordan and gave them the Law of Moses for the second time... thus "Deuteronomy" means "Second Law" or second giving of the Law.

The warning was clear: If you obey these commands, you will live long in the land you are entering to possess. If you refuse to obey, you will die, and the nation will be evicted.

Of special concern was the pattern of passing on the Law of Moses from generation to generation. That shaping of the children by the parents was essential to the continuation of Israel in the Promised Land... and it is the focus of our passage today

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. ⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

I. A Multigenerational Vision of Spiritual Protection and Prosperity

A. The World's Most Strategic and Effective Evangelism

1. Recent meeting with Deacons at Shoney's

- a. Talked about evangelism at FBC
- b. Discussed various strategies for reaching Triangle with the gospel
- c. Talked about the major identifiable mission fields
 - i) Inner-city
 - ii) College/University students
 - iii) Internationals
 - iv) Medical community
 - v) White collar hi-tech, RTP workers
 - vi) Large population upswing as Triangle Region voted one of the top places in the USA to live
- d. Discussed the difficulties of reaching people for Christ in modern, isolated, fast-paced American way of life

2. I spoke up: “The most strategically important and effective place for evangelism and discipleship in the world is at home, with the parent to child relationship.”
3. God has a MULTIGENERATIONAL strategy for filling the world with His glory
 - a. We Americans have lost a sense of multigenerational heritage
 - b. We scarcely know our ancestors, nor do we expect to be known by our descendents
 - c. We are shockingly myopic in terms of a multigenerational view of life... of shaping a legacy which will bear fruit for a hundred years to the glory and praise of God
 - d. God here lays out a multigenerational view... a work that could last us all our lives... from growing up in a godly home to crafting a godly home for our children to being godly grandparents and great grandparents
 - e. It is part of how God originally crafted the human race

B. God’s Original Strategy to Fill the World with His Glory

1. God created a world filled with His glory
2. God commanded Adam and Eve to fill the world with His image... by having lots and lots of children and by having them spread out all over the surface

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.

3. Sin defaced the image of God, so that the human race spread the disease of sin rather than the image of God all over the surface of the earth
4. God promised Eve that the seed of the woman would some day crush the serpent’s head

C. Old Testament: A Multigenerational View

1. God called Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees and made him an extraordinary promise
2. The godly seed of Abraham’s line was his gift to the human race... it was Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world
3. However, essential to Christ coming into the world was Abraham’s call to train his family in godliness

4. Moses commanded the Israelites to take a multigenerational view as well

vs. 1-3 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ² so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³ Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

- a. Notice the number of generations mentioned here
 - i) Vs. 3: The Land the God of your fathers promised you
 - ii) You
 - iii) Your children
 - iv) Their children after them

That's at least FOUR GENERATIONS mentioned here

- b. In order for Israel to survive and thrive in the Promised Land, they had to pass on a multigenerational view of godliness, of obedience to the Laws of Moses

D. Spiritual Protection and Prosperity Then and Now

1. For Israel

- a. Prosperity: The land is rich and blessed by God... a "land flowing with milk and honey"
 - i) "That it may go well with you"
 - ii) That you may enjoy long life"
 - iii) That you may multiply greatly

Notice the repetition of the original command from God to Adam, again repeated to Noah, and now through Moses... THAT YOU MAY MULTIPLY GREATLY

Nowhere in Scripture does God command you to limit the size of your family, or that children are anything but a blessing from God... part of the prosperity that God had in mind for Israel was a vast multiplication of the nation

- iv) God was giving it to Israel on condition... obedience to the laws of Moses

- v) Central to this: parents had to teach their children to FEAR the Lord AND to OBEY His commands, decrees and laws
- b. Protection: Israel was surrounded by spiritual enemies all around... Canaanites, with their detestable practices, including child sacrifice and sexual orgies
 - i) Only by fearing the Lord would Israel be protected
 - ii) Only by keeping His commandments would Israel be protected
- 2. For us
 - a. Prosperity: not merely a Promised Land but eternity in heaven with God... and spiritual blessing on earth as we live and serve Him here
 - b. Protection: we also are surrounded by spiritual enemies... the corrupt culture, the bizarre religions, materialism... and the devil behind all of it
- 3. The only protection: clinging close to the word of God... hearing and obeying

“commandments, statutes, judgments”

It is not enough just for parents to teach their children what the commandments ARE... they are to be taught to OBEY them. Actually, the more of God’s word we know and do not do what He has commanded, the worse will our judgment be in the end

Deuteronomy 6:1-3 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the rules that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. ³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

II. The Centerpiece: Loving God With All You Are

A. The Greatest Commandment in the Bible

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

- 1. Jesus called this the greatest commandment in the Bible
- 2. It begins with a command to LISTEN... “Hear, O Israel...”

- a. Ideas about God do not originate with man
- b. Rather they are revealed to man
- c. If God does not reveal Himself to us, we will not know Him
- d. God has chosen to reveal Himself by the WORD

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- 3. God here reveals His essential nature... He is ONE
 - a. There is one God, and there is only one God
 - b. God is one in Himself... essential to understanding the Trinity
 - i) Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are perfectly one
 - ii) One God, eternally existing in three persons
 - iii) Also God is one within Himself... never a shifting shadow of doubt, of self-contradiction, of inconsistency, of internal struggle, of second-guessing, of His emotions pulling one way and His intellect another
- 4. BASED ON THAT SELF-REVELATION... God gives to the human race the greatest command there is...

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

- 5. This is the whole duty of man... to love God

B. What It Means to Love God

- 1. It means to cherish Him, to consider Him most valuable, most precious, most glorious
- 2. It means to esteem Him above all others, the center of your universe
- 3. It means to find your pleasure in Him, and to be delighted in what delights Him
- 4. The devils know about God, they devils believe God is one... but they SHUDDER
- 5. We know that there is one God and we are DELIGHTED by Him
- 6. This is what we are COMMANDED by God to do... God is here commanding us to LOVE Him

C. “With All Your Heart, Soul, and Strength”

1. This love must be so all-pervasive and so all-consuming that it enervates every fiber of our being
2. God’s words search out and probe every part of the human person
3. There is no aspect of our existence that was not created by God
4. AND there is no aspect of our existence that is not here CLAIMED by God
5. Here is rebellion destroyed... here is hypocrisy uncovered and the wriggling writhing worms of discontent in the Almighty brought to full light... God will have no fake love, no counterfeit worship, no facades, no acting, no hypocrisy
6. Genuine, to the core love is here commanded... the very thing that cannot be done without God creating us new in Christ
7. Here as much as any other place is needed the great insight from St. Augustine

“Give what you command and command what you will.”

If God does not grant a united heart to love Him as we ought, we could not help but disobey this single greatest command

D. The Great Rival Then and Now: Idolatry

1. Sin has left humans half-hearted creatures
2. We do not do anything wholeheartedly

C.S. Lewis: “If we consider the unblushing promise of reward and the staggering nature of rewards promised in the Gospels it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased.

3. God intended our heart to love Him, our souls to worship Him, our bodies to serve Him’
4. The great rival is IDOLATRY... as it was for Israel and the Canaanites... it is cherishing and worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator

5. America is a land of idols every bit as much as was Canaan... and the danger is as great for us as it was for Israel

III. Upon Your Heart First

vs. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

A. Parents: It All Starts with You

1. Moses was about to command parents to train their children in the Lord
2. But first he speaks to them... to their own hearts
3. You cannot pass on to your children a faith and a love you do not possess yourselves
4. If you do not cherish the word of God, neither will your children
5. God is here commanding parents to cherish the WORDS of God... the very words He speaks to us
6. It is not unreasonable to extend this to the whole Bible, for all Scripture is God-breathed, all Scripture is the word of God

Simple diagnostic: Do you demonstrate a love for the words of God by the way you personally study the Bible, memorize it, talk about it, listen to sermons... saturate your own mind in it? Do your children see you cherishing the word of God?

B. Having God's Laws Written Upon Your Heart

1. This is a matter of the heart... of what you personally love and delight in
2. "What is on your heart?" That expression means what is truly consuming your thoughts right now... if I share something that's on my heart, I mean it is something that has consumed my thoughts

C. The Blessings of the New Covenant

1. This is the blessing of the New Covenant
2. The Jews merely had the words of Moses written on tablets of stone, then copied by the scribes on papyrus or lambskins
3. The words of God remained external... something on the outside of them
4. In the New Covenant, God has promised to write His laws upon our hearts

Hebrews 8:10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

D. The Holy Spirit's Role

1. The Holy Spirit is given to all of God's children to make this a reality
2. It is the unique role of the Holy Spirit to enflame the word of God within your own heart... He illuminates it to you... He causes the Words of God to come to life within the very core of your being
3. He is the one who motivates you to study it; who calls to mind what you have studied; who gives you insights and moves you to obey

Bottom line: you cannot teach your children to cherish something you do not cherish yourself

Riddle: Q: How do you teach a parrot to speak? A: Have a larger vocabulary than the parrot!

Perhaps you need to begin by repenting and confessing to God that you have not cherished the word of God... His words have not been upon your hearts

Perhaps you need to resolve by the power of the Spirit to cherish the Word of God in 2006... to read through the Bible this year; to keep a notebook of observations; to memorize a book of the Bible, or perhaps just a chapter to start

IV. A Special Word to Fathers

Vs. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

A. The Father's Role is Vital

1. God has established the father's headship in the marriage and in the home
2. It is therefore primarily the father's role to train the children in godliness
3. It is not an accident that Deuteronomy 6 focuses on the father-son relationship

NASB Deuteronomy 6:1-3 "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. Certainly, in the breadth of Scripture it is clear that God ordains that BOTH fathers and mothers train their children... and that children honor BOTH their fathers and their mothers

Proverbs 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

5. However, the final responsibility for child training in Christ rests with the father

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

B. The Original Sin: Male Passivity

1. Genesis 2:15 God commanded Adam to serve and protect the Garden of Eden
2. By extension, once Eve was created out of his body, God wanted Adam to serve and protect her
3. In all the time Eve was being tempted by the devil, Adam stood silently by and did not interfere... HE SAID NOTHING!!!
4. Thus the sin of omission (Adam's failure to protect his wife) preceded the sin of commission... either one of them eating the fruit
5. The sin of male passivity in the home continues to this day
 - a. Men are content to let their wives train the children
 - b. Men think themselves good fathers if they merely bring home a good salary and attend some of the kids plays and ballgames
 - c. Christian fathers think themselves good fathers if they add to that simple list a few other duties: praying before meals and bringing their kids faithfully to church to let others train them spiritually
 - d. I contend today that God is demanding more than that from Christian fathers

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

C. Fathers Need a Plan for Discipling Their Children

1. Fathers need bring each child before the Lord in prayer
2. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and their godly wives, fathers then need to develop a plan, a strategy for helping each child advance in Christ in 2006
3. Specific goals need to be set... goals for character formation, spiritual disciplines like prayer and bible reading and scripture memorization
4. A regular system of meeting with your children, of challenging them, of praying with them and for them needs to be set up
5. You need to think what kinds of experiences will help them develop as great servants of Christ... what ways they will develop compassion for the poor and a heart for the lost; what ministries can they do that will shape their whole lives
6. DON'T LEAVE IT TO OTHERS... I have never met a more godly youth pastor than Andy Winn... we are tremendously blessed to have him here... BUT it is not Andy Winn who is ultimately accountable for the discipleship of the youth at FBC... it is the fathers and mothers themselves... Andy and I both agree on this... we agree that the major purpose of youth ministry at FBC is to help the real youth ministers—the dads and moms—to disciple their own sons and daughters and prepare them for life

D. Fathers Need Accountability to Execute the Plan

1. Set your goals, make your plans... but then have someone hold you accountable
2. I am calling on the fathers who have children still at home to find another man to whom you can be accountable concerning the discipleship of your family
3. Fathers: is there another man here at FBC with whom you can share your dreams and plans and vision for your family? One who will gently hold you accountable to what you say the Lord is leading you to do?

V. Application

One Single Central Application: The Family Devotion Time

What is Family Worship? What is the Family Devotion time? It is simply this: this time when the family gathers around the Scriptures for Bible instruction, for mutual prayer, for worship, for encouragement in Christ and for conviction of sin.

It is best led by the father if possible. Fathers, I am speaking to you and urging you to take ownership of family devotional life:

J.C. Ryle said, "I charge you, fathers, take every pain to train your children in the way they should go. I charge you not merely for the sake of your children's souls; I charge you for the sake of your own future comfort and peace. Truly your own happiness in great measure depends on it. Children have caused the saddest tears that man has ever had to shed." Such sorrows are heavy enough when fathers have faithfully discharged their duty yet still live with a prodigal son or daughter. But who can bear the reproach of a stinging conscience that condemns us because we never brought them up in the fear of the Lord? How much better if we can say: "Son, we taught you God's Word; we wrestled for your soul; we lived a God-fearing example before you. You didn't see in us a sinless piety but an unfeigned faith. You know we sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Your conscience will bear witness that Christ is the center of this home. We sang together, prayed together, and talked together. If you turn away from this light and these privileges, and insist on going your own way, we can only pray that all your Bible study, praying, and singing will not rise up against you in the Judgment Day—and that you will come to your senses before it is too late."

We must so live and conduct family worship that our children will not be able to say, "I am being bound hand and foot, and being cast away into everlasting darkness because of your parental carelessness, your hypocrisy, your complacency about the things of God. Father, mother, why weren't you faithful to me?"

Joel Beeke, in a tract on family worship gave some great exhortations:

□ *Assistance in child-rearing.* Family worship helps promote family harmony in times of affliction, sickness, and death. It offers greater knowledge of the Scriptures and growth in personal piety both for yourself and your children. It nurtures wisdom in how to face life, openness to speak about meaningful questions, and a closer relationship between father and children. Strong bonds established in family worship in early years may be a great help to teens in years to come. These teens may be spared from much sin when recalling family prayers and worship. In times

of temptation, they may say: “How can I offend a father who daily wrestles with God on my behalf?”

The shortness of time. “For what is your life? It is even a mist, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes” (James 4:14). Daily training is only for a mere twenty years or less, and even those years are not guaranteed. We ought to conduct family worship in the awareness of how brief life is in terms of never-ending eternity. Children will sense this reality if family worship is done with earnestness, love, warmth, and consistency.

Love for God and His church. Godly parents want to glorify God and serve His church. They want to give the church spiritually mature sons and daughters. Pray that your sons and daughters may be pillars in the church. Blessed are the parents who can one day see among the crowd of worshipers their own sons and daughters. Family worship is the foundation of such a future. We as heads of households are accountable for the spiritual upbringing of our families. We must do everything that we can to establish and maintain family worship in our homes. We have been given biblical examples of family worship—will we not follow them? Has God placed in our homes the souls of creatures made in His image, and will we not use all of our abilities to see our children bow in worship before God and His Son, Jesus Christ? Will we not strive to promote the Christ-centered piety in our home that family worship is so well-suited to promote? Will we trifle with the spiritual nurture, with the eternity of our own family members?

Regular family worship will make our homes a more blessed place to live. It will make them more harmonious, more holy. It will help them honor God.

If your children are grown and out of our home, it is still not too late to do the following:

- Pray for them. Pray that God may make crooked sticks straight and bring good out of evil.
- Confess your sin to God and to your children. Give them sound literature on family worship.
- Speak to and pray with your grandchildren. Do for them what you didn’t do for your children.
- Begin family worship with your spouse.
- Do not become discouraged and give up family worship, no matter what happens. Start over. Press forward. Be realistic. Don’t expect perfection from your efforts or your children’s responses. All your perfection is in

your great High Priest, who intercedes for you and has promised to be gracious to believers and their seed.

- Beg the Lord to bless your feeble efforts and save your children and grandchildren. Plead with Him to take them in His arms for all eternity. May God graciously grant His Spirit to assist you, for the good of souls, and for His name's sake.