

Building a Culture of Discipleship ▪ Deuteronomy 6:1–9

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Series: Holy and Sacred Lives

Today's text has connections both to our 40-year milestone, but also sets us up for our next series, the 10 commandments.

From my experience, many Christians have never been exposed to teaching or exposition on the 10 commandments.

The major catechisms that came out of the Reformation include a section on the 10 Commandments (Westminster, Heidelberg)

Which means that pastors and parents believed that knowing the 10 commandments have been a vital and healthy part of healthy discipleship process.

- Yet for whatever reasons, Christians seemed to have gotten away from learning them and incorporating them into discipleship.

—Maybe it's because some have given into the trend that we need to “unhitch” from the OT.

—Maybe some fear slipping into some form of legalism, becoming like Pharisees, and losing the Gospel focus.

—Personally, I think it may be tied to the shift away from the objective to the subjective; from authority to autonomy.

Whatever the reason, it's sad because God has given these enduring words.

Uses of the Law

There is, historically what's been called, the 3 uses or functions of the Law (originated with Calvin).

1) Reveals God's righteousness and our unrighteousness.

This is Paul's testimony.

Romans 7:7 ESV

What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

› It also drives us to Christ

Romans 10:4 ESV

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

2. Restrains evil. This does not mean it changes the heart—but it does give a standard for humanity as to what is right/wrong.

Even my non-Christian neighbor does not want me to lie and steal. Across the centuries and cultures, adultery has been considered morally wrong and there are marriage laws to keep things in check.

3. Teaches believers God's will for holy and sacred living.

Ephesians 2:10 ESV

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

› Or another way to see it: it is to build up discipleship.

- Now the 10 Commandments are found both in Ex. 20 & Dt. 5—just some very minor differences.
- The book of Deuteronomy in a nutshell is a series of sermons that Moses preached after he had led Israel for 40 years.
- It's restating the covenant to a new generation of believers as they prepare for what God has next.

- It seems like a fitting place to camp as we give thanks to the Lord leading TRB for 40 years— hopefully not a wilderness wandering!

Psalm 119:90 (ESV)

Your faithfulness endures to all generations.

Big Idea:

God's people have always been called to build a culture of discipleship.

We hear two very clear calls on how to build discipleship.

Build your discipleship on how you hear (1-6)

- These words come as an exhortation.
- 2 times there is an explicit command to hear. (v3 & 4)

1) V3: Hear for flourishing

- It's a careful hearing that the Lord calls us to.

› Careful hearing leads to doing, which leads to a flourishing life (v3)

- It's also a life-long responsibility (v2) - "all the days of our life"

So for those who have been with TRB the majority of the 4 decades...the call is still the same!

- The flourishing is also tied to multiplying (v3)—a mandate rooted in creation and given to Israel (Gen. 1:28; Gen. 35:11)

It's also seen in the early church.

Acts 6:7 (ESV)

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.

Healthy things multiply—

So if our discipleship is built on careful hearing of God's Word—it leads to flourishing and also multiplying other disciples.

2) V4-6: Hear to love

- We are to hear so that we love well.
- Now v5 is called the Shema (Heb. word for *Hear*).
- It becomes the central confession of faith for the Hebrew people and part of daily prayer.

First, the Lord is One.

—That means it's not gods (plural) but One God we worship.

- › Our call is to love him whole-heartedly and exclusively

Here we have what Jesus says is the first and greatest commandment; a summary of the entire Law.

It's love...

Heart—the motivation of a person. In Hebrew understanding, it's more than emotions. The heart is what controls the mind and will.

Soul—not strictly the immaterial, but the essence (being). "Love God with you whole being."

Strength—Physical. Actions. With our hands, feet, lips.

Paraphrase: Love the Lord will a whole-hearted devoted. Love him with all you got!

- It's important to see that love is not an emotional idea, or a feeling, but a *covenant commitment*.

What does that look like? Think of the man and woman—they exchange vows in their early 20's. With sparkles in their eyes, there is a lot of feeling and emotions.

40 years later, the wife begins early stages of dementia which ends up turning into full blown Alzheimer's.

The husband patiently cares for his wife for the next decade in her sickness.

When sheer emotion is no longer the driving force, the vow, the commitment, the covenant still stands...and that drives the love.

- So it is, in our spiritual lives.

Look at what happens to our hearts in the new covenant....

Jeremiah 31:33 ESV

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Did you hear that? The Law gets written in our hearts.

Through regeneration, our radical heart change has happened. From being dead to God's law, we actually delight in God's Law!

Hearing God's Word with an open heart of obedience, is the disciples DNA.

Build your discipleship on intentional teaching (7-9)

- Here we have a strong call to intentional teaching—passing on.

Notice the progression

—Hear. Do. Teach.

- It's the Ezra 7:10 pattern.

Study. Do. Teach.

Or, you have to be a disciple before you can make other disciples.

- We may call this intentional *informal* teaching.
- That means that it's teaching without having an official title or role that puts you in front of a group.

It is how God has designed the mass amount of discipleship to be built.

- Back in v2, the vision is 3 generations.
- Again, we see continuity in how the church built discipleship.

(God's people have always been called to this.)

2 Timothy 2:2 ESV

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.

- Now the family is the immediate context. (v7)
- "Teach diligently".
- The Hebrew has the idea of *engraving something to make a permanent mark*.

As heads of our home, dads, this is our call—to build intentional discipleship in our family...in our children.

Are we doing it diligently?

We can be diligent in our jobs, hobbies, or watching the football game.

But are we diligent with this highest calling?

- › Don't underestimate, undervalue, or outsource this high calling to make a permanent mark.

How and when? (7-9)

We get a list of opportunities:

Home—sitting

Travel—walking

Early

Late

The Lord's plan for discipleship was not a sabbath only approach...we might say a church only approach—one day a week.

This informal intentional discipleship is a 24/7 calling!

Developing discipleship is a lifestyle!

The reality is that we are all being disciplined by someone. Some voices are the predominant shapers of how we think, act, and live.

- The immediate application is to the family, but there is a broader extension to the church.

Paul/Timothy—

Paul calls him “his true child in the faith”.

- Finally, V8-9 = wear them and decorate with them!
- It's hard to know if this is to be symbolic or literal.

But people did (and still do) take it literally.

Both orthodox Jews and those who shop at Hobby Lobby.

- In Jesus's day, he had to expose the religious leaders who did this, but missed the heart...had no love...missed the point.

Matthew 23:5 ESV

They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

It comes with a caution. If we are taking God's law seriously, which I hope we do, and if we take the call to Holy and Sacred lives seriously...which I pray we do, then...

- › We *always* need to guard ourselves from condescending pride; spiritual arrogance that the enemy wants us to fall into.

Jesus tells a powerful parable as a warning in Lk 18:9.

Luke 18:9 ESV

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

The trap, the danger, is to go here: start trusting in ourselves, and looking down on others.

The worst thing—instead of building disciples, we build our *own spiritual pride and ego—that ends up lacking all compassion, mercy, grace, and humility.*

That happens every time we take our eyes off Christ and his Gospel!

Conclusion:

As we celebrate a milestone of life at TRB—we need to keep in front of us the mission Jesus calls us to.

God's people have always been called to build a culture of discipleship.

It's been built well for 4 decades, by God's grace let us keep building for God's glory and the good of his people, and our great joy in the Lord Jesus.