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Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family  
For the Love of the Family™ Series  
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## "Not Forgetting the Children"

A great concern of God in the Old Testament was the second generation (children) not living for God. Israel is a picture of this not happening. This is also not happening in many Independent-Fundamental churches today. Most young people who grow up in a Christian home do not go on to live for or serve the Savior. Judges 2:10, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there **arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.**" Did you notice the phrase here "which knew not the Lord." They were not saved. We must desire, pray, and work to the end that our children would really repent of their sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior. However, our responsibility does not end there.

Please notice the next phrase in the verse, "Nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." The children did not know what God had done for the parents! The end result was that the children forsook the Lord. These children would have enjoyed hearing about the exciting exploits of their fathers and grandfathers and how the Lord had intervened for them. How sad that the leaders and the parents did not bother to tell them.

One of the principle truths that Moses surely taught Joshua and the Israelites is found in Deuteronomy 6. Over and over again God instructed the adults to teach the children the oracles of God, Deuteronomy 6:5-12. In Deuteronomy 6:5-7, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, **shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children,** and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." These words (Word of God) are to be in the heart. You are not going to tell your children something you

do not care about. What happened in Israel was their religion became mechanical. They did not have a real relationship with God. They had forsaken God in their heart even though they mechanically went about religious activities. Their heart got colder until the things of God did not mean anything anymore. They did not care about the Lord and what he had done; they were only interested in themselves and what they wanted. They desired to go their own way and be independent of God, Proverbs 14:12, 14.

Notice what God told them, "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," Deuteronomy 6:7. What were they to do to ensure that their children would serve the Lord? "Teach them diligently" unto their children. The word diligently means with careful steady effort. It means they were to do it with great care. Also, they were to make sure with great care that their children understood it. God said if they did not do this as He had instructed, there would be tragic results. Deuteronomy 6:12, "Then beware lest thou forget the Lord." When were they to instruct their children? Deuteronomy 6:7 says, "when thou sittest in thine house." Let me ask you a serious question to ponder. When was the last time you sat down and spent an extended period of time just talking about the Lord with your children? When have you explained to your children what God has done for you? When have you explained the spiritual truths of God's Word to them?

To most Christian parents today they would call this a time issue, when in reality it is a heart issue. Parents your children need to hear from you what God has done and is doing in your life. Of course the question would be, is God doing anything in your life? If not, we need to check our heart and ask a serious question, where am I in my personal relationship with the Lord? Do I have a real relationship with Him? Do I have an intimate, personal, passionate relationship with Him? Is my relationship with the Lord more important than any other relationship that I have in my life?

Unfortunately, in many instances, if a child does hear anything from their parents today it is negative things about God, God's house, and God's people etc. They do not hear the correct things. They do not hear things that will help them spiritually and help them have a heart for God and build their spiritual relationship with Him.

Deuteronomy 6:7 also says, "When thou walkest by the way". Have you ever as a parent ever walked with your child and talked with your child about the good things of the Lord? Have you talked about what God is showing you in personal relationship with Him?

Deuteronomy 6:7 also says, "when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." This is to be an ongoing process. Not only should we be telling them about the

Word of God, we should be encouraging them to read, apply, and practice it daily for themselves. We should be encouraging them to pursue their own real spiritual relationship with the Lord.

If we do not do this, a timeless principle of God will happen. They will not grow up to serve God and they will forsake Him, Deuteronomy 6:12. We are to teach them with all diligence, in all places, and at all times. We need to keep our relationship with the Lord and their relationship with the Lord in front of them at all times. There must be a diligent communication about the things of God in front of them. This does not need to be a forced issue. If you are forcing the things of God down their throat, they will move away from it. You must get their heart, Proverbs 23:26.

God told the Israelites repeatedly to answer the questions of their children and tell them of Him and what He had done, Deuteronomy 6:20-21.

Have you ever shared with your children when someone you have been praying for got saved? As a family we should pray for different individuals and make sure the children are praying for them as well. We should talk about when prayer is answered. Why? Because that shows them what God has done. How important is this? Notice in the following precious verses what God says about making sure your children understand this, Deuteronomy 4:9, 11:18-19, 29:29, 31:12-13. God even answers the question as to why we should do this, "that they (our children) may learn, and fear, the Lord your God." Our children need to learn to fear (respect) the Lord. Our children will never learn to fear the Lord unless we do. I would encourage you that your children are never too old for you to start this principle.

Before we criticize the Israelites too harshly, let's examine ourselves for a moment. What has the Lord done for us in years past? How has the Lord intervened in our behalf during particularly difficult times? Have we shared with our children the wonderful things God has done for us? If someone had occasion to ask our sons or daughters about it, how would they answer?

God is making it plain that there should be open spiritual communication in the home. In fact, it must be there.

I think there are three reasons we should be open in our communication and share with our children:

1. So they will be prepared for the trials and difficulties they will experience in the future as they seek to live for and serve God.
2. We grow from experience. God uses experiences for each of us to grow in our walk and learning to trust Him.

3. How about the faith of a child? If you and I do not share the trials with our children, we are not taking advantage of their believing faith and helping them to pray about the difficulties of life. Children can pray and experience answers to prayer that will help them to learn to trust God.

The church today has the same problem the Israelites had many years ago. We go through the motions of teaching our children God's Word and we forget (ignore) to tell them what God has done. The Israelites went to the Temple and went through the religious ritual, but it was forgotten when they got home. Other things were more important than their relationship with God. The result was a huge disaster. Today, television, sports, religious and secular activities, job, and a selfish me, mine, my philosophy have brought us to a point just as the Israelites were, a spiritual mess. "We forget the children." The church or school will never resurrect what the home puts to death. It is our responsibility to teach our children these principles, Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 22:6.

We need to make a diligent effort not to forget the children. If we do, they will forget the Lord and the results in their life will be disastrous. This is a timeless spiritual principle of God.