

Deuteronomy 060412-052211
Bridge of Hope
May 22, 2011

“Legacy: ReThinking Family Values-Imagine the End”

(Opening Sketch: Mrs. Faithfire)

We have been looking at Legacy through the eyes of Moses in Scripture so lets take a look at our base Scripture today from Deuteronomy Chapter 6 verses 4-12:

Deuteronomy 6:4-12 (NIV)

⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You 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. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

¹⁰“And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, ¹²then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

In one amazing moment, Moses establishes a frame of reference everything-It’s all about God and nothing else. Everything is and has always been about God and if our lives do not start with God, we may and undoubtedly have ended up in the wrong place.

(Personal story: Lori Valenzisi)

The last weekend of April, Tony and I were at the Ohio Student Ministries Fine Arts/Fun Arts festival. We’ve been working on this team for 8 years. We get to see kids using their gifts and encourage them to develop those gifts and use them to bring attention to Jesus.

It’s always so good to see long distance friends every once in a while. We ran into our friends, Pastor Aaron & Jamie Taylor. We caught up on the latest news of each other’s lives for a while and then Aaron said to Tony, “Remember when you were my adult leader coming to Fine Arts Festival, our room leader?” I’m sure that visions of 4 teen guys jumping on the bed and drinking Mountain Dew all night long came into his mind. We smiled and I’m sure we all felt a little older at that moment. Aaron is pastoring his own church in Painesville and has a couple of kids of his own now. We got to visit the room Caleb, Aaron’s son, was playing a piano solo. It was the only performance I got to see. I really wanted to be there for this one. Caleb is 8. Caleb was nervous and I told him as he was waiting for the judges to get ready he could sit at the piano and get comfortable. He looked at his parents and they nodded. The judges were ready and he started his solo. He played every single note perfect and when he finished his last chord, the room erupted into applause and praise

from the youth group, parents, and other kids in his kids ministry. It was overwhelming to experience the generations of influence who were present in that room.

See, earlier that morning at breakfast, Tony looked around the restaurant and saw all of the church groups and said to me, "I wonder if these people have any idea they are making memories that will last for a lifetime?"

I wonder if Aaron's grandparents thought for a moment when they decided to be pioneers of this church, that a single, skateboard riding, guitar playing guy would spend time with their grandson and invest in his life so that he could become a man of God who has children of his own and pastors hundreds of people and creates memories for a lifetime?

- **Focus:** What we are talking about today is the first step to truly leaving a Godly Legacy....and to leave a Godly Legacy we must be able to Imagine the End... To imagine the end we must be willing to fast-forward to the final chapter of the lives of the next generation and ask: Who do we really want them to become?
 - To Imagine the End we need to have perspective on what matters most and we need to have focus. As was mentioned in our earlier discussion about Legacy, the people of Israel were in danger of being spoiled by the beauty, majesty and bounty of the promised-land.
 - Without focus, we too can also have our eyes fixed in the wrong place, which then leads us to lose our priorities....Yes, the promised land was the wrong place for the people of Israel to have their eyes fixed...and Moses was reminding them of this as they were about to enter into that promise....what good is the promised land if the One who made the promise was simply an after-thought...their focus needed to be on God....
 - The same is true for us.....
 - We need to live, work, engage in relationships and yes, even parent from a single-minded perspective. We need to focus on what matters most....
 - Reggie Joiner says in his book, Think Orange, "As a parent, I am quick to pick up the yardstick the culture hands me and measure success for my children by a superficial standard. Over time, I start thinking the most important things is for them to attend the right college and find the right career.... marry the right partner, live in the right neighborhoods and have the right friends." ¹
 - How can we have focus if we do not know what matters most....really matters the most? Its very easy to lose focus and expend a lot of time and energy on things that matter but not the things that matter most....take a look at what Reggie says next: "I expend enormous energy to make sure I instill the right values. These things are all important; it's just that they are not what's most important. Imagining the end is about focusing my priorities on what matters most." ²

- **Familiar:** Since the time Moses spoke the immortal words of the Shema, which is the Hebrew title given to the section of Scripture we are referencing in Deuteronomy 6, every practicing Jewish family would recite it twice a day. It was written on doors and strategically placed throughout their homes as a reminder of God's role in their daily

¹ Reggie Joiner, Think Orange pg. 54

² Reggie Joiner, Think Orange pg. 54

lives. This practice basically conveys this truth:that through the recitation or proclamation of the Shema, one is a living witness testifying to the truth of its message.

- The Shema's job was to realign the family's values system along with the entire community of Yahweh-followers when it sometimes gets distracted. It's simply a tool to help keep families and specifically parents to stay on course....
- This course is important because as we have discussed, parenting and being responsible for the next generation is no easy task and none of us do it perfectly. This is why it is important to remember that when you remind yourself frequently that God is God, it doesn't cause you to stress more; it causes you to trust more.
- Each family has an opportunity to create a physical environment that is purposefully designed to remind each family member that "the Lord our God is one". Why is this important? This is important because of the nature of what is spiritual-it cannot be seen, touched or felt. Therefore whatever can be seen, touched or felt gets more attention. Because of this reality, we must constantly remind ourselves that there is a larger narrative or story at work and God is at the center of that story.
- How many of us will be honest with ourselves that life sometimes is bigger than we are....there are times when things are bigger than my capacity to think, dream or even do. Times of difficulty within a family can seem larger than life...and sometimes they are.
- Because of this reality, we can allow fear to grip us and it paralyzes us. What happens next is hard to admit but its true: we lose faith...mostly because we lose our focus.
- What is required in moments like these is simple surrender. Surrender to the idea that God has a bigger story in which He wants to demonstrate His love and grace...because without it....His story of love and grace.... there is no resolution. Reggie Joiner says it this way:
- "Sometimes I don't have an explicit revelation from God that tells me immediately what I'm supposed to do. Sometimes there are no simple solutions, no clear paths of action, no quick fixes; there is just God." ³

We need to be reminded daily of the truth of God's sovereignty and His presence in our lives. There needs to be something tangible, real and familiar that your family can focus on to keep the reality of God in front of you...This thought is captured well in this video clip:

- **Follow:** When you imagine the end, who do you envision our kids....the kids of the next generation following?
 - We have this thing in us as parents or even just as adults that tells the next generation... "Follow Me"can I just be transparent with you and tell you from the perspective of a youth pastor and dad of a teen...they simply are not following us....
 - I think I am discovering why...We are missing the phrase that should come right after "Follow Me"....we should be saying "as I follow Christ"....Paul had it right....

³ Reggie Joiner, Think Orange pg. 55

- Its one thing to be a leader or a person of influence, its quite another when we try to be God in their lives....Do you think you can instruct them better and take better care of our kids than God? Do you love them more than God? Do your dreams and hopes for them supersede God's?
- Good church leaders work very hard at keeping Jesus at the center of everything and so should parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and even family group members. Every aspect of life should revolve around Christ....not around parents or parental influences themselves or their dreams for the kids. We cannot make ourselves substitutes for God.
- *God uses imperfect people to direct the next generation to a perfect God.*

Conclusion: In order to do this correctly , we must fast-forward to who they are to become. When I take the time to imagine the end for my kids and all of those who belong to the next generation, I am much more equipped to discern with clarity what matters most.

I definitely want to foster a healthy good relationship with my kids...but I am not the most important relationship in their life....it is much more important that my kids and every kid I influence be pursuing a right relationship with God....first and foremost.

What matters most? Is it ourselves? Our dreams not only for ourselves, but for those who will follow us? We need to be willing to establish an environment in the home and in our Body that will allow us to focus on God being the center of our world.

Maybe God is saying this to us about our kids or even the next generation:

(Reggie Joiner, Think Orange, page 56)

"I am not trying to make them happy

I want them to really live.

In the middle of their pain I can be a better friend than anyone...

even you.

I am the only one who can really love them unconditionally, forgive them forever and be a perfect Father.

So, maybe you just need to trust Me
enough so they can see Me.

Besides...

with all of your issues,
I think its probably better for them to trust Me
more than you.

Isn't it more important for them to love Me more
than they love you?

I can heal their hearts;
You can't.

I can give them eternal life;
You can't.

I am God;
You're not."⁴

This week,

When you turn on a light switch, remember that God is the light of your life.

When you turn on the faucet remember the Holy Spirit that continually is available to fill us up to overflowing.

When you open up an email or read the mail, that God's word is true and sustains you.

When you sit down to eat, remember our Heavenly Father who provides for our every need.

When you are in your car, that God has plans for you, even when we don't understand them all.

When we pass the door posts of our homes, we should remember the Son who is the Word....who is the embodiment of the Shema.

⁴ Reggie Joiner, Think Orange pg. 56