

Moses' Magnificent Obsession

Intro: In our Wednesday Bible class, we've been reading Moses' last words to Israel before His death. When you know you are going to die, and you love the people you're with and you know you don't have much time with them, surely you wouldn't waste words on unimportant things. If you listen carefully to Moses' words, you hear what was important to him at the end of His great life. He wanted His people to be faithful to the covenant they had made with God and to transmit the truth from generation to generation so that God's people would be blessed rather than cursed.

As Moses solemnly addressed the millions of Israelites before him, he stood before them an aged man of 120 years, a father who had raised children, and the prophet who had led the nation. We could learn a lot from this great man about raising our children. Let's consider what Moses said to the parents in his audience.

We hold our children's future in our hands.

Moses wanted those parents to see that they held the future of their children in their hands and that they could help ensure a long and prosperous future for them.

God himself had expressed this wish.

Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! (Deut. 5:29)

And Moses sought to help the people see it!

So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time." (Deut. 10:40)

But God also wanted the parents to see that they could ensure a horrible existence for their children and grandchildren. He warned them that in their hands was the fate of their own children for disaster.

Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes shall look on and yearn for them continually; but there shall be nothing you can do. (Deut. 28:32)

And so we must learn! Our values, our priorities not only affect ourselves; they reach to the generations to come. How we conduct ourselves may determine not only whether we are saved, but whether our children or our grandchildren are saved. Give thought to your life not only for yourself, but for all those who will come after you! To some degree each of us will be responsible for what happens in their lives. Will they bless us? Or, will they not know why their lives are full of difficulty and pain?

As parents we must be committed to learning the truth ourselves.

God made provisions to make sure all Israel learned His law.

God instructed Moses to teach the nation.

But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I give them to possess.’ (Deut. 5:31)

God instituted the priesthood to give the nation ongoing instruction.

And you shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which the Lord chooses; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. “According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left. (Deut. 17:10-11)

In a similar way, God has made provision for us.

We have with us the teaching of Jesus and His apostle and, prophets.

And we have the help of evangelists, pastors, and teachers. (Eph. 4:11ff).

But even so they things will not benefit us if we are not serious students of the word, looking to take advantage of every opportunity to learn and help others learn.

We must impart the message to the next generation.

Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your sons and your grandsons.

“Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, ‘Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.’ (Deut. 4:9-10)

I hope that all of our parents have accepted that responsibility to teach the word to your children. It is your primary responsibility.

But Moses is even more specific:

We must explain the meaning of our rituals.

We can expect to be questioned about our actions; and we must be prepared to give answers.

When your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What do the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments mean which the Lord our God commanded you?’ then you shall say to your son, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt; and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand. (Deut. 6:20-21)

We must tell them what God means to us. Is He a god who did great things for others; but not for us? Could we add the testimony of our own lives and tell others what great things the Lord has done for us!?

We must memorialize our experiences in song.

Each generation must find a way to put into the heart language of their time their praise of God and tell the story of what God has done.

Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, in order that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel. (Deut. 31:19)

By teaching our children to sing and to enjoy singing, we teach them to praise God and we teach them to remember and have impressed on their hearts what God has done.

We must make God's word a part of daily conversation.

We can't be too busy with life's business not to talk about the word of God with our kids. This is life's business for the believer. It is as important as providing them with food, clothing, shelter, and an education. Moses urged the children of Israel...

...and you shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. (Deut. 6:7)

And you shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deut. 11:19)

We must take aggressive steps against false teachers and corrupting cultural influences.

Some of the actions of the Israelites at God's command may seem incredibly extreme. We may be troubled by the severity with which Israel was instructed to destroy the nations of Canaan. But this severity makes clear the militancy and zeal with which we should fight against what may undermine our faith and the faith of our children! Hence the Canaanites were utterly destroyed...

..in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God. (Deut. 20:18)

We must be not become too casual about the influences of evil around us and that so easily make their way into our homes through the media. God did not want His people watching the immoral worship of the Canaanites lest they be attracted to it. Would he expect any less of us today? Do we take those threats seriously and take steps to fight them?

We must encourage them to marry believers.

Moses knew the power and influence of a marriage partner. So, he urged Israel not to enter into alliances and marriages with the pagan people of Canaan.

Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to

serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will quickly destroy you. (Deut. 7:3-4)

Is this a priority for us as parents, to encourage our children to seek out a mate of comparable character and faith?

Conclusion: I am sure that all of us want only the best for our children and grandchildren. Moses shows us how to do all we can to ensure that they will prosper and be blessed. Will you take steps to ensure this blessing for your family?